

Hythe United Reformed Church
Cornerstone

Annual Reports : March 2026



**Families
Matter**

of Hythe URC



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CHURCH SECRETARY'S REPORT

I feel it's been another great year when God has richly blessed our church as we strive to worship and serve him in the best way we can. We have continued to grow spiritually as we seek to build our fellowship on the rock of Jesus Christ and the working out of the Holy Spirit amongst us.



Our worship is a key part of that – worship that blesses, teaches, challenges and encourages us particularly through the excellent preachers who have shared God's Word with us. We are again particularly grateful to George Gibson (who we greatly miss) for compiling our preaching programme, to Jytta James, who books the preachers and to the several leaders of our worship week by week. Drama Llamas have made a refreshing contribution to our worship as have many of our young people, and we thank them all.

During the year it has been great to welcome five new Church Members. Sadly though, some dear members and friends have died; we give thanks for their lives, service and witness over many years. Other members and friends have moved away or to another fellowship where we pray that they will continue to be blessed. So, at the end of 2025 our membership remains unchanged at 94. There are, however, several friends within our fellowship who are not Church Members, so if you are one of them and you feel led to make a commitment to Jesus Christ and the life and witness of Cornerstone, please speak to me or one of the Elders.

We have now been without a stipendiary minister for just over five years, but as I hope you all know, we are now fully into the process of seeking a new Minister to serve Cornerstone and Immanuel Southbourne. Indeed, as I write this report, we are looking forward to a

candidate minister coming to Preach-with-View to becoming our Minister. So please pray for this whole process: for the Minister in preparing to come to us, for our church that we will be able to clearly discern whether to issue a call to be our next Minister, for the Minister in discerning whether to accept such a call, and if all of that is positive, for the settling in period and subsequent ministry.

Our AGM this year will be on Sunday 29th March after morning worship and a fellowship lunch together. At the AGM there will be a vacancy for one elder to be elected. Margaret Yapp will have served for an initial period of four years – for which we thank her sincerely - so is eligible for re-election. Please pray that the right person will be nominated and elected to serve in this way. Nomination forms (available from the Church Office) need to be returned to me by Sunday 15th March.

I'm again so thankful that we have such a faithful and dedicated team of Elders and Leaders together with the great many members and friends who serve the church so well in a variety of different ways – often perhaps you may think in small ways, but ways which make a big important difference. Thank you to you all! As leaders we don't always get it right, and are sorry for that, but despite such failures our forgiving God continues to bless and challenge us as individuals and as a church. I continue to feel a sense of excitement and anticipation as to what God has yet in store for us – particularly with the coming of a new Minister at some point in the near future - and pray that He will equip us all for the next exciting part of the journey with Him!

With every blessing, *Richard Hall*

PRAYER MINISTRY

Nurturing the church's prayer life. Maintaining a cover of prayer and finding creative opportunities to develop this more effectively.

Leader and contact details:

Jo Pearce E-mail: prayer@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk



Prayer is vital in our Christian Lives. God our Father, expects us to come to Him with whatever needs we have.

To be part of the Prayer Team at Cornerstone is such a privilege. Numbers of people joining prayer times have grown. Prayer before the service each Sunday now takes place in Room 1 as the Counsel

Room is not large enough.

Our Worship includes spoken and silent prayer, with occasional invitations to be part of that.

We now regularly have Healing Services which are valued. These usually take place on the 5th Sunday of the month.

Monday Morning Prayer is attended by 8-10 people where concerns for the world and individuals are shared. Many of these are communicated through the Prayer Spider and we thank Joy Funnell for the regular way she keeps us up to date with urgent needs.

Another Prayer opportunity takes place on Wednesday morning from 8.30 am for those who rise early! and is organised by Margaret Yapp.

Please consider coming to either of these meetings, each are followed, of course, by the delicious coffee served in the Foyer.

Thanks are due to members of the Prayer Team in providing the Prayer Focus in the centre pages of Cornerstone News, the rota being organised by Wendy Axton.

There is opportunity each Sunday for any of us to receive prayer after the service if we have a need.

The Annual World Day of Prayer takes place this year at St Andrew's Church on March 6th. The Christian Women of Nigeria prepared this, with the service entitled "I will give you rest".

The Waterside House of Prayer meets at St Andrew's church. The chapel where they meet (to the right of the church entrance) opens out on to the Prayer Garden. Meetings take place on weekday mornings 8am-9am and Wednesday from 11.45am to 1.00pm. Participants come from most churches on the Waterside and anyone is welcome to come and use the Prayer Garden at any time.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight".

Proverbs 3 v 5-6

Jo Pearce



WORSHIP MINISTRY

Making provision for Sunday worship and encouraging creativity in worship throughout the life of the church

Leader and contact details:

Nick Tustian: E-mail: worship@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk



I am once again delighted to be able to report on what, I feel, has been another excellent year in terms of our Sunday worship. We have been blessed with yet another wonderful programme of bible study that has explored the Gospel of Luke, Hebrew names for God, the Church as the Bride of Christ and finished the year with a very challenging seven sessions on Galatians. This along with the many special All Age Services (now A² Services), Healing Services, Easter, Pentecost etc etc has made it a full and spiritually uplifting year.

We said a very sad and fond farewell to George and Di as they left for pastures new in Scotland, and we owe a massive debt of gratitude to George for putting the programme together and for, of course, his amazing ministry from the pulpit. Before departing, he created another engaging programme for 2026. We wish them both health and happiness in their new life together.

One of the things that's given me the most pleasure is to see how the Worship Leaders have continued their development over the past 12 months. Leading worship is no easy task, and I want to thank them all for the tremendous amount of work they have put in over the past year. I have seen them all grow in confidence and develop their own styles to the point where I do believe we have a truly wonderful and diverse balance in the way we worship every week.

Drama Llamas continue to enrich our services in presenting God's message to us with amazing humour and insight, the quality of which continues to improve every time. We are also seeing encouraging advances in our young people and their participation in worship. shepherded by Emma, Naomi and Ray they have demonstrated a

real heart for worship and the services they have led have been some of the highlights of the year. I particularly want to mention the contribution made by Bobby who has developed into a very accomplished and confident Worship Leader. I see great things ahead for him and all the Team.

There are so many people who make our worship possible and if I tried to list everyone, I'm bound to miss someone out. I do though want to say a massive thank you to Kirsty who continues to bless us with her exceptional music talents every third Sunday of the month and at many of our special services. Thanks to Kevin for pulling together the members of his family every so often to form a band and I still pray that into our midst will come someone who will enable us make "live" music a more regular feature of our worship. Over the past few months we have seen the emergence of a choir which is already making a wonderful contribution to our worship. Please pray for Leander and all the choir members, that they will continue to grow in confidence and through their singing will themselves feel ever closer to God.

I also pay a special tribute to our fantastic tech team who, often unseen, ensure that the sound and the videos are working every week. By streaming every service they bring our worship into the homes of those who can't be with us in person but, who are such important members of our fellowship.

We are all excited at the prospect of a new Minister being appointed sometime in 2026 and the direction that person will take us. Whatever that may be, I know we have a sound foundation for our worship which will continue to praise and honour God in so many exciting and varied ways.

God Bless, *Nick Justian*



EVANGELISM & FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

Presenting the Gospel and bringing people together

Finding creative ways to present the Gospel and for people to meet and find friendship and support with each other, thereby enabling opportunities leading to personal faith in Christ.

Leader and contact details:

Beverley Hall : E-mail: bevhall@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk

Looking back over the year, things have been really good and we had many successes which made all the hard work very worthwhile. There are things we could improve on and hopefully past activities we can re-introduce. Whatever we do in the future, extra pairs of hands are vital. So many thanks to the very willing volunteers who have supported the activities we managed to provide and look forward to many others joining our efforts.

OUTREACH EVENTS

Easter This year's event started with churches on the Waterside getting together in the centre of Hythe on Good Friday and Easter Saturday and sharing the Easter story. It was led by St Johns, while St Andrews led the music and Cornerstone contributed two poems. About 200 people were listening and singing. Hot cross buns were well received and 100 'Why Easter?' booklets given out. Family Church, despite bad weather to start, managed to have a time of celebration on the Saturday, though the craft was cancelled.

Christmas This year it was decided that we would have a presence at the Mistletoe Fayre giving out sweets and Christmas cards. It was felt that doing two days on consecutive weekends was asking too much of people at a busy time of year.

Hilary Ferry from the Lighthouse church provided hands on activities for children, which was extremely popular - it was free and fun. Wendy Axton provided an angel craft, which we ended up doing and gave to the children readymade. 22 tins of sweets were donated - many, many thanks for all your generosity, and every sweet was given out to passers-by. The Christmas cards were very well received; we started

by printing 200 and ended up reprinting and giving out a total of 500. People were thrilled that all churches had their services advertised. People received the card very readily; hardly anybody declined the offer.

There were people helping from Lighthouse church, Family Church, St Johns and Cornerstone. It was a really happy day and there was a lot of love and smiles shared. Despite a wet start the weather improved and we all felt that it was a very worthwhile day.

Foyer. Our bright yellow teapot has been repainted with 'Cornerstone Cuppa' (the new name for the foyer) on it. We are back to opening every morning from 10am-12noon. This has proved very successful, most days someone drops in off the streets and we have a group that have adopted us on a Tuesday and a Saturday, quadrupling our coffee sales! It is also good to have people from the church family dropping in. It is so good to offer a listening ear and help to those who need it.

We have a rota of people who cover the coffee bar, and to them I offer my heartfelt thanks. We can always do with extras so that no-one has to do it alone. Ric Lambert has now taken over the running of the Foyer bar rota so please talk to him if you can help and find out what days are most needed.

FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES

Walks: A couple of walks have been enjoyed over the year. On Bank holiday Monday, May 5th we walked from Tillery car park, near Brockenhurst followed by lunch at the Snakecatcher in Brockenhurst. Then on New Years Day, blessed with good weather we walked from, Longdown enclosure, finishing with lunch at the Bold Forester. Both walks were enjoyed by around 12 people and more joined us for the meal afterwards.

BBQ: This is an event always much enjoyed by many. We had the usual sausage and burger, thanks to Richard for his brilliant BBQing and as usual we had plenty of donations of salads and sweets, so everyone was very well fed. With very pleasant weather, people were able to sit and chat and enjoy the fresh air, so altogether very successful.

Harvest Supper: It was decided that lunch on Sunday, after the service was preferred. We provided the usual baked potato and fillings

with people bringing fruit pies. Around 40 people attended and we had a good celebration of God's goodness to us . Richard devised a quiz to challenge us all. A very big thank you to Sue, Marian and Terry, for all their help.

Picnic Lunches: Monthly picnic lunches are very much enjoyed. Numbers tend to be small, but that makes conversation easier. We played Quirkle, Mexican Train and Tri-ominoes at one session, which we hope to repeat in the future. Everyone had a good laugh, just learning the rules to each game was a challenge.

The August picnic was held in the Grove garden and though not arranged, the New forest Brass entertained us and many others. This proved to be very successful and will definitely be repeated.

New year celebration: Our final activity of the year was to host a party on New Year's Eve. It was decided that it would be from 6-8pm, so that people could go on to other events to see the new year in. We had a bring and share supper and played a few games. A small number joined the fun, and we had a very good evening and something to be considered for next year.

It has been an exciting year, and I personally have had to learn to trust in God, and when doubt entered my mind that things could not possibly happen, I was invariably proved wrong. So in the coming year I would really like to start activity mornings in the holidays for families, also have away-days with the church family and maybe even another church weekend. To do these things I shall be asking for lots of help so please come along to our meetings or just let me know what you can offer.

Thank you to everyone for all your support and generosity over the year.

Bev Hall

TABLE TOP SALES

We have been very grateful this year to welcome some younger helpers to Monday evenings and packing away on Tuesdays. This has given a boost to the regular helpers and also enabled some 'pruning' of goods so that Tuesdays look fresh and interesting. We have a very faithful clientele that we see regularly so the new, good quality goods that we receive are very welcome. Please encourage your friends, family and acquaintances to donate to Table Top when they are downsizing, moving or just de-cluttering.

Table Top continues to provide much needed funds as you will see elsewhere in this report book for the building repairs and the outreach of our church. The beginning of the year is always quieter but we remain confident that it will pick up again as we get into Spring. Beyond this of course are the relationships being built with many folk. Those of you who call in on Table Top days provide the welcome that is needed for so many, so well done.

Please contact one of us if you are able to offer any form of help. We still need someone on the electrical side to get to know the stock there and to provide that chance to chat.

Joan Shewry, Richard and Bev Hall

HYTHE ACTIVE EXERCISE GROUP

Our exercise group continues to meet on Thursday mornings at 10.00am and provides a fun time with "gentle" exercise, both standing and sitting, with about 20 people attending each week. Many people meet after the session for coffee in the foyer to recover. Come along and try it, and improve your balance and flexibility.

David Yapp

WOMEN'S GUILD

The Women's Guild has continued to gather throughout 2025. Our meetings have provided opportunities for learning, socialising, charity fundraising, and supporting one another.

We meet twice a month, on the second and fourth Thursdays from 2.15pm until 3.30pm. The first meeting each month features a guest speaker, offering insight and inspiration on a range of topics. The second meeting is more informal, allowing for relaxed conversation and fellowship. At these gatherings, we have a Bring and Buy table, raising funds for our chosen charity throughout the year.

At our AGM in February, Glenys Bartlett stepped down as our President. We expressed our gratitude for her dedicated service over many years with a special presentation. Sadly, Glenys passed away in August, and she will be deeply missed.

Our current membership is 23, with an average attendance of 18 at our meetings. While we have lost some members during the year, we have also welcomed new faces into our group. In a change to our committee structure, the role of President has been replaced by our two Leaders who now share the responsibilities previously held by the President.

This year, income for our General Fund has decreased, but the Charity Fund has surpassed expectations. We were pleased to present a cheque for £565 to 'Stop Domestic Abuse', our chosen charity for 2025. We also benefited from an informative talk by their Outreach Worker about the invaluable work they undertake.

Our AGM took place in February and was chaired by Nick Tustian. All principal office holders and our tea convenor were re-elected. Anne Sanders and Beverley Souter were elected to the committee for a two-year term.

Eric Parker was our guest speaker for our Easter Afternoon, which is always special. Rev Ted Slade spoke at our Anniversary Service and, as last year, refreshments in the Foyer proved very successful. In August, we enjoyed a garden party at Beverley Souter's home, raising nearly £100 for our charity. For our Christmas Lunch, we visited the Travellers Rest, an outing enjoyed by all.

Throughout the year, our meetings have featured a range of engaging speakers and activities. Highlights include Mike Garside sharing his memories as a Headmaster, Jytta and Liz recounting their holiday in

South America, and a session with the Honey-pot Charity. Margaret Yapp has joined us to project hymns with music, a welcome addition to our gatherings. We express our appreciation to Maggie, who has accompanied us on the piano for many years and continues to step in when needed.

As we look forward to 2026, we hope to welcome new members, especially younger individuals who may be interested in joining us. We would love to see our average age decrease and bring fresh energy to the Guild. We have decided not to devote a whole afternoon to an AGM in future, but to do any business as part of one of our normal meetings.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported us this year, whether as speakers or in other capacities. The dedication of our committee is deeply appreciated; without their hard work and commitment, the Guild could not continue. Most importantly, we thank God for guiding and supporting us throughout our journey.

Joy Funnell (Secretary)

WOMEN'S GUILD BALANCE SHEET FOR 2025			
INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Collection	393.55	Teas	40.74
Donations Received	0.00	Speakers/Meetings	95.00
Miscellaneous	0.00	Cards, Flowers & Gifts	98.40
Christmas Dinner	289.50	Christmas Dinner	289.50
Charity 2024	38.31	Administration	6.96
Charity 2025	634.88	Bank Charges	3.46
		CHARITY	
		National Coastwatch	461.85
		Honey-pot Children	25.00
		Stop Domestic Abuse	565.08
			1051.93
		DONATIONS	
		URC Benevolent Fund	50.00
		Hythe URC	200.00
TOTAL INCOME	1356.24	TOTAL EXPENSES	1835.99
Balance B/F			
General	415.53	Lloyds Bank a/c	924.40
Charity	423.54	Uncleared Cheque	-565.08
	839.07		359.32
	2195.31		2195.31

MEN@CORNERSTONE



The main activity of Men@Cornerstone is Men's Breakfast! About 15-20 men and older young people met on a Saturday morning for breakfast eight times during 2025. We enjoyed fresh coffee, tea, fruit juices, cereal and toast with a Full English Breakfast.

The breakfasts are mainly a great time of fellowship – opportunity to share joys and sorrows, opportunities and experiences with other men. We occasionally have a speaker as well.

In addition, in July a group of us went to watch Hampshire play a T20 cricket match against Glamorgan, which Hampshire won by 92 runs! A good time was had by all!

The Men@Cornerstone team now comprises myself, Jonathan Russell and Andy Turnpenny as we have sadly lost the valued input of George Gibson following his move to Scotland after his marriage to Diane. But we're looking forward to another year of great food and fellowship at the breakfasts and hope to arrange a visit to the cricket again and possibly a skittles evening.

Please pray for us during the coming year as we continue to meet together. Pray that our friendships with each other and our relationship with God will continue to grow.

Dave Symmonds

BUILDING AND FABRIC MINISTRY

Maintenance of buildings, fixtures and fittings. Arranging planned and other repair work, routine maintenance and decoration of the church.

Leader and contact details:

Richard Hall buildings@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk

Unfortunately, we still do not have a Building & Fabric Ministry leader! We are just about managing, but this is mainly because Terry Pearce is still doing much of the work, despite several people taking on specific tasks. We are particularly grateful to Terry for all he does, but we do need a new leader and other people willing to do occasional jobs. If you can help with this please let me know, so that you can be called on from time to time. The main areas of work are below, together with the person responsible:

Area	Person Responsible
Regular servicing – external resources	Nick Tustian as contact person
Regular toilet cleaning	Hannah Andrews (paid)
Heating programming & monitoring. Plumbing & Electrical repairs, using external resources as necessary	David Yapp
Descaling/re-salting of kitchen equipment	Mikaela Lee
Ad-hoc repairs using internal or external resources as necessary	Richard Hall as contact person
Regular vacuuming /cleaning of areas	Named person for each area*
Baptism preparations	Dave Symmonds & Jonathan Russell
Church Keys	Richard Hall / Terry Pearce
Church garden	Simon Coveney (paid)
Safety Officer	Richard Hall

Thank you to all the above people and all those* who have adopted a room/area to keep clean. Please remember that all room users should make sure that the room is as clean and tidy when they leave as when they arrive – and this includes the kitchen! We're particularly pleased that Hannah Andrews has taken on the job of regular toilet cleaning – and is doing a great job, thank you Hannah!

Though the major Repairs Project contract has been completed there is one job outstanding. This is some fine pointing and brickwork around the central entrance door which should be done when the weather improves.

The lift continues to be a bug-bear and has been out of service for a few weeks because a new emergency auto-dialler needs to be installed, but this doesn't seem to have any priority with the lift company!

There are some members and friends who regularly carry out some of the routine but essential tasks so faithfully and we thank them sincerely. This particularly includes David Yapp for programming and monitoring the heating – we would often be very chilly without him, so a warm thank you!

But thanks to all of you as everyone has a part to play in keeping our building as a welcoming place to come to meet with friends and to meet with our Lord.

Richard Hall



ADMINISTRATION MINISTRY

Keeping the church affairs organised, people informed, rotas operating, papers flowing. Finding creative ways of doing it better.

Leader and contact details

Richard Hall : E-mail secretary@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk

Administration is one ministry that generally works best in the background, enabling other ministries to play their part in serving our Lord as well as possible. So, the aim is to provide support and assistance across all areas of church life and the main tasks and those involved in doing them are currently:

- ◆ Editing of Cornerstone News, Weekly Notice Sheets, the Annual Report (Diana Sandy)
- ◆ Proof reading and printing newsletters posters and other documents (Richard Hall)
- ◆ Printing Weekly Notice Sheets (Mary York)
- ◆ Distribution of newsletters (Pamela Bridge, Sue Ruddock, Joan Shewry and a few others)
- ◆ Ordering stationary, cleaning materials (Agnes MacIntosh, Joy Funnell)
- ◆ Ordering coffee and communion wine (Terry Pearce)
- ◆ Monitoring the printer/copier and ordering toner (Joan Shewry)
- ◆ Maintaining lists, directories and rotas (Joy Funnell)
- ◆ Emailing information about services, church activities or events and Prayer Spider requests (Joy Funnell)
- ◆ Room bookings (Ric Lambert)
- ◆ Maintaining the church calendars (Terry Pearce)
- ◆ Maintaining the church website (Andy Turnpenny)
- ◆ GDPR maintenance, e-mail forwarding changes (Richard Hall)
- ◆ Copyright and other licences and subscriptions (Richard Hall)
- ◆ URC information returns (Richard Hall)

It's great that earlier in the year our new website went live and seems to have been well received. Many thanks to those involved in developing it and to Andy Turnpenny as our new Webmaster for seeking to keep it up to date.

The website enables us to view the Room Bookings calendar and from the start of 2026 Ric Lambert has taken over the role of Bookings Secretary from Mike Garside, who has been doing this job for a great many years! A very big thank you goes to Mike for his stalwart service in this important role and to Ric for taking it on.

It's important that everyone is kept informed as much possible about the life of the church, so the monthly Cornerstone News and weekly Notice sheets, edited so well by Diana, play a key role in this. E-mails to members and friends are also important, and Joy Funnell has continued to do a fantastic job in this way.

A very big "Thank you" goes to Diana and Joy particularly, but also to those carrying out the various jobs noted above. I pray that we will all be open to doing what we can, however big or small, to further the life and witness of the church.

Richard Hall

FINANCE MINISTRY

Managing financial records and controls. Keeping the members informed and advised as appropriate. Supervising the planning and control of budgets.

Leader and contact details

Nick Tustian E-mail: treasurer@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk

Treasurer's Report

There's an old joke that goes: "Why did the man become an accountant?" The answer: "Because he found watching paint dry too exciting". So when I was thinking about writing this report, I did ponder on how I could make our finances for 2025 more interesting and exciting. You may, however, think that accountants only get excited when they are delivering a difficult and unwelcome message.

So perhaps you'll be delighted to know that I have nothing really interesting or exciting to say about what happened with our finances during 2025. You will recall that in 2024 we did indeed face a difficult time but due to the incredible and continuing generosity of you all we not only balanced 2024 but also created a very sound financial base to build on in 2025.

At the end of 2025 our General Fund Reserve amounted to £44,000 which is comfortably over the £10,000 minimum and indeed well over the £25,000 maximum reserves that we have set ourselves. We also have 9,000 in the Building and Fabric Reserve plus nearly £3000 in the Loan Repayment Fund. The remaining £20,000 loan from Wessex Synod has, including this amount, only got a balance of £12,000 to pay so we are well on the way to repaying this loan earlier than the 2033 end date.

So all very good news, however, it is important that we don't get

complacent as there are still enormous pressures on our finances both in terms building costs, especially with repairs and maintenance and heating and lighting, and the ever increasing day to day costs that we are all experiencing. As a result we are projecting a deficit budget on 2026 and it only takes a few years at this level to eat into what appears, at present, to be a comfortable margin for safety.

It does though give me immense pleasure to see how our finances continue to be used wisely and responsibly in continuing God's work at Cornerstone. Please pray that this continues and in doing so I ask everyone to pray for their own situation recognising that our personal giving must keep pace with ever rising costs if we are to maintain the position we have strived so hard to achieve.

Many thanks to you all for your amazing generosity and support.

Nick Justian



FINANCIAL REPORT AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

	Income			Expenditure			OVERALL F (A)		
	Budget 2025	Revised Budget	Actual to 31 Dec	Variance F (A)	Budget 2025	Revised Budget		Actual to 31 Dec	Variance F (A)
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Finance	91,950	96,330	99,587	3,257	76,200	86,890	87,555	(665)	2,592
Building & Fabric	0	2,450	2,466	16	26,600	20,800	17,724	3,076	3,092
Administration	5,770	5,200	4,443	(757)	6,170	6,550	6,276	274	(483)
Publicity & Communication	0	20	20	0	200	350	267	83	83
Fellowship & Social	2,400	3,850	3,959	109	1,950	1,950	2,122	(172)	(63)
Worship	0	0	0	0	1,150	1,550	1,688	(138)	(138)
Prayer	0	0	0	0	50	50	0	50	50
Pastoral	150	100	90	(10)	550	550	525	25	15
Youth & Children	0	0	0	0	200	0	76	(76)	(76)
Families Matter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Evangelism	1,350	750	1,088	338	1,100	750	1,077	(327)	11
World Church	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	0
TOTAL GENERAL FUND	101,620	108,700	111,653	2,953	114,220	119,440	117,310	2,130	5,083
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Benevolent Fund	101,620	108,700	111,653	2,953	114,220	119,440	117,310	2,130	5,083

Worship	0	1,688
Prayer	0	0
Pastoral	90	525
Youth & Children	0	76
Families Matter	0	0
Evangelism	1,088	1,077
World Church	0	0
Benevolent	0	0
	111,653	117,310
	<u>174,646</u>	<u>174,646</u>

Summary - Funds

	Bal 1 Jan	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Bal 31 Dec
	£	£	£	Reserves	£
General	42,327	111,653	(105,076)	(4,719)	44,185
Benevolent	1,028	0	0	0	1,028
Building & Fabric Reserve	8,000	0	0	1,000	9,000
Building Loan Repayment	11,288	0	(12,234)	3,719	2,773
Expenses Float	350	0	0	0	350
Total - General	<u>62,993</u>	<u>111,653</u>	<u>(117,310)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>57,336</u>

OUTREACH FUND

The Outreach Fund has continued to provide valued financial support and encouragement to mission work and outreach both locally and overseas - support that has helped to change people's lives both in the basic needs of life and in coming to know Jesus Christ.

The Statement and Summary of the Outreach Fund financial activities during 2025 are given in the tables, which are separated into three parts: General, Building Repairs Loan and Sierra Leone, helping to give greater clarity to the parts within the account. The fund balance at the end of 2025 was £19,431 of which £13,687 was the General Outreach Fund balance, £5,715 the Sierra Leone balance and just £28 for the Building Repairs Loan balance.

The main support to the Fund has been through personal donations of just over £3,400 (largely by standing orders) plus the attached Gift Aid of over £700. So a very big "Thank you" goes particularly to those regular supporters. The donations have reduced by 15% since last year but thankfully have still enabled the Fund to increase our support for our main commitments which are the work of Romans 1:11 in Uganda (£2,400) with Pastor Julius Bigirwenkya, his church and schools at Kakumiro and Hope Now working with the people in Ukraine (£1,800) particularly at Cherkasy. From the accrued balance a donation of £5,000 was also passed to Families Matter to support them at a potentially critical time. Other donations were made to The Crossings (£500) and Bringing Good News (£500) and from the Sierra Leone funds £1,000 was donated to St George's Children's Home and £728 for other aid in Sierra Leone.

At present, fundraising events and Table Top sales are being used to help pay off the building repairs loan. During the year the fundraising events raised a net total of £3,777 through eight events: Quiz raising £358, Ceilidh £392, Grad Band concert £300, Cream tea £214. Barbecue £36, New Forest Brass concert £299, Solent Concert Orchestra concert £393 and Christmas Fayre a tremendous £1,785. All these events not only raised funds but also provided a good time for fellowship and opportunity for outreach. Special thanks go to the great team who plan these events and several others who help run them.

In addition, Table Top sales were run every two weeks (excluding summer holidays) raising nearly £2,173 at an average of £103 per session. Not only are these good fundraisers, but they also provide opportunities for people to meet, chat and share problems and joys.

From the Table Top and fundraising events, a total of £5,950 was able to be transferred to the General Fund for the building repairs loan fund – a great achievement.

The Outreach Fund was started when we had just paid off all our debts for the completion of our new building and as a church we promised to raise funds to support mission and outreach in the wider world equivalent to a tithe on the cost of the building works. The target for this is £201,400 and so far after 14 years we have raised and donated £200,021 of this leaving just £1,379 still to go! So, we are now 99% of the way, so I'm sure the target can be reached within 2026.

Finally, a simple but sincere big 'Thank you' to all who have contributed to the Outreach Fund in any way by supporting and particularly helping with Table Top sales and fundraising events.

Richard Hall

TITHE EXPENDITURE 2025		
	£	
Romans 1-11 Trust - Uganda	2,400	
Hope Now - Ukraine	1,800	
Families Matter	5,000	
The Crossings	500	
Grace Ministries - Sierra Leone	298	
Spark2Action Sierra Leone	430	
St George's Children's Home	1,000	
Bringing Good News	500	
TOTAL in 2025	11,928	
Total for 2012-2024	188,093	
Cumulative Total (2012-2025)	200,021	99% of target
TARGET	201,400	
OUTSTANDING at 31.12.2025	1,379	

OUTREACH FUND - STATEMENT of FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES for 2025

Balance 1 Jan 2025

Balance 31 Dec 2025

	£	£		£	£
Bank Current account	10			10	
Bank Deposit account	26,533			24,194	
Payments outstanding	0			(4,950)	
Late income	0			0	
Gift Aid tax owing	198			176	
		<u>26,741</u>			<u>19,431</u>

Income 2025

Expenditure 2025

General

General

Donations general	3,400		Romans 1-11	2,400
Church Organisations	0		Hope Now	1,800
Legacies	0		Families Matter	5,000
Other donations	0		Other Support	1,000
Gift Aid reclaim general	705		Other costs	0
Bank interest	435		Bank charges	60
Sub-Total	4,540		Sub-Total	10,260

Building Repairs Loan

Building Repairs Loan

Fundraising events	5,648		Fundraising costs	1,954
Table Top sales	2,255		Repairs Loan Fund	5,950
Sub-Total	7,904		Sub-Total	7,904

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone

Donations S/L Aid	112		Sierra Leone Aid	1,728
Donations S/L Team	0		Sierra Leone Costs	0
Gift Aid reclaim S/L	25			
Sub-Total	137		Sub-Total	1,728

Total Income **12,581**

Total Expenditure **19,891**

39,322

39,322

FUNDS SUMMARY 2025

FUND	Balance 01.01.25	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance 31.12.25
Outreach General	19,407	4,540	10,260	0	13,687
Building Repairs Loan	28	7,904	7,904	0	28
Sierra Leone	7,305	137	1,728	0	5,715
Total Outreach funds	26,741	12,581	19,891	0	19,431

OUTREACH FUND : FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2025

INCOME	Actual Budget 2024	Actual Budget 2025	Total 2025	Diff (Total- Budget)	EXPENDITURE	Actual 2024	Revised Budget 2025	Total 2025	Diff (Budget- Total)
General					General				
Donations	4,038	2,880	3,400	520	Romans 1-11	2,000	2,400	2,400	-
Church Organisations	-	-	-	-	Hope Now	1,500	1,800	1,800	-
Legacies	-	-	-	-	Families Matter	-	5,000	5,000	-
Other donations	-	-	-	-	Other Support	400	1,000	1,000	-
Gift Aid reclaim	906	600	705	105	Other costs	32	40	-	40
Bank interest	788	400	435	35	Bank charges	60	60	60	-
Sub-Total	5,732	3,880	4,540	660	Sub-Total	3,992	10,300	10,260	40
Building Repairs Loan					Building Repairs Loan				
Fundraising events	5,556	4,000	5,648	1,648	Fundraising costs	1,695	1,200	1,954	(754)
Table Top sales	2,506	1,800	2,255	455	Building Repairs Fund	6,500	4,050	5,950	(1,900)
Sub-Total	8,061	5,800	7,904	2,104	Sub-Total	8,195	5,250	7,904	(2,654)
Sierra Leone					Sierra Leone				
Donations S/L Aid	300	200	112	(88)	Sierra Leone Aid	13,126	5,500	1,728	3,772
Donations S/L team	637	400	-	(400)	Sierra Leone Costs	84	1,000	-	1,000
Gift Aid reclaim S/L	234	100	25	(75)	Sub-Total	13,210	6,500	1,728	4,772
Sub-Total	1,172	700	137	(563)	TOTAL	25,397	22,050	19,891	2,159
TOTAL	14,965	10,380	12,581	2,201					

WORLD CHURCH MINISTRY

Maintaining links with the world church, establishing and maintaining contact with the church overseas and keeping the congregation informed and involved as appropriate.

Leader and contact details:

Richard Hall E-mail: mission@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk

There are three main Areas of the world where we have been involved directly in the past and continue to support them through prayer and on-going financial commitments.

Uganda

Our support for mission in Uganda continues through the Romans One Eleven Trust both for the general work of the Trust in Uganda but also supporting the work of Pastor Julius Bigirwenkya. He lives at Kakumiro in the western region, where he established a church and two schools; Chris Copley visited there in 2022. Osborne School has continued to grow and, thanks to the support from Cornerstone, there are now enough classrooms for each class to have their own space. Blessings School however had to have extensive repairs so has not been able to grow in the same way. As well as being a trained secondary teacher, Julius is an ordained pastor within the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Uganda (RPCU) and director of the Romans 1-11 Spiritual Life Centre in Kakumiro. The centre along with two others, delivered pre-ordination training for 27 student pastors during the year. The Romans 1-11 training material is also being used by another pastor for running the course for pastors from other denominations; this was always an aim to make the course self-sustaining. Our funding from the Outreach Fund is also giving £30/month to support the training of new pastors under the "Boost 100" initiative. For further information about the work of Romans 1-11 Trust go to <https://www.romans111.org.uk/our-work-in-uganda/>

Ukraine

Our support for Ukraine is through Hope Now, based in Southampton. We continue to send regular financial support with some earmarked for the churches at Smila and Cherkasy, and other funding for general operations. As the war in Ukraine continues relentlessly the provision of help with food, clothing and temporary shelter though the local

churches is essential and is often the first step to someone coming to know the Lord. Hope Now was founded 40 years ago as a response to a desperate need to “bring hope by sharing the love of Jesus”, so our continued support through prayer and funding is still vitally needed in helping these war-torn people. For the latest information go to <https://hopenow.org.uk/latest-news/newsletters/>

Sierra Leone

We continue to support the work in Sierra Leone through prayer and the use of the funds still held in our Outreach Fund account. During 2025 this was used to provide some solar pumps and digging of wells as well as £1,000 for the St George Children’s Home in Freetown, which cares mainly for orphans. Much of the work in Sierra Leone is now being undertaken by a separate Christian organisation called Spark2Action headed by a couple, Jo and Sarah, from the UK. We also support the work of Practical Tools Initiative led by James Fallah-Williams with the UK base in Fareham.

Steve Baker and David Miall have just returned from a three-week visit to Sierra Leone, which was a busy but productive time. As well as spending some time with the Devine Grace Ministry conference they managed to train 10 pastors in well repairs and brought 17 wells and one solar system back into use. They also surveyed sites for future work in 2026. I’m sure we will hear more about this visit soon.

Following visits to preach by Ian Thomson, our Outreach Fund has also supported the work of “Bringing Good News”, which shares the gospel with the poor and relieves poverty in areas of Ukraine, Pakistan, South Sudan, Central Asia and Nepal.

See <https://www.bringinggoodnews.org/> for more information.

In conclusion, our support in terms of interest, prayers and finance in all these areas of the world is greatly valued by the people on the ground and equally important, provides us with an insight to different aspects of God’s world that we may not otherwise appreciate.

Unfortunately, there is still no one directly overseeing this Ministry of our church and encouraging us in such works, so if this is something you might like to help with, I’d be pleased to speak with you!

Richard Hall

PASTORAL MINISTRY

Taking care of the congregation. Looking after people, welcoming new ones and caring for the existing congregation. Finding creative ways of helping people reach their full potential in Christ.

Leader and contact details

Richard Hall : E-mail pastoral@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk

Pastoral Ministry is a key role of the Elders (together with the minister when in place), with pastoral care at its essential core - showing God's love to members of the fellowship through keeping in touch, showing they are valued, praying for them and giving spiritual and sometimes practical support when needed.

The elders have both a practical as well as formal responsibility for pastoral care. Each person within the life of the church should have a named 'Pastoral Care Elder', who will try to keep in contact, offer a listening ear and give encouragement to help each person grow in Christian maturity. The pastoral care lists of each elder are updated from time to time and particularly following the change of serving elders after the AGM. If you don't know who your pastoral care elder is please ask!

Homegroups and other organisations (e.g. Women's Guild, Men's Breakfast) also provide valuable pastoral care for all those who are part of them. In addition, a few individual members thankfully continue to give pastoral care as a natural expression of their God given gifts. Nevertheless, we all have a Christ given responsibility to love and care for one another – "My command is this: love each other as I have loved you" (John 13 v 12) and He will help us to do that.

Underlying not only pastoral care but all areas of church life is the need to provide a caring and safe environment for everybody. So **Safeguarding** is an essential function of the Pastoral Ministry and is a whole church responsibility needing every member to play their part. So I'm particularly thankful that Wendy Tustian, as Safeguarding Coordinator, is actively engaged in all that needs to be done, as she reports below.

The Pastoral Ministry also includes a number of other areas of ministry and service; these are briefly reported below, and many thanks goes to all those involved in doing these tasks.

SAFEGUARDING

I took over as Safeguarding Co-ordinator in December 2024. Firstly, I would like to thank my predecessor Nikki Pullen, my deputy Kay Keen and Joan Shewry for the invaluable support they have given me during the transition period. Also, to Terry Pearce for creating a new Safeguarding Notice Board at the entrance to the Church.

Safeguarding is one of those functions that needs to be embedded into our organisation so that, for the most part it is unseen, while still undertaking the crucial role of protecting the Church and every individual encountered. If anyone has any questions or concerns, please feel free to come and talk to me at any time. Our conversation will be treated in the strictest confidence but will be taken seriously and followed up if further action is required.

During the previous twelve months, I have been acquainting myself with our current Safeguarding Policy and the procedures and practices within the various Church organisations. Inevitably issues have arisen from time to time and I did seek guidance from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on one occasion who confirmed that it was not an incident that required a report to other agencies for action.

I continue to provide regular updates at Elders meetings and know that I will have whatever support I need should any issue require investigation and further action.

There are two main aims for 2026:

1. Complete the update of our current Safeguarding Policy.
2. The Mandatory Safeguarding Training requirements for URC roles were changed at the General Assembly in 2025. The training requirements for all those who hold any office of responsibility within the Church need to be reviewed and appropriate courses provided.

Details of new training courses available are shown on our Safeguarding Noticeboard

Wendy Justian (Safeguarding Co-ordinator)

HOMEGROUPS

We currently have six homegroups which usually meet twice a month in "term time" in various venues and at varying times . The Elders had decided that all groups would follow the Bible Society updated "Bible Course" but as that wasn't published as early as anticipated, the groups discussed the church teaching/preaching series "The Bride of Christ" in the Spring. The study of The Bible Course followed in autumn 2025 and when that concluded in early January 2026 the groups followed the sermon series in the study of the Gospel of John. If anyone is interested in joining a homegroup please contact me on 07928 819300.

Jan Sherlock

HOME COMMUNIONS

Although we were able to offer home communions throughout the earlier part of 2025 to our friends who are unable to attend church services, we were unable to do many before Christmas 2025 but hope to be in a position to resume offering home visits to share communion before Easter 2026 and again in September and December. If you know of anyone who may like a visit or if anyone would like to accompany the person ministering, please let me know and I will pass the information on. My telephone number is: 07928 819300

Jan Sherlock

NEWCOMERS SUPPORT

We have not held a Newcomers tea this year for various reasons so must put this right in 2026. We have continued to see new people from time to time, some looking for a new church, some contemplating moving to this area. As always the congregation welcomes them and some have stayed and become more involved. We have also seen some folk initially coming in during the week and then trying Sundays. This is also due to the 'non-pushy' welcome they experience. They would all benefit from attending a Newcomers tea as this is a great way of learning a bit about the URC generally and this church in particular. In the meantime thank you all for playing your part in welcoming new people.

Joan Shewry

CONDOLENCE CARDS

Sadly, in 2025 we have seen the passing of some of our fellowship here at Cornerstone who were long standing members and also involved in many activities and commitments to the Church:

March - Anne Gale

August - Glenys Bartlett

October - Graham Thatcher

Also we learnt of the sudden passing of church members' close family:

May - Margaret and David Yapp's son, Joseph

December - Helen and Andy Turnpenny's daughter, Charlotte Ralph

We passed on our love, prayers and best wishes to all their families through a card and visit. As we send an Anniversary Card on the first year to the bereaved families it was encouraging to receive a message telling me how that card and message had helped and lifted them on the day. While these times are sad, I have learnt over the years how much the cards and visits are appreciated.

Pat Dudley

FOODBANK

The Waterside Foodbank continues to be a lifeline to many families and individuals. Thanks go to everyone who contributes to the produce collected and to Mike and Polly Garside, who regularly deliver the goods to the Foodbank in Holbury. The items currently most needed are: *Potatoes (tinned), Rice Pudding, Coffee, Tea bags, Carrots (tinned), Ginger Cake, Sponge Puddings, fruit (tinned), UHT milk, toiletries*. So, keep donating

Richard Hall

CHURCH FLOWERS

I would like to thank everyone who contributes to the church flowers each week. I always welcome additional people who would like to give the flowers on a Sunday that is special to them, not only for a special event or anniversaries, but to praise and thank God for the love he shares with us.

It is a pleasure to arrange them in the pedestal for Sunday services and other occasions; they are always appreciated by the people who receive them afterwards.

At the beginning of the year I prepare a rota to cover all Sundays, apart from Easter, Harvest and Christmas, when I ask for donations. Just as a guide £25 to £30 covers the cost of a pedestal. If you would like to share a Sunday with someone else please speak to me and I will arrange a date and suitable price for you.

Also, thank you to the people who take the flowers out each week, Bev Hall, Steffe James-Brown, Sylvia and Mike Burman, Sue Ruddock and Marion Brodie. They do a sterling job and are appreciated by all who have received the flowers.

Pamela Bridge

WELCOME STEWARDS

“Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God”. Romans 15 v 7

This is what we do. We welcome people we know and visitors, with a friendly smile. We like to learn people's names to help them feel part of our family. We provide them with a Notice Sheet and make sure they know where to go and where to place their free will offering if asked. We assist people with mobility needs to access our building and direct people to where they can find water or to where our toilets are located. Our aim is to help everyone feel welcome and comfortable as they join us to worship our Lord at Cornerstone.

For those visiting us for the first time, Pamela provides an extra welcome and a copy of Cornerstone News. She lets them know more about what goes on at Cornerstone and opportunities for prayer and fellowship. Pamela also keeps a record of the number of people attending our services.

Looking back/Changes

When Angela moved away, Jeanette Hortop offered to fill the gap on 2nd Sundays. Rachel Tabenor now arranges for our young people to be involved on the 5th Sundays. Thank you Jeanette and Rachel.

THANK YOU to all our Welcoming Stewards for your faithful service: Lawrence and Gill, Liz and Jeanette, Peter and Val, Rachel and Jytta, who is with me on the 4th Sunday, and to Pamela. To Liam, who is always ready to start welcoming people who arrive early, your support is appreciated too. If you would like to join our team or be a reserve, please let me know.

Many thanks and Love in Christ, *Carol Whittaker*

FAMILIES MATTER MINISTRY

Development and oversight of programmes serving the local community. Liaison with other local service providers and development of creative ways to serve the needs of the local community, especially families.

Chairman of Trustees and contact details:

Peter Blasby E-mail: office@families-matter.org.uk

Families Matter

at Hythe URC

Families Matter is the church's community outreach programme. It is an independent charity for fund raising reasons and provides a number of different projects which support the families and people of the Waterside Area.

On the Right Track (OTRT) is one of our biggest projects and supports children in Year 6 of primary school. The aim is to give extra support and boost confidence in the transition to secondary school. This is done through weekly one-to-one twenty minute sessions with a trained School Worker.



Mentoring is a continuation of the support we have given to some of the children from the OTRT programme for the first three months in their new secondary schools.



Parenting courses. We offer free parenting courses entitled 'Managing Your Child's Angry Feelings' and SPOT (Supporting Parents of Teenagers). These are run in conjunction and partnership with YFM in Totton and take place four times a year for six weeks at a time.

One-to-One Family Support. Referrals are made either directly from families, via social services or from local schools and charities. This support varies greatly but can include anything from extra help with food parcels to complex family difficulties and associated behaviour problems with the children.

Women's Wellbeing Group supports local women experiencing mental health problems and promotes positive mental health.

Swans is a weekly drop-in for parents/carers and grandparents with children with additional needs (no diagnosis necessary).



Hythe Huddle is a monthly drop-in support group for carers and people living with Dementia.

Memory group is a weekly support group programme which delivers Cognitive Stimulation Therapy. All members have a diagnosis of cognitive impairments and/or specific Dementia conditions.

Our Time is for people who have somebody in their family who is suffering from an addiction. This group meets monthly.

Domestic Abuse Healing Awareness Course This support group runs for 12 weeks and those attending complete “The Freedom Programme.” This has already proved to be a very helpful and needed programme.

The impact of the work of Families Matter has a great effect on the whole family. We employ ten professional part time staff and the support of over 20 volunteers.

A full report will be given at our AGM on 8th July 2026 at 7.00 pm here at Cornerstone. Please come and support us.

Families Matter needs your help with funding or if you can volunteer in any way please talk to Peter Blasby or our manager, Laura Gray.



YOUTH & CHILDREN'S WORK MINISTRY

Oversight, development and encouragement of work with youth and children. To engage children and young people to equip them with a knowledge and love of Jesus Christ leading to a life-long commitment to follow him.

Leader and contact details:

Dave Symmonds E-mail: youthclub@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk

Again this year Jesus' love has been shared and lots of fun activities have happened across the various children and youth groups at Cornerstone. Please see the following individual reports for more details. I would like to take this opportunity to say a very big thank you to all the leaders and helpers of these groups for their dedication and faithfulness in all they do.

YOUTH CLUB

The club is for 11-18 year olds and is open to all youth in the area. Numbers are very varied - some weeks we have had 15 young people another week it could be four, so planning can be a little complicated. However many young people come we always have fun.

We try to keep the programme very varied to appeal to all. Cooking is probably the most popular. We have made pancakes and tossed them (some not quite making it back to the frying pan!!), French bread Pizzas (Dave is the pizza expert now!!) and Ice cream Sundaes (messes). The boys particularly like cricket, which is a bit confined in the hall and we play with a soft ball, but nevertheless they still enjoy themselves.

While special activities are going on we still have snooker, table tennis and badminton available and recently we have also had a craft table for those who like to sit, and chat whilst using their hands. The young people appreciate having space to chat, so we will often find groups in corners sat on the floor nattering, so much better than being on their mobile phones.

We try and have an outing once or twice a year. In the Autumn this year we went bowling in Southampton, with ten of our young people.

They could not beat Richard - they tried but even with bumpers up they did not manage it!

In the summer we braved one meeting in Jones Lane recreation ground and played rounders. It was not the hottest of days so they were happy to keep running around and it was great to be able to hit the ball hard (that's if the ball actually made contact with the bat!). They could not resist the play equipment. A good evening which we will definitely repeat. In the summer, a session of water games is a must, water balloons are a great source of amusement.

We ended the year with a Christmas party, playing a few games and icing chocolate logs. The Hokey-Cokey never fails to make a great ending to any party.

A very big thank you to all the helpers, Dave who leads the group so ably, Naomi, Richard, Angela, Bev, Ian and Robert who give up their Friday evenings to help and encourage the young people in our care. We were very sorry to lose Angela during the year when she moved out of the area. We greatly miss her calmness, support and pastoral care for the youth and the leaders.

We try to share God's love in the way we care for and interact with the young people so that they feel that it is a really safe and happy place to be. Please keep the leaders in your prayers that they may all continue to find the strength and enthusiasm to take the group forward and encourage more young people to come along.

Bev Hall (on behalf of Dave Symmonds)



YOUTH CLUB
Summary of Accounts for 2025

Income	£	Expenditure	£	Change
Subscriptions	415.00	Equipment	84.52	
Tuck sales	21.40	Tuck costs	22.91	
Activities	0.00	Activity costs	241.81	
Donations	0.00	Misc	0	
Total	436.40	Total	349.24	87.16

Funds

Balance at 01.01.25		Balance at 31.12.25		
Bank account	642.26	Bank account	555.58	
Cash	54.68	Cash	228.52	
	696.94		784.10	87.16
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
	1,133.34		1,133.34	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	

Accounts prepared by Richard Hall



YOUTH BIBLE GROUP

The Youth Bible Group operates on alternate weeks with Youth Club, but to keep them on their toes it starts at 7.00pm instead of 7.30pm. Time just disappears during the evening, so we needed that extra half hour. Usually there are around 4-8 young people; sadly we have lost a couple of our faithful just recently as they have turned 18 and found themselves paid work.

Young people really love discussing the many questions they have about what it means to be a Christian and following Jesus. The year started with discussing topics they had chosen including: 'science and religion', which Kevin Thatcher helped them understand, 'baptism' - it was wonderful to witness Liam's baptism in the summer - 'the creation', 'righteous anger' and 'other faiths'.

We then did the Bible Project, just like the homegroups. They found this interesting though needed a few more discussion sessions to explore what had been said. They certainly were much more knowledgeable as to where to find certain books in the bible when it was finished, and it helped to put things into context.

When asked what they thought of bible study, they replied: "We want it more often", "It is a space where we can be honest and not feel judged, where people listen", "It's helping our understanding" "We need more worship and prayer time." It is wonderful to work with a group who are so keen to learn and grow in their understanding. This can be quite a challenge to the leaders. A very big thank you to Dave who arranges the evenings and very calmly discusses their questions and looks at possible answers. Also, a big thank you to Naomi, who has been a great asset to the group. It meant we could cope when Angela moved away. Thanks to Angela for all she contributed to the group, she is much missed.

It is not all study during the evening, they do love their hot chocolate with squirty cream and marshmallows when they arrive, and they eat enough crisps, biscuits and cake to feed an army. Then if we have time at the end of the evening we have a game; this used to be Uno but has lately become a bit more varied, one being Mafia, which became their version of 'Traitors'. It is a real privilege to work with this group - they inspire us as leaders and keep us on our toes. It is wonderful to see them growing in their faith and how God is working in their lives as they take a very valuable part in the life of our church.

Bev Hall (On behalf of Dave Symmonds)

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE A² TEAM

This past year has been a really positive one at church with our young people. We've seen strong engagement, thoughtful discussions, and a growing sense of community as they've built friendships and explored their faith together.

Our goal for 2025 was to ensure that we engaged the young people with our services and supported them in their journey of faith. One of the main changes we implemented to achieve this was introducing the A² service which was aimed at including all ages in every aspect of the service planning and delivery.

The young people have taken on many roles throughout these services, including writing and reading the prayers, picking the music and taking the roaming mic around during open prayer.

Bobby has taken on a larger role in the services, by leading them, and more recently, delivering the Message, which Ray has been mentoring him through.

The Drama Llamas have performed a few scenes this past year, with many of the young people focusing on other roles in the service as well, delivering some good monologues, duologues and small group scenes. We've ended up with a mix of Drama Llama sketches and funny activities as our setting the scene in our A² services, which have helped to make each service feel just that bit different.

Another way our young people are engaging with the church and participating in services is through our new church choir (name as yet undecided). It was at the suggestion of a couple of our young people that a choir was started up just before Christmas, with Leander taking the lead on sourcing music and leading rehearsals. Though they have small numbers at the moment, they are an enthusiastic group, who are continuing to meet every other week on a Friday, and hope to be able to perform in more services in the future.

In our regular Sunday School sessions in Lightyears, we have 12 young people, all secondary school age, who come along fairly regularly, with a group of about 4-6 who come along almost every week. We can have anything from 1 to 12 turn up on any Sunday. In these sessions we have looked at various bible readings, some following along with what is being preached in the service, and some based on topics or readings the young people are interested in. Near the end of 2025 some of our

young people even planned and delivered bible studies on a Sunday morning. They are a smart, inquisitive group who often come up with questions that put the leaders' biblical and philosophical knowledge to the test! The sessions have a very informal feel, helping our young people feel comfortable and meaning they aren't afraid to ask difficult questions. Through these sessions I believe our young people have developed a real trust in each other. They are able to talk openly to each other and to the leaders, and support each other in their faith. Their enthusiasm, honesty, and willingness to get involved has been encouraging.

We made the decision this year to no longer plan a session for primary aged children in Lightyears, unless we have prior knowledge that a younger child will be there, as we have limited resources in terms of leaders and so infrequently have children from this age group. We have, however, occasionally welcomed visiting children, including crèche and primary school age. While they're not present every week, it's been lovely to have them join us at times, reminding us of the importance of being a welcoming, all-ages church family.

Heading into next year, we're planning to ensure we support our young people with their faith as they transition to adulthood and continue to involve them in all aspects of church life. One way we are trying to help them feel more connected to the main services is by following along with whatever is being preached in the main service in bible study, as requested by our young people.

The choir is hoping to grow its membership and grow in fellowship, and we are hoping to grow the team for our A² services and encourage more people to contribute and get involved, utilising as many people's gifts as possible.

Thank you to all the leaders and helpers who give their time, energy, and hearts to lead and support our children and young people on Sunday mornings. Their commitment, patience, and care make such a difference - not just week to week, but in shaping faith, confidence, and a sense of belonging.

Naomi Thatcher



TODDLER GROUP

We continue to meet on Wednesday mornings during term time. The children enjoy playing with the toys, doing puzzles, playdoh and sticker pictures while the parents/carers relax and chat.

We end the morning with a time of singing. Hot and cold drinks and biscuits are available for everyone.

Our average weekly attendance is 11 family groups with 18 children. In July, before the summer break, we had a "bring and share" lunch and at Christmas we had a "bring your own" lunch when all the children received a chocolate Santa. At the end of the year £350 was donated to the Building Fund.

My thanks to our staff for their continued support. Looking forward we will continue to provide a friendly and caring meeting place for all our families.

Gill Tabenor

TODDLER GROUP ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 31/12/2025			
INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
Subscriptions	576.70	Gifts	131.50
		Equipment	0.00
		Donations	350.00
Total	576.70	Total	481.50
Balance at 01.01.25		Balance at 31.12.25	
Bank account	46.25	Bank account	169.45
Cash	28.00	Cash	
	74.25		169.45
	<u>650.95</u>		<u>650.95</u>
Accounts prepared by Peter Blasby			

BOYS' BRIGADE



All our weekly activities in the first part of the year have been reported in the monthly newsletter. In May the Company Section boys held a cake and bric a brac sale in aid of Families Matter. £446.70 which also included the monies the boys raised during Lent was presented to Peter Blasby on behalf of Families Matter.

Sadly before the summer break, due to few members, it was decided to close the Company after 62 years. On 1st September, our last meeting, we had our Awards Presentation Evening with boys, their parents and invited guests attending. I feel very privileged to have been a Boys' Brigade officer for 52 years and wish the boys well in their future.

I thank the Church for the generous gift presented to me at the Nativity service in December. Rachel and I look forward to using it in February.

Gill Tabenor

1st HYTHE BOYS' BRIGADE FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31.12.25

RECEIPTS	£	EXPENDITURE	£
SUBS	178.00	HQ	
TUCK	1.00	TUCK	4.98
		BADGES & PRIZES	75.10
		TRANSFER TO HURC	945.49
		EQUIPMENT	39.75
Total Income	179.00	Total expenditure	1,065.32
Balances at 01.01.25		Balances at 31.12.25	
Bank	830.13	Bank	0.00
Cash	56.19	Cash	0.00
	1,065.32		1,065.32

ACCOUNT CLOSED

Accounts prepared by Mrs Joan Shewry



GOD IS WORKING HIS PURPOSE OUT,

As year succeeds to year,
God is working His purpose out,
And the time is drawing near,
Nearer and nearer draws the time,
The time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled
With the glory of God,
As the waters cover the sea.

From utmost East to utmost West,
Where'er man's foot hath trod,
By the mouth of many messengers
Goes forth the voice of God;
Give ear to Me, ye continents,
Ye isles, give ear to Me,
That the earth may be filled
With the glory of God,
As the waters cover the sea.

March we forth in the strength of God
With the banner of Christ unfurled,
That the light of the glorious gospel of truth
May shine throughout the world:
Fight we the fight with sorrow and sin,
To set their captives free,
That the earth may be filled
With the glory of God,
As the waters cover the sea.

All we can do is nothing worth,
Unless God blesses the deed;
Vainly we hope for the harvest-tide
Till God gives life to the seed;
Yet nearer and nearer draws the time,
The time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled
With the glory of God,
As the waters cover the sea.