

CTHH Chair's Report 2021-22

Normality is hard to return to for lots of reasons. People have been scared of bigger events or out of the habit of coming out in the evenings, or our churches are putting emphasis on events on their own territory for their own recovery, but we are seeing a return to our former programme of forums and services.

In October 2021 our CTHH Forum continued our vision of inclusion and diversity with a wonderful presentation from 'Through the Roof' with Heidi Buckell and Tim Wood. We were challenged to consider how inclusive of people with different disabilities or churches are, the services, social and also the buildings. Heidi also showed us the wonderful work of 'Chats with Heidi and Karl', a free YouTube resource for primary schools to raise awareness of disability and inclusion. For more information on this resource please email heidibuckell@hotmail.com

We enjoyed two sessions of Carol Singing in December, one in The Marlowes shopping centre, and one outside La Vigna at Adeyfield Free Church. Both of these were returning while people were still anxious about Covid, but it was nice to make a noise.

The World Day of Prayer was a well supported service this year held at Hemel Methodist Church. It was the final service to be organised by Lynn Bassett, and a request was issued for someone else to come forward to head up a coordinating team. The beauty of this is that all the resources are provided for you, and the biggest challenge is to find a venue and readers. Please let us know if you are interested in this role. Email Heather Lewis on secretary@cthh.org.uk. Thank you so much to Lynn's efficient leadership in not only the world day of prayers, but in liaising with the authorities for Carol Singing and The Good Friday Witness events.

We found a Lent Course written by CPAS which covered Ecological Justice (following on from a different resource in 2021 which explored Restorative Justice in the prison system.) The course in 2021 was on Zoom, so it was refreshing to return in person and circulate around member churches. The Lent course led us to the Good Friday witness event and explore the new beginnings we have through the death of Jesus on the Cross. The service revolved around the building of a cross of cages filled with our rubbish as an act of repentance. The Good Friday Witness happened this year in the Old Market Square where churches gathered without an organised walk. There will be a circulated questionnaire about how effective the gathering and location were this year and to ask for views and volunteers to coordinate for next year and beyond.

Our February Forum took place at St Barnabas Church and we learned about the Anna Chaplaincy scheme presented to us by Maggie Dodd. This is a way of churches of different denominations working together to provide spiritual and pastoral care for the elderly in our communities. One of the initiatives in other areas is 'Messy Vintage', similar to Messy Church, but specifically for the older generation. This seemed to spark ideas in those gathered for the Forum.

In May we offered a youth work tool kit night led by Dani, Damon and Lisa from Youth Across Hemel at Hemel Methodist Church. This was jam packed full of ideas to enable the Christian message to be communicated creatively in our churches and secondary schools.

We have been pleased that Pray Hemel have been able to meet together again for prayers on the first Saturday of each month.

We are looking forward to the June AGM hearing particularly about Eco-Churches.

I am tremendously grateful to all of our trustees and for all their expertise they bring. We will miss Chris Jones our treasurer for his contribution to CTHH over the years, including his treasurer skills, Street Pastor connections and for the fantastic rambles he led us on around the Hemel area.

If you would like to be involved with the CTHH team of trustees, please get in touch with us.

Revd Austin Janes, Chair of Churches Together in Hemel Hempstead