

Witnesham Baptist Church Report for Annual Parish Council 2017.

There are some who ask the question 'What is the purpose of the Church?' I guess it is at least two fold; for those with faith in Christ Jesus, church is the place where we gather to worship the Lord and to learn how to live in step with Him. The second purpose is to be a beacon of light where people can come to have a sense of community and experience the presence of God whether they have faith or not or even be seeking that presence. We would like to be known as a church for the community. Thus we have the strap line on our notice board and publications; **Where People....Meet People....Meet God.**

Throughout this year whilst a number of activities have continued and some have closed others have begun. My hope is that all activities that we undertake are within the will of God and meet these two fold purposes.

Sunday morning services, monthly Wednesday afternoon Prayer meeting and monthly Wednesday afternoon Bible Study have continued over the past year and meet the first purpose although they are completely open for all to attend to hear about Jesus. Our Open House on a Tuesday evening is a venue for informal discussion on topical issues, to air our views and to understand those views and issues from a Biblical/God perspective. New in this past year has been the Sunday morning (9:30am) Family Time Together where mums, dads and children can come to have an interactive craft activity, hear a Bible Story and have a song. At present three families come regularly but there is space for more. This time has been a real encouragement to our church fellowship. Another encouragement is in January this year a lady from the village expressed her faith and trust in Jesus through being Baptised. We practice Believers Baptism by total immersion. Three people from within the local community have also become church members.

Meeting the second purpose our premises continues to host the Post Office on a Tuesday afternoon and Thursday morning. Alongside the Post Office on Tuesdays the Café continues to offer people the opportunity for a cup of tea or coffee, cake or biscuit and chat.

From within the fellowship we visit Witnesham and Otley Schools fortnightly with Open the Book; Bible story telling through acting. Last summer term we were also able to hold a Prayer Space in Witnesham School so that pupils could have time to be thoughtful about all the things they experience in school and life in general.

Three times a year St Mary's Church join with us to do Messy Church alternatively at the Baptist Chapel and Village Hall, where around seventy people of all ages gather to enjoy crafts, story and songs from the Bible.

Pastor Andrew