



A praying community which wholeheartedly
Loves God
Loves Each Other
Loves Great Yarmouth

ANNUAL REPORT

2017



Park baptist church

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THE LIVING ROOM

Night shelter project comes to Park for one night a week through the winter

The Living Room began last year as the brainchild of a group of town centre church leaders. After running a pilot project for one night per week from January-March, this year it is expanding to include December and run from Fridays-Sundays.

We are excited to be hosting this night shelter for rough sleepers on a Sunday night, and have a team of volunteers signing up to cover one of three shifts each week. Teams from both congregations will be providing a hot meal, with the rest of the evening taken up with a range of activities such as board games, films and craft activities. Choices are made depending upon the interests of the visitors to The Living Room, with last year including a poetry writing workshop and an African drumming class.



Help is also offered to connect with local service providers and with filling in forms. Two of last year's visitors have since successfully been housed, and credit The Living Room with helping them get on their feet.

Earlier in the autumn the project was given charity status, which has developed the opportunities for further funding. We are also in discussions to partner with a local GP practice for them to provide sporadic homeless health clinics throughout the winter.

Last winter's project co-ordinator, Ana, has now moved to Barcelona to complete a Master's degree, so we were very pleased to appoint Jo Morrison to the post in October. Jo is a member of Kingsgate Church and is eager to take the project forward.

We currently have four trained volunteers from Park, but would love for more to get involved. You can volunteer on any night and you don't have to stay overnight. The first shift begins at 6.30pm-12.30am, with lights out at 11pm. The second shift runs through the night from 12.30-6.30am and the final shift is 6-9am, and includes the serving of breakfast and clearing up.

For more information about what it's like to volunteer at The Living Room speak to Nick or Lester, who both helped out last year and found it to be a rewarding experience. They will be joined this year by Peter Chapman and Peter Timothy, but a further training day is being planned if anyone else is interested.

This has been an inspiring outreach project, bringing together Christians from across the churches of Great Yarmouth in order to serve some of the neediest members of our community.

Peter Timothy

CAP DEBT CENTRE

Our flagship outreach work began in January to serve those in unmanageable debt and has steadily grown through the year

What a privilege to go into the homes of members of the local community bringing them the message of hope - hope that they will one day be debt free and hope that Jesus can change their lives.

As Debt Centre manager I am firstly dependent on the prayer team; there are 25 people who have signed up for regular e-mails and others have taken copies of prayer requests left for general use.

We also have a team of nine befrienders; eight from Park and one from Cliff Park in Gorleston who provide a crucial link with our clients. We are going to do another befriender training evening in a local church and one in Lowestoft. I recently attended a ministers' breakfast meeting in Lowestoft and there was a lot of interest. Peter is going to contact some of these churches to see if they will support us by pledging £50 a month. If we can get nine churches on board we will be able to continue the work beyond the forecasted three years.

One of the befrienders and one of the support team came with me to CAP's annual gathering in Harrogate and we were all very much inspired to forge ahead.

By the time you get this report we will have visited 25 families; Eight from Lowestoft, seven from Great Yarmouth, six from Gorleston, two from Caister and one each from Martham and Worlingham. Of these, 10 are on plans to set them free from debt within the next three years.

Eight have attended church or church events, mostly at Park and a further two are interested in going to a church in Lowestoft.

We are excited that our CAP clients are moving forward not just with their debt repayment, but also in their relationship with God. Conversations about Jesus are commonplace when I meet with clients, and we have already seen some fruits with one clients now attending church fairly regularly and several others exploring what it mean to make a commitment to Jesus.

One of the major issues for our clients has been poor mental health; either as a result of debt or as a pre-existing condition. A number of clients also have low educational attainment. This makes it difficult for some to engage with what is needed to help them become debt free, but we have stayed in contact with a number of those who decided CAP wasn't for them, in the hope of building relationships and encouraging them.

The art group (perhaps it should be renamed the drop in!) has proved popular with CAP clients, and is a great opportunity to invite them to something low-key but fun.

We hold a church social on the last Friday of the month, where CAP clients have been invited along with other unchurched families. This has had mixed success, but those who attended have given positive feedback. Recent examples include a treasure hunt in the park, a fish & chips and film night, and a quiz night.

The vision of CAP allies very happily with Park's vision to be 'a praying community which wholeheartedly loves Great Yarmouth' and 'to share God's love with our community' and we look forward to seeing how God develops this in the coming year. **Pat Hillier**

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTERS

New mission activities, prayer teams and discipleship groups are just some of the highlights from 2017 as Peter & Jorge reflect on a year of growing momentum



Looking back at 2017 we can be greatly encouraged by the work God is doing right across the church.

From exciting new mission partnerships to a renewed vigour in prayer meetings and a thriving Portuguese ministry (full report page 4); it's been a busy year for Park!

Hopefully you have experienced something of what feels like a fresh wave in church as fruit begins to develop in different areas.

In mission we have seen the launch of our new CAP Debt Ministry, and as we begin to find our feet and develop relationships with clients we have already seen new people attending church and recently celebrated our first family becoming debt free.

An exciting day spent with evangelist Chris Duffett in August inspired some of us to step out in faith to share God's love with our

community, and this has been a launch pad for further outreach and other new ideas, including the formation of a women's discipleship group 'Soul Sisters'.

Our course on Intercessory Prayer in the Spring was challenging but the subsequent weekly prayer meetings have regularly been places of deep encounter as the Holy Spirit stirs among us. An intercessors team also now meets to pray regularly and a prayer ministry team has been invaluable in offering support after our Sunday services.

The finalisation of our vision and values statements have given us a clear framework and reference point for where we believe God is leading, and we are convinced that with continued prayer, God has great things in store as we move expectantly into 2018.

Peter & Jorge

VISION, PURPOSE & VALUES

Earlier this year we settled on some key statements outlining what kind of a church God has called us to be and where God is leading us. Together they help shape the direction the church takes and the kind of Christian community we are striving to become.

VISION



Our vision outlines *where* we believe God is leading us. Our vision is to be:

A praying community which wholeheartedly

- **Loves God**
- **Loves Each Other**
- **Loves Great Yarmouth**

PURPOSE



Our purpose explains *why* we exist as a church:

- **To express our love for God together**
- **Help each other as a church family to become more like Jesus**
- **Share God's love with our community**

VALUES



Our values outline *who* we believe God is calling us to be. We are committed to making Park Baptist Church a place where:

- **We will always serve God joyfully**
- **We will always put Jesus above ourselves**
- **We will always put people above task**
- **We will always include everyone**
- **We will always speak the truth in love**

ART GROUP

A safe space to meet people and let the creative juices flow...or simply grab a cuppa and relax with a biscuit

The art group was set up nearly two years ago in response to a lady who had severe mental health problems and was using art as therapy.



She belonged at that time to the Tuesday house group and its members suggested meeting weekly at the church café (Chatteteria) to do some colouring. This simple activity proved surprisingly popular and as members of the group matured in their faith they wanted to invite non-Christians and lonely people along and to extend the range of activities.

We now have eight people who attend regularly, including a CAP client who isn't a Christian.

We have welcomed around 20 visitors this year, about half of these are Christians - some from Park, some from other churches in the town.

Just over a dozen of these routinely pop in on a Friday afternoon in addition to our regulars.

The aim of the group is to get alongside each other in a relaxed, Christian setting and to engage in something fun. Colouring, oil-painting, water-colour painting, drawing sewing, knitting, jigsaws, board games and basket making are some of the activities people have chosen to do in the past. Looking ahead, we would like to create a sofa space in the cafe, as lots of people just want to sit down with a cup of tea and have a chat. We provide hot and cold drinks, cake, crisps, biscuits and fruit; people are asked to contribute up to £1 if they can.

So far with the money raised we have been able to buy lots of art supplies and have given the church £30 to cover the winter heating.

If you are skilled in a particular craft and would like to come and lead a beginners session to the group please speak to me.



If you're interested in joining us then you would be most welcome.

Pat Hillier

AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

Teaching children to cook tasty nutritious meals on a budget

In September we began a new after school club for school years 5-8 on a Tuesday afternoon. The aim of the group is to provide some basic life skills to our children that they may not necessarily learn at school or at home, whilst also creating a safe place to share concerns and prayer requests.

We have partnered with Unite East Norfolk Youth For Christ to run the group and are grateful to have both Alison Roberts and Lorraine Lythaby joining us.

For the autumn term we focused on cookery, and were grateful to receive a small grant from Dreams & Visions to subsidise the cost of ingredients.

We have three children from Park attending, plus four unchurched children who were attending a weekly Bible study run by Unite. The primary aim has been to make nutritious meals on a budget of around £1.50 per head. Some of our successes include making from

Each child has a folder where they can put laminated copies of each recipe so they can try it at home. We always thank God for our food before eating and then share prayer requests in our own prayer diary. Recently the group have also worked on developing a



scratch our own healthy chicken nuggets and salad, a stir fry and fresh tagliatelle in a tomato, garlic and basil sauce.

code of conduct and planning a joint meal for their families.

Peter & Claire Timothy

PORTUGUESE REPORT

Jorge reflects on life with the Portuguese congregation as his first anniversary as minister approaches, and looks ahead to what God will bring in 2018

When we arrived in January we had about 20 adults at attendance. Now we are pleased to let you know that we now have an average of 45 adults attending the service. They mostly come from Sao Tome & Principe, but we do have now 7 Portuguese speaking countries represented. They are from: Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guine Bissau, Portugal, Brazil and Sao Tome.

We believe that the reason for this growth is due to our emphasis in evangelism, discipleship and community involvement. We have been trying to teach the church the importance of being a wholistic church, preaching a wholistic gospel. Although we still have a long way to go we can see the Spirit of God leading us in the right direction.

We have been praying to form a and train a group of new leaders to serve in other areas of church life. We believe that God is starting to show us the right people and soon we are going to have a bigger leadership team, at the moment it has been just myself, Mel and Gorete.

Children

One of the areas that needed immediate organisation was the children's work. There was virtually no structure in this department, with children just going out to have a play time. We are very pleased to let you know that, after many months of hard work we were able to structure the children department which is not only play time but a time to listen to bible stories and learn from it. A special thank you to my wife Mel, for that.

The group has grown and we have now about 18 children ranging from 1 to 14 years old divided into two classes. But the good news is that the children's team has also grown and been trained to work with children. We now

have around 10 children's workers and helpers. Denise is working hard to have all of them DBS checked.

It has been wonderful to see our children growing spiritually and the knowledge of God as they remain children.

Community

We have been working to engage the church in the life of the community. For example, we are going to have a team to work in The Living Room night shelter which is going to be excellent in terms of giving people a taste of community life. We have also held a couples' day, open to the community and we had 13 couples attending and a few singles. It was a good way to build bridges with the local community.

Next year we are going to form a community task group to look into the needs of the community in more details and help us to be more pro-active in both fronts, socially and spiritually.

Conclusion

It has been a wonderful year for Mel and myself. It has also been a learning curve for us. We did not plan for our first year to be that busy but God had other plans.

We are also conscious of the challenges we have ahead. We are teaching the church about the importance to be a praying church so we can deal with the spiritual attacks against us. We would like to thank our English-speaking brothers and sisters for the support received. It is important for us that we continue to see each other as part of one family, united in Christ. We are looking forward to 2018 and for ways we can work even closer together as one family that looks beyond cultural or linguistic barriers.

Jorge Damasceno

HOUSE GROUPS

Six house groups currently meet across the town to study the Bible, pray, support one another and develop new friendships. Here's a flavour of what's been happening in each group..

BRADWELL

We always start our group with a meal, which has become a special time of socialising and developing relationships. We are a mixed group, both in age and Christian experience, but as the group develops we are increasingly sharing intimate details about our lives as they relate to the Bible studies.

Edward joined us while he was in the UK and his decision to be baptised in the sea before leaving was a special occasion, following

discussions and we encourage everyone to take part. At the end of each session we pray together, for each other, our church and the issues we've covered. We would like to come together with other house groups at the end of each study to discuss what we've learned and enjoyed, so perhaps this could be done in future.

CAISTER

We started the group about two years ago and currently we're made up of four

and hosted by Denise and Lester.

We often begin our meetings by listening to some music which is often related to the theme of the discussion. We have been inspired by the study materials and have very lively discussions. Getting to the end of the questions is always a bonus! We have all grown deeper in our understanding of scripture and our journey as God's people.

Being part of a smaller group has allowed us to get

to know each other a lot better and feel comfortable in each other's company. We have been able to share good and bad times and are able to offer help and support. We are aiming to spend more time praying together and to also share communion together.

We suggest that anyone who is not part of a house group should consider joining one - it is a wonderful way to share the



BRADWELL HOUSE GROUP

on from Iona and Bex's baptism in 2015.

We all take turns to lead the study and some share hosting duties. Each member contributes to our

couples - so for better or worse you always know someone really well! We meet fortnightly on Wednesdays and are led

PRAYER

Prayer course, an intercessors team, after service ministry and a new prayer meeting feature in this year of developing communal prayer

In January, 14 members embarked on a course on Intercessory Prayer written by Dutch Sheets. The course was designed to develop our understanding and our confidence in prayer, and to better hear the Holy Spirit's prompting in our lives.

This course brought many challenges to our thoughts on prayer and how the Lord could use them. By the time we completed the weekly course on the 20th April, about half of those who had started were still on board. However everyone who took some part in the course has been challenged to explore new dynamics in their prayer lives.

Since the course ended there have been two key developments. Firstly, we decided to continue meeting on Thursday nights every week to pray. This has now become the main church prayer meeting, replacing the poorly attended Saturday morning slot. We meet from 7-30pm until around 9pm and all are welcome.

The second key development has been the formation of an intercessors prayer team, which meets fortnightly on Thursdays from 6-7-15pm. The purpose of this is to seek God's will, to intercede for the health and protection of the church and our community and to actively combat any signs of spiritual attack.

This team have also met with individuals when required to pray through spiritual problems.

It is amazing how God is changing and shaping our prayers by the Holy Spirit's direction. I can not recommend coming to these prayer meeting strongly enough if you want to see our Church and our lives move

forward. They have become times of intimacy with God and wonder at his immense power and love.

We now also have a team of men and women who are available after Sunday services to offer prayer ministry with anyone who would like to receive it. They can be identified by their yellow 'Prayer Team' badges and are happy to pray with people in their seats or to use our prayer room if a more confidential conversation is needed.



In line with our vision to becoming a 'praying community' there is still much work to be done in the area of prayer.

There is a growing confidence among the congregation in praying aloud during services, and the sharing of answers to prayer during 'Family News' has helped with that.

It has been a year of good progress in the area of prayer and exciting times lay ahead in 2018 and beyond as we become bolder in our prayers and more confident in a God who can do all things.

Nigel Parrott

SOUL SISTERS

New women's discipleship group

This is our Christian ladies group that had their first meeting in September. We are open to all women across the church and are committed to being a support for each other and helping each other in our journey with God.

We have had two enjoyable lunches together and most recently met to prepare Christmas gifts that the Church can use for outreach during the festive period.

This is a group that is still finding its feet, but we are excited by the opportunity to grow closer to God and to develop relationships with one another. We will continue to meet on a regular basis and hope to enjoy a wide range of activities together.

Denise Jackson

JUNIOR CHURCH

Night shelter project comes to Park for one night a week through the winter

We hold Junior Church each week for the children of the church (and friends) and have developed a strong core group of children who regularly attend. Each week is run by a rotating pair of helpers, and follows a theme for the month so that there is a coherence and the children can build upon what they have learnt in previous weeks.

The children love to be active during Junior Church, and especially like to act out bible stories and play interactive games which relate to the teachings. Over time the children have really developed their knowledge and ability to apply this. For example, some children have commented that coming to Sunday school has helped them to learn about how to respond to situations in everyday life. They have also begun to reflect on how the teachings relate to wider life and world issues. Often the children will ask to pray about specific events or will request prayer if they need it. They bring ideas to facilitate their learning and also interactions with the wider congregation, which is fantastic to see.

Once a month the children share what they have been learning with the congregation through a short performance. It has been a pleasure to watch the confidence of the children grow in this, and encourages them that they are a valued part of 'grown up church'.

It is something both the congregation and the children look forward to!

The Junior Church Team

Word of God, to ask questions and to find answers together, as well as develop lasting friendships.

GREAT YARMOUTH - MONDAYS

We meet in Albion Road fortnightly and for the first time this year also met throughout the summer. We usually average around 10 but there are a handful of others who come when time allows.

The group keeps in touch throughout the week via text messaging and social media, sharing any needs and prayer requests.

We are at the point of releasing some of our members to form a new group so that a greater range of needs and times can be met. We are exploring the possibility of a new daytime group in Great Yarmouth at a new venue, and would welcome new members who are currently not in a group.

Doing this rediscovers the reason behind why house groups were once called 'cell groups'; they grow then divide and eventually cover the area around the church. We have been and I pray will be there for each other in the year to come, preferring the needs of others to our own, while continuing to learn the Lord's will for us and our town.

GREAT YARMOUTH - TUESDAYS

There are seven members of this group led by Pat and Megan. The group meets weekly and mainly comprises adults with a mixture of learning difficulties and those who live on their own.

All have a strong faith in the sense that they are sure that God is with them and they are sure about eternal life with Jesus.

This year we have been learning about putting our faith into practice, and have seen some remarkable changes in three lives and a general increased awareness of what it means to live a witnessing life.

All are also involved in the Art Group, where non-Christians and marginalised individuals are welcomed into a safe, non-judgemental place.

This is a group which loves to serve; you can often find our members in various areas of church life helping to set up and pack away, making drinks, sharing food and washing up.

People who come along to the group often comment on how easy it is to be with this group of people who accept others with love and compassion.

We are currently trying to develop our prayer lives. We have considered different strategies to help pray through the day and will be

looking at how to read the Bible regularly.

The group meets for a Sunday roast on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month and welcome anyone who is on his or her own to come along.

This is a challenging group to disciple but the love and joy of being with them makes all the effort worthwhile.

HEMSBY

Our group meets fortnightly on Thursday evenings with a focus on opening up the Bible and studying God's Word.

We are a small group of around six and have particularly enjoyed delving into the psalms this year in connection with the daily devotional readings from Tim Keller's book 'My Rock My Refuge'. We are currently studying the gifts of the Spirit in conjunction with the Sunday preaching series.

ORMESBY

We are a group of seven who live in and around Ormesby and meet fortnightly on a Thursday evening.

A typical session involves beginning with some social time and a catch up, where we can support each other with any concerns shared. We then discuss the study material provided and finish with a time of prayer.

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

'And let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.'

Galatians 6:9

The Team

Val Bayliss

Megan Mynhardt

June & Robin Day

Kim Symeou

Lester Jackson

Peter Timothy

The pastoral care of the church involves and impacts the whole congregation. This work starts in house groups, with the ministers and the Pastoral Care Team picking up those who might otherwise 'fall through the net' and in circumstances where extra support is needed.

We meet bi-monthly to co-ordinate pastoral care where it is needed and support one another in prayer. There is also a second tier of volunteers who are involved on an 'as and when the need arises' basis, which is an invaluable support. Everything we do is done on behalf of the church. Some people will only need very short term support, but for other people their issues are ongoing, requiring regular weekly support.

Types of Support Given

- Visiting people in their home, in hospital, care home, in prison
- Taking people out: shopping, sight-seeing, coffee, lunch
- Accompanying people to medical appointments
- Liaison with social workers and care workers
- Making contact by phone, text, card, flowers, gift
- Supporting people in applications for benefits, setting up meals delivery etc
- Financial support from benevolent fund
- Other initiatives supported include the monthly coffee morning at Christchurch, Pat's monthly Sunday lunches and the Craft group.
- Prayer support

Numbers (total number of either individuals/couples/ families given pastoral care support)

2016 **46** of which **20** needing regular ongoing support

2017 (to date) **32** of which **10** needing regular ongoing support

A big thank you to our wonderful team and all those who have supported them this year. The work can be very challenging, but when we see God bring someone through dark and difficult times it is extremely rewarding. At some point in our lives we will all struggle with issues and will need support from our church family. God hasn't promised us a life without problems, but he has promised that through those difficulties, he will be with us, he will be our strength and he will use ordinary people like us to get alongside those who are hurting.

We always need more people to get involved, so if you feel you would like to be more proactive in supporting others, speak to one of the team!

Kim Symeou

NEW MEMBERS

Welcoming newcomers into membership is one of the joys of being part of a church. This year has been extra special as two of our newest members, Michelle and Dale, were also married in July! With more people due to come into membership over the coming months, it's exciting to see what God is doing in people's lives. Here is a little about our newest members...



MICHELLE BULLOCK

Michelle first came to Park after attending a CAP Money course. She attended the Alpha course last year and has been an active member of a couple of house groups and currently serves on the Junior Church rota and helps out at the Youth Cafe run by Unite. After she accepted Dale's proposal during a Sunday service in 2016, they were married in July this year.



DALE BULLOCK

Dale was originally baptised at Gorleston Baptist Church, over 20 years ago. Having drifted a little in his faith he began attending Park with Michelle and also attended the Alpha course last year. Dale can regularly be spotted helping with refreshments or packing away after a service, and attends both the Monday and Tuesday house groups.



SEBOLELO MOGOROSI

Seb joined us after looking for a new spiritual home in Great Yarmouth. She works in the care industry and is a member of the Tuesday house group.