



Annual Review

2023

Keeping you up to date with what's been going on in all our ministries and groups over the year March 23-Feb 24.

Baby and Toddler

Firstly, we want to say a big thank you to all of those who so willingly give up their time and energy to consistently show up and serve us by baking, organising children's snacks and serving teas and coffees. Baby and Toddlers wouldn't run without you, and we are very grateful to you all.

We had a big change when we said goodbye to Alex at our mid-week groups in June, but we have a brilliant group of church mums who have committed to coming along early every week to help set up and build relationships with the mums, grannies and carers who come along, through conversations and seeing each other every week.

Numbers can vary from week to week but on average we have 15-25 children coming along and about the same number of adults.

This year we have introduced a Bible craft each week as a way of gently introducing the children (and adults) who come along to some simple Bible truths and stories. Once a month we tell the children a Bible story during our song time - with varying success depending on how willing the children are to sit and listen! This Bible input has been positively received and we pray on that some of the simple truths we are sharing with the children who come will sink in, and that the adults will listen in too. Over Christmas we saw mums come to the Out of the Box puppet show and the Carol Service which was a great encouragement, as was the number of families from the group (past and current) who came along to the Street Party the church ran in May to mark the King's Coronation.

Please continue to pray for the relationships that we have as we continue to support and get to know the carers, form meaningful friendships and point them towards Jesus through everyday conversations.

Bible Class

Bible class has been positive over the last academic year. We have a strong cohort of students attending most weeks and we have seen some of the young folks develop and grow in their faith and knowledge of His grace.

We finished off the youth version of Christianity Explored just after last year's AGM, which ran in parallel to the church going through Mark's gospel. We found that the young folks responded well to the material and the format helped them to open up and discuss where they were at in relation to their faith quite candidly.

Since then we have used Christian Focus' Junction series and we have completed studies in the life of Joseph, thinking about God's nature of choosing, caring, revealing and planning. We have also looked at Creation and how that ultimately points toward Jesus and we have spent time in 1st Thessalonians thinking about how we persevere and encourage one another. Again, we have found the material to be helpful and appropriate for the time that we have had. In a practical sense, it has helped the young folks to be encouraged to keep trusting whatever happens, to keep godly and to praise God unashamedly.

There are another 3 books in the Junction series, all approx. 6 weeks long. There are studies on the church, relationships and the contemporary world (social media, technology etc). Given the quality of the material and also how applicable they are to what our young people are exposed to, we have taken the decision to work through them systemically.

In terms of make-up of the group we have a larger group this year with between 14-16 attending each week and the profile is much more S1/S2 centric which makes for a lively discussion! The group is well mannered, generally keen to learn and they seem to be forming good bonds between each other which is helped by other youth activities such as Friday night youth.

Leaders this past whilst have included, Ben Binnie, Phil Sutcliffe, Sam Nixon, Oyin Adekola and Derek Leith. Ben has moved on to Edinburgh and that has been a big miss but we are thankful to have had Oyin join us who brings years of experience working alongside young

folks and bounds of energy! Phil and Sam continue to be mainstays and I am thankful for their dedication and passion in this ministry area.

Prayer Points

- Give thanks for Libby & Eilidh taking the decision to be baptised.
- Pray for spiritual growth and resilience in the cohort. A deepening of relationship between the young folks such that they would become an encouragement and support to one another.
- Pray for wisdom and encouragement for the leaders; such that they would be faithful teachers of the Word and a blessing to the young folks.

Care Group

The function of the Care Group within the church is primarily looking out for, and caring for, those who are in need. You may remember that at the AGM in 2022 we relaunched the group and we are happy to say that as a result there are now 32 members of the “Hebron Cares” WhatsApp group.

If you missed the call to arms, then it’s not too late! Simply drop a note in the Hebron Cares box, or email Sally to say you want to get involved. Here are some of the ways:

- Visiting and shopping for the older members, the mums with babies and young children.
- Meals for new mums in the first week or so after bringing baby home.
- Visits to Care homes, and those ill in hospital or their own homes.
- Bringing folk to church who can’t manage on their own steam.
- Sending handmade cards to those struggling, or to those with a special event in their lives.
- Preparing an Advent booklet for the church and to the wider community.
- Crafting special items for Aberdeen charities and the mission field

Most important is that we can all pray for this work, and we give thanks to all of the Fellowship, as well as the Care Group members, who get involved in this very important work.

Caring Crafts Group

We meet every Tuesday morning from 10.00 till 11.30 (or a bit later if in the middle of a knitting a row) in the Atrium.

Our numbers have increased to a steady 10 but sometimes over 12 of us meet and are busy crafting under the watchful eye of Reuben who gets very excited when the fine pieces arrive! For those who haven’t met him Reuben is a hypoallergenic dog who is super cute and very well behaved!

We work on individual projects or work collectively on whatever is needed by the people of Aberdeen. There is time for tea, coffee, cakes and friendship. We take turns to share a bible verse that has been significant to us each week and pray for any items shared.

Some come to the group itself and those who can’t manage along like to work alongside on a project at home.

We have a folder of lots of patterns that anyone can choose from in the main reception of the church. Feel free to help yourself!

We were busy this year with Seamen’s Hats for Aberdeen Seafarers.

We had completed over 40 hats and to be honest and then lost count!

Steve Murray provides care and Christian pastoral support to the Seamen. We can pray for his work and also that more Christian volunteers will join him as the Harbour expands in a new area for cruise ships to dock.

We have also made baby blankets and baby cardigans for AberNecessities along with trauma teddies for Police Scotland.

In December we made some Christmas cards for the church to send out with the Sunday School Advent calendars. In March we will set aside a session to make Easter Cards for those who can't manage out to church.

We continue to welcome any donations from people's stashes if they have some spare balls of wool.

Going forward we plan to keep going with the hats and any suggestions to help the people of Aberdeen.

From all in the Caring Craft group.

Deacons

Sam Joseph and Donald Thomas joined the team of deacons this year. The deacons thank all who provide practical help to keep the church running smoothly for the activities described elsewhere in this report.

Stewarding: A team of volunteers help set up and clear up for services and special events, as well as providing a friendly face to welcome all to the building.

Building: Like any building of this age, there are always jobs to be done and all help is gratefully received with our thanks. Deacons have been ensuring we are safe and comply with good practice, particularly in electrical, fire and food safety and to satisfy our insurers. Several sanctuary chairs have loose joints that have dried out in the warmth of the underfloor heating and are being repaired. Look out for an opportunity to help with a spring clean to reach areas not tackled by our regular cleaner.

Sound and Vision: Thank you to all who are involved in the AV teams. We continue to stream morning services online for those unable to attend in person. As with all rotas, availability changes over time and we are particularly grateful to those have recently joined the projection rota.

Home Groups

Through 2023, Home groups continued to be a wonderful context for studying God's word together in smaller groups, to "speak the truth in love" to one another as a church family (Ephesians 4:15), and for fellowship and practical care of one another. Groups have used a number of different materials to help with studies, but the content has focussed on the book of 1 Kings, a thematic series on "Making work work", and now, a series in Zechariah.

Thank you to those who have either hosted or have led the groups - your willingness to do that is such a blessing to your groups. Thank you, too, to everyone who engaged with Home Groups throughout the past year: just by coming along regularly, you have been serving your brothers and sisters in Christ.

If you have yet to come along to a group, or would like to sign up for one, we would love to have you! Please ask Jonny or one of the other elders, and they'll gladly link you up with a group.

Inter Church Holiday Club

Once again, we joined with our friends and partners in the gospel from Bon Accord Church, Gilcomston Church and the YMCA to run our annual Inter Church Holiday Club for a week in August – although, having run for three days last year in our post-covid re-introduction, we decided that having time for the team to prepare and set up on the day before was a really good idea, so we ran the club for 4 days from Tuesday to Friday, allowing the team to spend the Monday together on making props and decorations, preparing crafts, setting up the halls and tackling the puzzle of the sound and projector system (Not sure we got it right yet, so if anyone with tech know-how has considered getting involved, we really need you!!)

The second advantage of running for 4 days was that we could use the 5th day of programme material for the Sunday Service to round off the week. This year we used a programme provided by Scripture Union called Restoration Station where the big idea was to discover who Jesus the Restorer is, and see how he can make a difference in the lives of each of the children.

In terms of numbers, we had a register of 86 children with an average of 63 attending each day and the vast majority of them were **not** families from the three churches involved! We had a team of 30 which sounds like a lot, but each team member had their own role for each morning we'd have struggled to run it as smoothly with any less!

LEGACY for teens ran in the evenings on the same days as Holiday Club - epic games (in the dark) followed by Bible Teaching – very popular events which were held in Bon Accord Church this year, with a few from Hebron joining the team.

Please keep praying for the impact these events have on the hearts of the families who are reached, and for the planning for “The Great Green Welly Garden Show” in summer 2024 (12-16th August.)

Kids Sports Club

The Sports Club has just started up this last year with Willie Harrison, Bob Fraser and Craig Robertson helping at it.

On average we have around 9 children from the local community who attend each Tuesday night.

It's billed as 'training for body and soul.' We start off with circuit training then have our Bible Lesson and memory verse and finish off with a game like handball.

We have a really lovely bunch of kids who are enthusiastic in participating and learning.

We are getting to know their parents and pray that some of the children might attend the CYC camps.

Ladies Craft Nights

We have continued to hold these evenings over the last year and have built on the contacts and friendships made.

Good numbers of ladies have attended each evening. It is obvious that they enjoy attending. Our ultimate aim is to point others to Christ and we always have some Gospel input. This is either a short talk or an interview.

The next Craft Night is on 16th March, commencing at 7.30pm

If you've never been before, why not come along and bring a friend?

Ladies Prayer Meeting.

We meet every Thursday morning during term time in the conference room area.

There is always a warm welcome and a cup of coffee / tea. It is a time when women of all ages come together to reflect on the week ahead and the week gone by; and spend time together in prayer. A volunteer each week leads the hour of prayer and offers a short devotional to focus us all on something that is topical or simply something that is on our mind that we want to share. Some come and offer up their silent prayers, others bring a list so we don't miss anyone in need, and there are always prayers of thanks and praise. Please let us know if you would like us to pray for any situation needing prayer, or better still, come along if you can. All are very welcome. We are pleased that our numbers have grown this year, so don't be shy, come along and see for yourself what a difference praying together can make.

Please see Rhoda, Angela, Lois, Gillian or Jane for more info or just come along and pray with us.

Mainly Music

Mainly Music has been another fantastic outreach point for local families. We have a very loyal group who come every week and a good number of church mums who are committed to coming enabling intentional conversations to happen. Also very loyal are our volunteers, who provide snacks, baking, help with clear up, and establish strong relationships with the carers who come. We are very thankful for them and the time they give up to serve in this way.

Mainly Music has explicit gospel messages through the music and provides plenty of opportunity to explain our faith and love of Jesus to others. It is wonderful to be able to get to know the carers who come through the ups and downs of life, and they often open up over a cup of tea and cake. Every week we have between 10-20 children coming along with their carers and it is lovely to see children joining in enthusiastically with the songs. Over Christmas we saw mums come to the Out of the Box puppet show and the Carol Service which was a great encouragement.

Please continue to pray for this ministry, that the simple truths of our faith explained through songs would sink in to these little children's lives and those of their carers.

Men's Indoor Bowling

The men's bowling group continues to meet every Tuesday between 10am and 12 noon.

Fortunately, whilst the bowling skills of those attending has not improved, the general enthusiasm has not diminished. It is not unusual to have over 12 men turning up which can make team arrangements challenging.

Although the original intention was that it should be an outreach, it has developed more into a time of fellowship and prayer and also a bit of fun. It has been good for the senior men in the church to get to know each other in a relaxed setting. Although comprising of mainly Hebron members, there are a few from other churches which is encouraging and I think they appreciate our time together.

Anyone is welcome to come along and there are no age restrictions or skill required. Outwith Hebron we all met in December for a Christmas meal at The Braided Fig Restaurant. This has become a regular event for the last three years and is always well attended.

Throughout the year, the ladies of the church have kept us supplied with their delicious home baking for our coffee breaks, so a big thank you to them. It is much appreciated.

In closing, I would ask you to remember the group in your prayers that we will continue to be able to meet and that all those who come along are blessed by their time together.

Monday Club

Monday club runs weekly during term time between 6-7pm for primary aged children. The number of children coming along has increased since last year which has been really encouraging to see. There is a mixture of children from our own Sunday school and 5 girls from the community all coming consistently. The evening generally follows the structure of 30 minutes of crafts and games with the next 30 minutes being held in the conference room where we enjoy a time of singing choruses, listening to a Bible story and learning that month's memory verse. Since the last AGM we have started using The Gospel Story Bible, previously used in our Sunday school, to structure our story time. This is a fantastic resource which follows the story of the Gospel from Genesis to Revelation. We know so many people in the church are praying for the work, and we are so encouraged by this. Please continue to commit this work to the Lord.

Prayer points:

- Give thanks for faithfulness of the children and helpers coming along every week.
- Pray links to the local school would strengthen and more children would join us.

- Pray that ultimately that the children would grow to love and trust Christ as their Saviour.

Music team

Our music team has been fairly steady this year, with a few lovely new additions, and returning members, to the team. It's been great to have some of the teenagers get involved under the guidance of Lois so we look forward to them gaining confidence and experience over the next year.

The planning of a Sunday Service has a lot of inter-dependent parts which provides our church services with great variety in style and process – a challenge for the music team sometimes but we are working on keeping things as smooth as possible! Our aim is to serve the church by helping the congregation to sing praise to our God with joy and delight, as well as maintain a high standard of music so as not to be a distraction.

One change we seem to have settled on over the past year is to reduce the involvement of the team in evening services – really just due to circumstance and availability – but we are open to feedback on that point!

As always, we are grateful for the dedication of the AV team who join us at the rehearsals every week and are ably managing to sort out technical issues one way or another! We are planning to challenge them in the near future with a rearrangement of stage positions to help the musicians see each other better – see if you can spot some different set-ups in the coming weeks and let us know if you have any comments...

The Hebron Choir had a few opportunities to get together in 2023 – we took part in the Fishermen's Mission Praise Evening in June, and then again at Christmas for our annual Carol Service, with the excellent guidance of Heather and Logan resulting in a great evening declaring the message of Christmas to a full hall! Choir is a super way to get involved in church as it provides fellowship through rehearsals and opportunities to invite friends and family to the events where the choir will sing.

"O Lord my Rock and my Redeemer, may all my days bring glory to Your Name"

Safeguarding

In 2023 we have managed to catch up on a few outstanding PVG applications and have implemented an application form via our website, which allows us to gather and store the required information on all our children and youth work team members, in keeping with our safeguarding policy. We have now added a Safeguarding Assistant (Emma Coalter) and a Safeguarding Trustee (Duncan Reaves) to our team to provide support if needed.

We also had all our teams complete Risk Assessments for their activities as good practice, but also required by our insurance policy. This was a useful exercise for each group and will be reviewed annually.

Sunday Lunch and Young Adults

In one sense, Young Adults lunch is exactly what its title suggests- it is a lunch provided for young adults each Sunday during term time. In another sense, though, it is much more than that: it's a time for fun, fellowship and care for our students and young adults during what is often a pivotal point in life. On average, somewhere between 20-35 young adults have tended to stay for lunch most Sundays this year, and those lunches simply wouldn't be possible if it were not for those who give up part of their weekend and resources to serve us. Thank you all very much for doing so!

If you have never been involved in Young Adults lunches before but would be keen to be involved, either by serving on one of the cooking teams or in helping to wash up, please do get in touch with Jonny or Sally. Whether you're new or have been helping for a while, we are

keen to make sure that anyone involved has the opportunity to refresh their Hygiene course. Again, please speak to Jonny or Sally if that is something you would benefit from.

Similarly, our Young Adults Gatherings are exactly what it says on the tin: gatherings of our young adults. These happen on Saturday evenings during term time, generally twice a month. Socials have been hosted monthly, often in the flats/houses of one of the young adults, and once monthly we have gathered in our (Fiona and Jonny's) house to think and talk about the scriptures. During those studies, we have spent time growing in our love for Jesus and being equipped to tell people about him through studying John's gospel, as well as spending time learning how to read and apply parts of the Bible with which we might be less familiar, like apocalyptic literature or wisdom books.

Sunday School

Over the last year we've had lots of fun working with the Dig-in Sunday School material, which was new to us and allowed teachers to build their own lessons online using a variety of options to fit the teaching theme. We used a series called "Foundations of Faith" which walked the children through aspects of God, and what it means to be a Christian.

We finished that series just before Christmas 2023 so have now begun a new curriculum called "The Biggest Story" which is based on the Biggest Story Bible Storybook by Kevin DeYoung and will work through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, using simple concepts and flexible lesson plans (as well as some beautiful artwork!) Each week the children will bring home an activity sheet which includes the main teaching point and the memory verse for Sunday's lesson.

A big change for us this year has been a large group of P7s moving up to Bible Class so we have re-jigged the classes a little bit now to balance out the groups a bit:

Discoverers: (Nursery-P1/2) Teachers are Katy McLeod, Katharine Rankin, and Judith Allan. (Katharine taking maternity leave after Easter!) Average 12 children each week.

Explorers: (P2-P4) Teachers are Arlene McLeod, Alex Perrett, Beth Ritchie and Ruth Innes. Average 12 children each week.

Investigators: (P4/5-P7) Teachers are Jane Stirling, Rebecca Binnie, Hazel Taylor and Sally Pirie. Average 8 children each week.

We're delighted to have added Ruth to the leaders' team since Christmas and hope that she is settling in okay! We have still be working with one less leader than is ideal and will shortly lose Katharine just before baby arrives so are actively looking to add more leaders to the team – please pray with us about that, whenever you pray for the children of our church.

Many thanks to our team of helpers who come down each week to lend a hand – mostly with the youngest group: we couldn't actually run Sunday School without you!

Finally, a big well done to the children for pulling off another fun Nativity Play this Christmas – it was called a "no rehearsal play" and we took it at its word!

Wednesday Prayer Breakfast

The small group meeting on-line on Wednesday mornings has been fortunate to include several of our mission partners, as their daily programmes allow. We start with a time of worship, based on thoughts from a bible passage. After working our way through the later New Testament letters, we have recently moved into Revelation. Our prayers focus on the needs of group members, in particular our witness to family and those we meet as neighbours, friends or work colleagues. We then pray for the activities in our respective churches. It is a good way to start a weekday. Do join us if you can spare time on a regular basis.

Website

The church website continues to run in the background of much we do as a church – in a non-spiritual kind of way! From the office side of things we use it to run rotas and send automatic reminders and from the visitor side we hope it provides an informative view of who and what we are as a church in Aberdeen.

We've recently worked our way through many of the pages, updating things and tidying up links and pages which had been active but are no longer required. If you ever spot anything needing updated or corrected, please let us know.

The mobile app continues to be a useful tool for a quick way to catch up on sermons, keeping an eye on the church calendar and accessing your own details - especially for checking your rotas. It now has a new "Book Now" function which you can use for signing up for things as they go live (eg the Ladies Crafts Night is live at the time of writing.) If you don't make use of the app yet, you can download it to any device from www.hebronaberdeen.org.uk/hubb.

Our church newsletter continues to be sent by email only – to make sure you receive this weekly update, please do check your account via the website or the app where you need to select the Consent option to allow us to include you in the mailing list. If you ever have personal or family news to share we'd be delighted to rejoice with you or pray for you together by means of the newsletter so do feel free to send info to Sally.

Thanks again to Donald for always managing to have our sermons pages right up to date and providing the livestream video of the Sunday morning services for a week after each one.

Weekend Away

After a break of 9½ years, as a church we returned to Faskally House in Pitlochry for a weekend in November 2023. There were 45 adults and 28 children there together for a weekend of, for the adults, teaching from Andy Gemmill on 2 Timothy. The children had their own programme using the same lesson for the weekend as would be used in Sunday School in Hebron – all about Zacchaeus.

A major part of these sort of weekends away is the fellowship and a lovely time was had by all with opportunities to get to know and spend time with others from church who we may not often have a chance to speak to. The weather was lovely, allowing people to explore the outdoors together and visit the town of Pitlochry during the free afternoon.

Of course, a weekend away to a lovely house like Faskally does not have room for everyone to go, nor is it practically possible for everyone in the church to be away for the weekend for various reasons, so in 2024 we are planning to have a "Weekend At Home" in November time, based on a similar idea but keeping the cost for individuals down and having more room for everyone to join in – look out for more information in the coming months!

Youth Fellowship

1st Timothy 4v12 "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

Since our last report in 2023 the Youth Group has continued to meet faithfully every Friday night at 7pm during school time for all S1-S6 age teenagers.

This year we have been blessed to see several new young people join both directly from Hebron and indirectly via invitation from friends who already come along. Apparently, God heard our prayer when we asked for more young people in the 2023 report 😊.

On one specific Friday night we counted 25 young people attending and 6 leaders and like the story of the loaves and fishes we still seemed to have enough food (sweets) to go round!! On average Friday we have between 15-20 young folks attending and 4 to 5 leaders who all take it in turn to organise the games, the foods and the lessons.

Over the last 3 school terms we have covered the books of Proverbs, Philippians and Colossians. We are currently working our way through bible characters who can inspire us in our Christian walk.

The goal continues to be to share the lessons of the bible that continue to be applicable to young people in Aberdeen in 2024. We hope to share our faith with them and show that God's word can be their trusted guide through this life and the principles from his written word 2000 years ago are still relevant to us today. God's word is unchanging, and God is faithful.

When the opportunity arises, we take part in Legacy events and are part of the joint activities with Bon Accord, Gilcomston, Gerrard St and Deeside youth groups.

If you look around most Sundays you will see young people from YF serving in some capacity in the services – either in music, Sunday school, creche, reading, welcoming or on the tech team. Monday club is blessed by having YF volunteers go along and pass the baton onto the next generation. Thanks be to God for their servant hearts and their willingness to serve.

This year we also had the joy of seeing Eilidh and Libby baptised. We give thanks for their individual decision and continue to hold all our young people up in prayer to make similar personal commitments. God answers prayers.

Please pray for all the young people as they as we help them grow in their own faith and seek to have a personal relationship with Jesus.

Their names are: Charlie, Ben, Jesse, Tolu, Tomiwa, Lewis, Johann, Samuel, Raphael, Leo, Jack, Pawan, Anna, Temi, Laura, Ilana, Libby, Eilidh, Isla, Yasmine, Gaby, Elijah, Seffan, Rosie, Maria, Kiishi.

Also, please pray for the volunteers who continue to faithfully choose YF on a Friday and look to serve and share their faith with the young people: Emma, Emily, Jonathan, Andrew, Russell, Alex, Beth, Kai, Ash, Maz.



Members Roll changes March 2023 – February 2024

New Members – 2

Members moved – 4

(Members returned – 3)

Total members - 127

Births – 2

Deaths – 1

Marriages – 1

Baptisms – 4

Church Members' Children (u-18) - 39

Deacons/Elders/Trustees changes

Donald Thomas and Sam Joseph joined Deacons

Staff Changes

Alex Perrett stepped down from Women's Ministry

Leader role in June 23

Members & members'
children (u-18)

