

The United Church Dorchester

Annual Report

January to December 2019

Charity registration number:1137996

Location: 49-51, Charles Street, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1EE

1. The Charity: its constitution, organisational structure and governance.

1.1. Overview

1.1.1. The United Church Dorchester was formed in 1978 by the coming together of the former South Street Methodist and South Street United Reformed congregations as a formal Local Ecumenical Partnership under the sponsorship of “Churches Together in Dorset”, the county ecumenical forum. It originally received its charity status indirectly as a result of its membership of both the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, themselves both independent charitable bodies. However, following changes to Charity Law, the United Church Dorchester adopted its own written constitution and registered with the Charity Commission in 2010 as a charitable unincorporated body. (Registered Charity Number: 1137996).

1.2. The Purpose of the Charity

1.2.1. The purpose of the Charity is to advance the Christian faith in Dorchester and its surroundings in accordance with the principles and practices of the Methodist and United Reformed churches

1.2.2. To achieve its purpose, the Charity will engage in a range of activities, either on its own or with others, including (but not restricted to):

- a. the celebration of public worship;
- b. the teaching of the Christian faith.
- c. mission and evangelism;
- d. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved;
- e. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs; and
- f. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas.
- g. maintaining the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

1.3. Membership

1.3.1. Membership of the United Church Dorchester is open to anyone who formally accepts the Faith and Practices of the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church with regard to Baptism and Reception into Membership. Our current membership is 193. During the year, 10 people were welcomed into the Church (9 through transferred membership and 1 by confession of faith), 5 members died and 7 moved away. 4 people left but did not transfer. Another 113 people are regular worshippers but have not chosen to be members.

1.4. The Council of Stewards and Organisational Structure

1.4.1. The Council of Stewards is the trustee body of the church. This group constitutes the legally responsible body of the charity. Trustees, called Stewards, are elected, from the membership by church members at the Annual General Meeting. A Steward is appointed for an initial period of three years; the period of office can be extended by a further year

after which time the steward must stand down for at least one year before being eligible for re-election. The Ministers are ex-officio members of the Council. We are currently drafting policies for the induction and training of trustees. Our current procedure is to give every new trustee a bound folder containing information on our constitution, the role of a trustee and the management structure of the organisation.

- 1.4.2. The Council of Stewards meets approximately every month. The chair of the Council, the Senior Steward, is elected from within the Council, along with the treasurer and secretary. (Currently the Treasurer's position is confirmed annually by a 75% agreement at the AGM since he has served longer than the standard 4 year term) The Council of Stewards (i.e. the Trustees) is responsible for administering and managing the Church in support of its Vision. It supports and advises the Ministers in promoting the whole mission of the United Church and the wider Church in its teaching of the Christian faith and in its pastoral, evangelistic, social, ecumenical and charitable work. The Council is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the United Church buildings, owned by the United Reformed Church, at numbers 49 and 51 Charles Street, Dorchester.
- 1.4.3. The Church meeting, which can advise the Stewards' Council, meets at least 4 times a year. Much of the day-to-day management of the church is delegated to nine major committees (Worship; Pastoral and Fellowship; Youth and Family; Community Service, Home and World Mission; Finance; Property; Lettings; Outreach; and Administration) and their constituent subgroups, which report regularly to the Stewards' Council, and to Church Meetings. The sub-committees have delegated authority to make routine decisions related to their remit and may have a budget allocated to such ends. Decisions requiring extra funding for any items outside the usual scope of the committee are referred to the Stewards who may decide to seek advice from the church meeting. The Ministers, Senior Steward and Secretary meet regularly to review needs, progress plans and co-ordinate future date planning.
- 1.4.4. The Council of Stewards (Trustees) who served during 2019 comprised:

Our Ministers:

- Revd Stephanie Jenner (unavailable for work during 2019, and stepped down as minister at the end of the year)
- Revd Peter Clark

Stewards who stood down at the AGM in April 2019:

- Roni Boyden
- John Saunders

Stewards who resigned in 2019: none

Stewards who served all year (Management Sub-committee membership shown in brackets)

- John Parson (2018) – Senior Steward & Chair of the Council of Stewards (Admin)
- Mary Martin (2017) – (Community Service, Home & World Mission)
- John Hilton (2017) – Church Secretary (Worship, Lettings)

- Gillian Daniel (2017) – (Pastoral)
- Colin Gannaway (2004) - Treasurer (Finance, Lettings)
- Paul Smith (2018) (Property)
- Maria Jacobson (2018) (Youth & Family)
- Janice Young (2018) (Outreach for part of year)

Stewards appointed April 2019

- Diana Leeming (Finance)
- Debs Brazier, our Outreach worker, was co-opted as a steward following her appointment in June 2019. (Outreach)

Observer

- Sue Bird (representing the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit)

Stewards co-opted in 2019: none

1.5. Staff members

- Joint Minister: Vacant. Revd John Yarrien has been appointed subject to approval by Methodist Conference and is due to start in September 2020.
- Joint Minister: Revd Peter Clark, approximately 50%
- Temporary minister: Revd Sally Spencer - part time from February - July 2019
- Administrative Assistant: Mrs June Faulkner - 10 hours per week (off sick during 2019 and resigned in November 2019)
- Pastoral Visitor: Mrs Angela Fisher 5 hrs per week (employed by the Circuit)
- Youth and Family Worker: Mr Peter Jenner – part time (employed by the Circuit)
- Outreach Worker: Mrs Debs Brazier 15 hrs per week (employed by the Circuit from June 2019.)
- Clerical Co-ordinator: Mrs Di Lawrence 5 hrs per week (employed by the Circuit from June 2019)

1.6. Senior Volunteer Managers:

1.6.1. Although we have paid members of staff, the church is mainly managed by volunteers. Key post holders include:

- Senior Steward – John Parson
- Secretary – John Hilton
- Treasurer – Colin Gannaway
- Pastoral Care – Wendy Hilton
- Youth and Family – Peter Jenner
- Property - Paul Smith
- Lettings – John Hilton
- Coffee Shop Manager -Shirley Hood

- Church Shop Manager – Margaret Knighton
- Worship Secretary – Linda Gundry

1.7. Relationships with Related parties:

- 1.7.1. The United Church Dorchester and the Bridport United Church are in the same, new, Dorset South and West Methodist circuit and are combined into a joint pastorate by the URC. As a result the Rev Stephanie Jenner (a Methodist minister based in Dorchester) and the Rev Peter Clark (a URC minister based in Bridport) were joint ministers of the two churches. Rev Jenner would have spent nominally 70% of her time in work for the United Church Dorchester and Rev Clark nominally 30%. Because the Revd Jenner was not available for work during 2019, and retired through ill-health at the end of the year, the United Reformed Church Wessex Synod and the members of the United Church Bridport kindly agreed that Rev Clark would spend 50% of his time working for the United Church Dorchester until a new minister was appointed. The Revd John Yarrien was appointed as minister and Circuit Superintendent at the end of the year, and will take up his post in September 2020.
- 1.7.2. The United Church Dorchester retains its links to both parent bodies through the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church and the Southampton District of the Methodist Church. It is also an active member of Dorchester Churches Together and seeks to work closely with other churches in the community.
- 1.7.3. The Southampton Methodist District, of which the Circuit is a part, will say farewell to its Chair, Revd Andrew Wood, early in 2020 when he moves on to a Connexional post. He will be succeeded by Revd Andrew De Ville (who was the Superintendent of East Solent and Downs Circuit).

1.8. Governance issues

- 1.8.1. This year, much of the time of the Stewards' Council was taken up reorganising work to cover both the absence of the Rev Jenner, and the absence of the administrative assistant. The Circuit supported the Stewards by providing funding for a 5-hour per week clerical co-ordinator post, and this allowed for the risk register to be completed, risk assessments to be undertaken, policies to be reviewed. and the continued introduction of GDPR
- 1.8.2. The stewards were also able to work with church members to continue to develop the strategic vision for UCD for the medium term.

2. Public Benefit Statement, Achievements and Performance

2.1. Our Objective

2.1.1. When planning our activities for the year, the Ministers and the Stewards' Council have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion and our vision for the wider church. Our main objective is to try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our church community through:

- a. the celebration of public worship;
- b. the teaching of the Christian faith;
- c. mission and evangelism;
- d. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved;
- e. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs;
- f. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas;
- g. the maintenance of the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

2.2. The celebration of public worship

2.2.1. As a Christian Community, the United Church welcomes everyone because God loves all people. We value our diversity. Whatever our age, background, culture, gender or race, we each have something special to share with others and the Stewards' Council is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our church. The Stewards' Council maintains an over-view of our worship and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within Dorchester and its surroundings. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

2.2.2. The Church provides a variety of worship styles at different times throughout the week.

2.2.3. Over the year, the 10.30am Sunday morning services have been led by our Ministers, (incumbent or retired) and accredited lay preachers. The typical weekly congregation is about 117 worshippers. The format for Sunday mornings is flexible with a mixture of traditional and modern hymns and songs. Hymns and worship songs are led by a variety of singers from the choir and/or the singing group with musical accompaniment from a traditional organ, piano, a music group with woodwind and stringed instruments and/or the brass group. The choir practises weekly to support congregational singing in worship and performs anthems and other items; an informal singing group offers the opportunity for anyone to learn new worship material. There is always the opportunity for children and young people to take part in worship both with the adult congregation and in their own Junior Church worship. The sacrament of communion is included in one 10.30 service a month, usually the first Sunday.

- 2.2.4. Sunday evenings tend to follow a more traditional format with a smaller, but faithful congregation of between 20 and 30 worshippers. However during the year it can include a variety of forms of worship, such as: reflective (Taize) style, Celtic style, traditional healing and wholeness and songs of praise. Irrespective of the form of worship a service of communion is included in one service a month, usually the third Sunday.
- 2.2.5. On the second Sunday in the month, an early morning communion service is held at 9.00am. Attendance is usually between 10 and 15.
- 2.2.6. A short, twenty minute service is held on Wednesday morning to coincide with the town's Market Day and is accompanied with refreshments and stalls in the Hall. Typically about 30 people attend the service and, although most are regular Church goers (though not necessarily from the United Church), a few, who would see themselves as non-church goers, regularly attend.
- 2.2.7. During the year, three of our lay members: Penny Fennell, Ruth Archer & Mary Lucraft, were authorised by the United Reformed Church to officiate at services of Holy Communion. This has proved to be extremely helpful, given our current shortage of authorised ministers in the circuit. They regularly lead communion at the monthly 9am service, at the evening 6.30 service and at several of the local care homes.
- 2.2.8. As well as continuing to offer our regular services during the main festive periods at Easter and Christmas, we have additional, special services and activities during these celebrations. We also offer, jointly with other churches in the town, a number of ecumenical services during the week of prayer for Christian Unity, Bible Sunday, Remembrance Sunday, (Women's) World Day of Prayer and others.
- 2.2.9. Over the Christmas period, we offered a variety of services: a Christingle Service for the very young and young at heart; a Quiet Christmas service for those who could not cope with a loud and busy service, such as those suffering from Dementia and those going through bereavement; a carol service; midnight communion on Christmas Eve and a short, Christmas morning service. Collections from these services raised a total of £708, which was divided equally between the two charities Christian Aid and Action for Children.
- 2.2.10. Two church groups meet regularly for reflective prayer and meditation.
- 2.2.11. One baptism was performed this year.

2.3. Teaching of the Christian faith

- 2.3.1. The Church has four house groups that meet regularly to explore the Word as expressed in the Bible, through discussion and conversation.
- 2.3.2. A key objective of our Junior Church is to educate our young people in the basis of our Faith. Numbers are now very small (0 -5). Most Sunday mornings they share in part of the main service before leaving for their own sessions. There is also a small play area at the back of the main church for any family with young children to use if they don't want to come out when other children leave.

2.3.3. During the year the UCD has been working to redefine our vision of what we should be doing to improve its evangelism over the coming years. Three workshops have been held, led by Mark (t) Tizzard (Methodist) and Ruth White (URC). The first focussed on putting our planning into context, particularly how non-church goers might see our church; the second concentrated on young people and the third on what we do well and what we need to improve to bring more people to an active faith. Work is still continuing to draw these ideas into a longer term plan of action but some steps have been made. Led by Rev Spencer, a small group re-modelled the South street foyer to make it more welcoming to non-church goers; The Junior church was encouraged to continue with ideas like Forest Praise - a new initiative where young people have activities and bible teaching outside, connecting with nature and worshipping God. Thirdly we recognised that, as a church, we are good at bringing people into the church but poor at developing their faith.

2.4. Mission and evangelism

- 2.4.1. The Dorset County Show attracts between 55,000 and 60,000 people over a weekend in September. For the last six years, UCD has hired a space to provide baby changing and feeding facilities, games and craft activities. A similar facility is provided in church on the run-up to Christmas, offering an 'Open Door' into South Street for a few hours each day to anyone in the town wanting a respite from commercial activity, with facilities to feed and change babies whilst other children in the family play with toys or do a craft activity.
- 2.4.2. During December, we repeated 'Journey to the Stable' (J2tS); a short journey explaining the true meaning of Christmas, for the tenth time. Over a few days, 230 school children from five local schools visited, along with 30 adults. In the following days 80 members of the public visited. In another initiative, many people from inside and outside the church had been taking part in our Knitted Christmas Angel project organised and promoted by the church's AfC committee. This year, over 600 small angels were knitted and prayer cards attached. The angels were then given out during Journey to the Stable and AfC Carol Singing, and were very well received. The events planned for the Christmas period were widely publicised in various ways, including giving out information cards at "Cracker" night, during services and on the first day of public opening of J2tS.
- 2.4.3. The annual Christingle service, held on Christmas Eve, was led by Mrs Karen Whiter. It was extremely well attended and many of the congregation were not regular worshippers at UCD.
- 2.4.4. This year in Holy Week we again staged the interactive Journey to the Empty Tomb. This consisted of seven stations, each highlighting an element in the passion of Christ, ending with the final station, staged in the empty tomb. It was well received and encouraged members of UCD and many visitors to reflect on the events of Easter. The Good Friday Walk of Witness commenced with a short service at St Peters, and concluded with a short service followed by refreshments at Dorchester Baptist Church. All these celebrations culminated in a dawn service on Easter day at Maumbury Rings, a notorious spot in days gone by for executions which is just on the edge of town, and which was attended by people from different churches in Dorchester.

- 2.4.5. Breakfast was supplied afterwards back at the church Hall before the celebration of a family service for Easter.
- 2.4.6. In the carnival atmosphere of the town's Christmas lights switch on (Christmas Cracker) we provided refreshments and mince pies. Music was provided by the church choir and the United Brass, an interdenominational brass group operating from our church. This brought many people of all ages into the church and they stayed to sing Carols and Christmas songs. A voluntary collection raised £128.28 which was donated to Dorchester Poverty Action.
- 2.4.7. The 'Story-Tots' group, run by a team of dedicated volunteers, meets once a week during term time. It continues to welcome babies and pre-school children and their carers who share a time of play together. Currently there is a regular group of at least ten carers/parents and often it is more.
- 2.4.8. About four years ago, our Outreach Group initiated a Retail Chaplaincy in the town. This mission has grown and now visits nearly 200 outlets on a weekly basis. Visits are not just to shops but to any businesses found in the centre of town e.g. cafes, estate agents, cinema, solicitors etc. In addition they visit the Town Council Offices and the County Show and some of our own, UCD, Chaplains are present at the Market Day coffee morning.
- 2.4.9. In addition they visit the Town Council and the County Show and some of our own, UCD, Chaplains are present at the Market Day coffee morning. Chris Warren has finished five years as Fire Chaplain to the local Fire Service and Roger Frapwell Pastor of the Community Church, is due to take over very soon.
- 2.4.10. We are always looking for new Chaplains and a training day is fixed for March at our church with, at present, four participants.
- 2.4.11. The membership of the Chaplaincy team has spread across churches in Dorchester and responsibility has now been transferred to a Chaplaincy Management Group operating under the auspices of Churches Together in Dorchester.
- 2.4.12. The Church's window onto South Street, continues to show to passers-by something of the life and concerns of the Church with a frequently changing display. Posters have been put up in many rooms as discussion starters.
- 2.4.13. The Junior Leaders and Youth and Family committee's Forest Praise initiative has been very successful this year. We have held seven events at the Sure Start Children's Centre in Poundbury. Everything is outdoor and consists of various activities, a short act of worship and refreshments. Numbers have varied over the year between 15 and 35 and we do get help from some of our Congregation.

2.5. Pastoral work

- 2.5.1. Our Ministers offer 24/7 care for spiritual and emotional needs, Rev. Peter Clark (United Reformed Church Minister) from the Bridport Pastorate, offers 50% of his time. The gap by Rev Steph Jenner's absence was filled by the pastoral visiting team, including our Lay Pastoral Visitor, Angela Fisher, and a newly appointed Outreach worker Debs Brazier. Both are employed by the Circuit, on behalf of the United Church.

- 2.5.2. The United Church maintains a system by which all members and adherents are assigned to a pastoral visitor, who tries to keep in touch with them and appreciate their concerns. The visitors themselves are grouped under a number of coordinators, who look after the visitors' pastoral welfare. Training for pastoral visitors this year has included a discussion on pastoral visiting led by Rev Sally Spencer and an open meeting on SCAMS with speakers from the Dorchester Community Police. The latter was very well attended by many people who attend activities at the church, but are not members.
- 2.5.3. The welcome pack which is given to all new members was updated. All outstanding GDPR consent forms were collected during the year and all new members were encouraged to complete the form.
- 2.5.4. A Death Cafe held in the spring was well attended and both the stall holders and those who came found it very useful. The Quiet Christmas service with refreshments, was led by the pastoral committee.
- 2.5.5. As part of our pastoral support to the local community we provide comfort and support to the bereaved. Ministers were involved in funerals throughout the year, not all for Church members. Monthly communion services continue to be held at two residential homes and one sheltered housing complex and, through our Pastoral Visitor and Ministers, we hold occasional services at three other locations in the town.
- 2.5.6. Another component of our pastoral care is the "Prayer Chain" where those in need, are remembered in prayer by a number of Church members, including those who are housebound. The Tuesday prayer group also keeps a confidential list of people for whom prayer has been requested.
- 2.5.7. The Coffee Shop continues to be a hub of social activity, offering a listening ear and a friendly welcome to all. It opens up to four days a week and is manned by church volunteers and others from different walks of life. It now has a regular clientele, some of whom are either physically or mentally frail. They are well known to the staff and use the facilities as a place to come and feel at home. In addition to providing pastoral care to its customers the coffee shop also contributed £8,000 to church funds from profits made throughout the year.
- 2.5.8. The Quiet Room and the Church itself are open daily for all to use for quiet prayer and reflection and as a place for quiet conversation.
- 2.5.9. The Solo's Group offers friendship and activities. Once each month, except August throughout 2019 the Solo's group have met. Sessions are usually held on a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm. Activities have included talks on subjects ranging from the history of towns and villages in the area, to overseas visits, Meditation, Mindfulness and many others. Practical cookery sessions have been enjoyed as have visits to Bowleaze Cove, Moreton Walled Gardens and having lunch at various café's in and around Dorchester. Numbers vary between 10 and 25. Church members and friends come regularly but other, occasional attendees, who are interested in a particular topic being presented, have also been welcomed.

2.6. Serving the local community

- 2.6.1. With its central location in the town, the United Church is ideally placed to offer itself as a reasonably priced venue for many events. Among others, the Regional Blood Transfusion Service runs well attended donor sessions regularly on our premises. Our local Alcoholics Anonymous group meets here four times a week finding the lack of alcohol on the premises, a result of our Methodist roots, a positive benefit.
- 2.6.2. A number of local charities receive advantageous rates for the use of rooms. In specific instances accommodation is provided free-of-charge. One such group is the bi-monthly Contact Centre where children can come to meet their non-resident parents, often under potentially confrontational circumstances.
- 2.6.3. Because of the good acoustics in the main church, The Church is used by a number of choirs for rehearsals and occasional concerts.
- 2.6.4. Due to the illness of our Administrator, the lettings function was run during the year by two volunteers. The Wessex Trust of the United Reformed Church owns our buildings and delegates us powers to let rooms under strict conditions set by the URC. The lettings group was formed to make sure that we comply with URC requirements and to assist with some aspects of the lettings process.
- 2.6.5. We let rooms in our building to another Christian denomination, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, allowing others to celebrate public worship in a different way to our own traditions.
- 2.6.6. The Church Shop opens six mornings a week from 10.00am to 12.30pm and is manned by volunteers. It provides a wide range of Christian books, gifts and cards, and fairly traded goods, including food from Traidcraft. The shop window attracts passers-by into the church and customers come from a wide radius around Dorchester. Mrs Margaret Knighton is the shop manager and is assisted by a team of volunteers. The shop contributed around £4,500 to church funds this year. As a Fairtrade Church and eco-congregation, good practice is actively promoted within the Church and more widely in our locality.
- 2.6.7. In June 2019, UCD commenced a once per month lunchtime meal for Homeless People in the Dorchester Area. The project started on a 6-month trial basis, but was so successful that it is now a regular 'outreach' activity of the church. All food costs are covered by church member donations. Numbers attending the lunches have varied between 12 and 18, with a number of "take-aways" being provided for those not wishing to come into the church premises.

2.7. Support of other charities in the UK and overseas

- 2.7.1. The United Church has a continuing commitment to local, national and international charities through members working as volunteers and by donations of goods and money.
- 2.7.2. Locally the Church has supported, amongst others:
 - a. Dorchester Poverty Action, through both direct donations and free use of rooms.

- b. The local food bank, for which the Church continues to be a collection point
 - c. The Dorchester Child Contact Centre, which provides a safe space for children of divided families to meet their non-resident parent for a few hours interaction in a safe and controlled environment. The church offers free accommodation and many of the volunteers are church members.
 - d. Dorchester Alcoholics Anonymous Groups, who appreciated the “dry” status of our buildings and who also receive accommodation at a much reduced rate.
- 2.7.3. We continue to give financial assistance to the Dorchester Support Group for Action for Children (AfC) through a combination of personal giving via home collection boxes and the donation of collections made at services over the Christmas period and the proceeds of a number of events held throughout the year, including country dancing, a garden party, baby changing facilities at the Dorchester Show and carol singing. We were able to raise £3514 for the charity in total during the year.
- 2.7.4. Internationally the Church is committed to relieving poverty and disaster and to funding development through the work of Christian Aid. The main focus of raising funds was through Christian Aid Week, most particularly the annual house-to-house collection and the Christian Aid Week market, an example of ecumenical cooperation, hosted by our Church. Members too volunteered for the street collection at the end of Christian Aid Week which has now become a regular fixture. Our annual carol singing, as well as collections at our Christmas services allowed us to send £822 to Christian Aid. In total, Dorchester churches, including UCD, raised £13,900 for the charity.
- 2.7.5. Lunches were served each Wednesday during the seven weeks of Lent, which raised £1,364 for Christian Aid.
- 2.7.6. Members of the Church have shown great generosity in their contributions both to regular charity collections and in other fund-raising activities. For the past year the church has supported Mission Aviation Fellowship, MAF. People have given generously of their time and money to support this work. MAF works in many countries, flying small planes in terrain that is often barely accessible to other forms of transport. The aircraft come to the aid of medical emergencies, but also transport church personnel. Another major area of their work is to respond to natural and manmade disasters, flying in teams of rescuers, and bringing out casualties. Luc Vandamme, the regional co-ordinator and another MAF colleague have given inspirational talks about their work. So far, the church has raised £3,014.81 for MAF.
- 2.7.7. Church members continue to be heavily involved in lobbying on such matters as climate change and environmental issues through our Christian green group and the Churches Together Ecology group. During 2019, we started working with Green Journey, a leading renewable energy procurement consultancy in order to reduce overall energy costs while improving our green credentials and reducing environmental impact.
- 2.7.8. The Church continues to make a tremendous contribution to the fight against injustice and working to bring hope to the poorest and most powerless people in the world. Its contribution to all Christian Aid activities provides an excellent example of commitment to cooperation with many of the other Dorchester churches.

- 2.7.9. The Church contributes to world mission through the World Mission fund of the Methodist Church and Council for World Mission (CWM) in the United Reformed Church.
- 2.7.10. As in previous years charitable donations have been made by the Coffee Shop by contributing from the regular "tips" box. Over £300 was raised this year and donated to the Dorchester Child Contact Centre.
- 2.7.11. The weekly market day stalls and coffee in the Hall have again distributed their proceeds to 17 local and national charities. Many of the Church social groups also made donations towards Church expenses or their preferred charity.

2.8. Maintaining the fabric of the Church building

- 2.8.1. In September 2016, when the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee met at UCD some seven projects at UCD were considered, two being 'future' projects. The first (& only) project to be completed has been the redecoration of the church, in January.
- 2.8.2. A structural engineer surveyed the loft space of No 51 Charles Street and designed a simple structure to permit the removal of the cross beams to improve access throughout the loft. Details of the design were received in January and a quotation for the work (£5,900) was received in October.
- 2.8.3. Some more progress has been made on the repairs of the church spire. The Building Surveyor used by the church suggested where we might obtain another list of contractors, this has yet to materialise. When we find a contractor, our Structural Engineer will oversee the work.
- 2.8.4. Quotations were invited for the refurbishment of the main toilets, after a meeting at the church and the exchange of many emails, one quotation has been obtained.
- 2.8.5. Members of Property committee contribute a huge amount to the maintaining of the church premises. Ray Harris often assists in practical ways and Margaret Knighton works tirelessly organising the disorganised, like keys and door numbers!
- 2.8.6. During the year, the sanctuary was redecorated; a new Sound System and a new TV system for PowerPoint presentations were installed

3. Ecumenical Relationships

3.1. Local Relationships

- 3.1.1. The United Church Dorchester has good working relationships with other Christian churches in the town. We are a member of Churches Together, which amended its constitution during 2019, and take part in a number of joint church initiatives in the town. Four churches joined Churches Together in the year: Dorchester Baptist Church, Storehouse Church, the Family Church and the Community Church.

3.1.2. This year the Church participated in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and we celebrated the Good Friday Walk of Witness, beginning at St Peter's and ending at Dorchester Baptist with a service followed by hospitality. Other denominations joined us at Churches Together's "Sonrise" service on Easter Sunday. We continue to seek ways to work with other churches in the town.

3.2. Wider Relationships

3.2.1. Members of the UCD Christian Aid committee were not able to attend the 'Climate Change' event in London on 26 June. However a delegation from the local committee with a number of other supporters presented a petition at HSBC in South Street in March as part of the national 'Big Shift' campaign: an attempt to persuade the Bank to stop investing in fossil fuels.

4. Staffing and Other Issues

4.1. Employed Staff

- 4.1.1. The absence of our Dorchester based minister, the Revd Stephanie Jenner, who was unable to work for much of the year, continued to impact upon this church and the Circuit. She was temporarily replaced as Superintendent by the Revd Gwyneth Owen, the superintendent of the Christchurch and Wimborne circuit and deputy chair of the Southampton Methodist District. She has given generously of her time to UCD, filling in, as time allowed, in the planning of worship, in pastoral activity and, particularly in supporting the senior management team. The Revd Jenner retired due to ill health at the end of 2019, and UCD hosted a special 'Farewell' service, on behalf of the Circuit, to thank her for her years of ministry and to say goodbye. At the end of the year, the Revd John Yarren was appointed to the circuit as minister and Superintendent. He will take up his post during 2020.
- 4.1.2. Our URC Minister, Revd Peter Clark, continues to give about 50% of his time to United Church Dorchester, leading worship, sharing leadership of one of our Fellowship groups and serving on the Council of Stewards. He also comes regularly to our Coffee Shop and makes himself available to church members and visitors alike.
- 4.1.3. In order to help UCD manage during the year when we only had Revd Peter Clark as our minister, the circuit generously funded two part-time posts: the Revd Sally Spencer and Mrs Debs Brazier. Sally offered, nominally, one day per week from February - July 2019, although she generally gave much more time. She has the knack of knowing where to put her effort to get the best return and was extremely enthusiastic, supportive and positive about all we are trying to do. She has now moved on to a new ministry in Bristol with a group of churches based around Totterdown. Mrs Debs Brazier, was appointed as outreach worker for 15 hrs per week from June 2019. As well as carrying out her outreach role she has also supported the minister and leadership teams through active involvement in worship and planning meetings and has worked well beyond her contracted hours.

- 4.1.4. United Church Dorchester is part of the Dorset South & West Circuit. During 2019/20, Revd Gwyneth Owen has been the acting Superintendent Minister. Revd John Yarren will join the Circuit staff in September 2020 as Superintendent. At the same time, the Weymouth/Portland area will also welcome a new minister, Revd Ruth Lownsborough. Under the leadership of Revd Owen, the Circuit has continued to build on the 'mixed economy' of ministry. For Dorchester in 2019/20, this has meant continued funding of the Church's pastoral visitor, the appointment of a part-time lay outreach worker and the provision of additional administrative support to the Church. Our pastoral visitor and Outreach Worker continue to work closely with the Ministers and pastoral team.
- 4.1.5. Our Admin officer, Mrs June Faulkner, carried out the routine administration of the lettings of rooms in the church buildings and carries out some administrative duties to assist the Church Secretary. As she was sadly unwell during the whole of 2019, the Circuit funded a five-hour clerical support post to support the Church Secretary (starting in June 2019), and two of the church stewards managed the letting of the rooms. She resigned on ill-health grounds late in 2019, and the lettings administration was transferred to the clerical support officer.
- 4.1.6. Mrs Angela Fisher, our pastoral visitor, works in conjunction with the Pastoral committee and Minister(s) caring, particularly, for our older members of the church and is, generally, the UCD face at several of the local care homes.
- 4.1.7. Mr Peter Jenner was originally employed by the circuit to carry out youth work in the eastern part of the circuit but has, this year, been encouraged to lead a number of important areas youth work at UCD, particularly Forest Praise, Journey to the Stable and Journey to the Empty Tomb, the County Show initiative and also chairs the Youth and Family committee. In the latter role he has been heavily involved in the new UCD Vision initiative.
- 4.1.8. In June of this year, Mrs Di Lawrence joined the team to help the Stewards and Senior Management of the church with clerical work. To date she has been heavily involved in bringing our Policies and Procedures up to date. Latterly her hours have been extended to take over the Letting of rooms in the church.

4.2. Volunteers

- 4.2.1. The majority of the work carried out by and in the United Church is done by volunteers. All aspects of church life require church members and friends to freely give of their time; from pastoral visiting, making sure services run smoothly, fundraising for the charities we support and practical help such as the coffee shop, the church shop or Contact centre. Although we cannot accurately estimate the time given, it must amount to several hundred person hours per week.
- 4.2.2. We continue to benefit greatly from the ministries of retired Ministers and lay leaders of many denominations who are part of our church and circuit.

5. Financial review

5.1. Reserves policy

- 5.1.1. The Church has a Reserves Policy, a requirement of the Charity Commission, to secure the future in case of unexpected or exceptional need.
- 5.1.2. Our reserves are held as unrestricted (freely available) funds which are ring-fenced from our budgeted annual commitments and planned expenditure. The Charity Commission suggests that we consider future planned expenditure, and possible risks and contingencies, including the possibility of a reduction in income of the Church. The Finance Committee has tried to strike a balance by taking the figure recommended by the Charity Commission, which is equivalent to six months' worth of our working capital to be held as reserves. Therefore it is necessary for us to hold an amount of at least 50% of the annual expenditure of the United Church as a sufficient reserve. Currently the general reserve is more than adequate to cover six months expenditure, currently £82k.

5.2. Restricted and Designated funds

- 5.2.1. Restricted funds and endowments, i.e. funds designated for a specific uses, are not included in the reserves:
 - a) The Florence Fare Trust is an endowment; only the interest may be used and must only be spent on Youth and Family work.
 - b) Both interest and capital from the Memorial fund may be used, but only for items used in or work carried out on the sanctuary area of the church. Monies from this fund were used to help pay for the decoration of the church sanctuary, resulting in the emptying and closure of the Memorial Fund.
 - c) An Outreach fund was created to ring-fence money from the Methodist Circuit to be spent on outreach at the United Church.
 - d) Finally a designated fund has been set aside by the Church Meeting to cover the costs of stabilising the church tower, which is in an unsafe condition. Work is still ongoing to find a qualified contractor who is prepared to take on the work.

5.3. Investment Policy

- 5.3.1. It is our policy to invest our fund balances between the Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF), Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London. EC4V 4ET and the Trustees for the Methodist Church Purposes, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester. M1 1JQ.

5.4. Names and addresses of:

Bankers: HSBC 15, Cornhill, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1BJ.
Independent examiner – Mr Denys Hood, (address on application)

5.5. Risk Assessments

- 5.5.1. Risk assessments were undertaken during 2019, and the outcomes fed into the church's risk register, which was developed during the year. The Register was reviewed by stewards in January 2020.

6. Safeguarding

- 6.1. Safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse and children is taken very seriously by the Church Stewards. A new member of the congregation was appointed to act as joint safeguarding officer during the year, and the church also takes the lead in the circuit for safeguarding.
- 6.2. The church has a robust and comprehensive safeguarding policy which is displayed on the noticeboards of the church and on the website alongside the contact details for the two safeguarding officers. It is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. A programme of safeguarding awareness training is delivered regularly to all those in the church who work or volunteer with children and young people, and adults at risk of abuse.
- 6.3. We ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the Prevent Strategy and able to protect children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk of being radicalised. Training must be repeated every three years.
- 6.4. A Safer Recruitment policy is now in operation which requires that staff and volunteers, appointed to particular roles, are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check.