

2019

A YEAR IN FOCUS



New Life
Church
Bristol

Introduction

This report looks back at 2019 and is a celebration of all that God has done in us and through us; the highs and the hard works which made 2019 an amazing year, full of God's blessing. We've been able to welcome new people to the NLC family, which is an important part of who we are, and we look forward to welcoming many more people during 2020.

Outreach and community initiatives

This year as always, we've been involved in many events and initiatives in our local community and the wider Bristol area. Some of these are through our continued involvement with Churches Together in Worship and are covered later, but here's a round-up of a few of our main activities.

Bristol Churches Winter Night Shelter (BCWNS)

This project provides food and shelter to some of the homeless people in Bristol during the winter period and we are proud to be able to support it practically and financially.

It took place between January and March and several of us from NLC got involved in serving at different church venues across the city where guests were offered hot food, a friendly environment and a bed for the night. The project was a tremendous success, with many of the guests being able to find jobs and more permanent accommodation.

The BCWNS project is running again in 2020 and many from NLC are already signed up to help.

We pray for all of those involved in this important initiative of showing love to some of the most vulnerable people in our city.



Charity Pub Quiz



Many from the Bristol small group led by Dave and Nicky, plus a few others, regularly enter the pub quiz at the White Lion on Frenchay Common.

This includes a charity quiz held to raise money for The Macmillan Trust which, whilst the team didn't win, was a great success, and between them the various teams raised £88.87. We're pleased to say that NLC were able to add £200 to this, and so the total sent to Macmillan was £288.87.

Our small team continues to develop strong links with the pub who now regularly put some of our notices on their Facebook page.

The Noise 2019

"The Noise" is about mobilising youth from local churches towards showing God's love in practical ways, serving urban communities across Bristol. It ran from Saturday 4th May through to Monday 6th May and many from NLC took part.

Our main project was at Frenchay Primary School, where we were able to paint many rooms, tidy up the outside spaces, unblock playground drains, and paint the summerhouse which was totally transformed.

The school were very appreciative, so a big thank you to all involved.



Frenchay Village Hall

We continue to meet in and serve Frenchay Village Hall.

Over the same bank holiday weekend as the Noise, we blessed the hall by upgrading the security lighting, building a fence and installing several raised planted borders to the edge of the car park. These create a physical barrier to the road and surrounding land which makes it safer and also adds some wonderful colour which enhances the first experience of driving into the car park.

We again planted out the NLC vegetable plots which provided runner beans, onions, courgettes and tomatoes for anyone within the community who wanted them.

Thank you to everyone who came along and worked so hard.



4Front Theatre

In April we saw the return of 4Front Theatre who presented their "Beyond Bars" production.

As this production is more serious and was written to be taken into prisons, it was very different to their previous shows which are generally packed full of humour and children's fun.

The event was well attended with many visitors and was complimented by an after show "Build your Own" burger bar.

We hope to be seeing 4Front Theatre again around Christmas 2020.



Christmas Carol Service

This year as a church we delivered invitation cards to our Christmas Carol service along with a small bag of chocolate coins. The positive reaction we received at the door as we handed these coins over and wished everyone a Happy Christmas was amazing. Sometimes it's those small things we do that impact people the most.

The service itself was a traditional (ish) carol service, with readings, a nativity scene, puppets and of course snow!

After the service, we enjoyed an extremely indulgent "Christmas in a Bun" expertly created by our hospitality team.

Christmas Gift Bags



For the second year we took part in an initiative run by local Christian charity Sixty-One to provide Christmas gift bags to local prisoners.

A team of us got together one Saturday morning to pack bags with a shower gel, a toothbrush, a pair of socks, sweets, chocolate, a diary and a Christmas card.

When the inmates were given the presents, they were told that they were from the churches of Bristol who were thinking and praying for them. For so many prisoners this will be the only gift they will receive.

Sixty-One delivered a total of 1,500 gift bags to three local prisons: HM Prisons Bristol, Ashfield and Leyhill.

Individual Activities

In addition to activities that we get involved in as a whole church, many individuals are involved in various other city-wide initiatives such as the Resound Foodbank, Messy Church, The Wild Goose Café and the Dementia Café. Some members of NLC are starting to explore the prisoner mentoring programme, which provides support for ex-prisoners as they start to rebuild their lives back in the community.

We will continue to promote and support people in reaching out to show the love of Jesus through practical serving.



Our links with other churches in Frenchay and Stapleton continue to strengthen as we undertake more initiatives together under the banner of CTiW.

CTiW is made up of New Life Church, Waterbrook, St. John the Baptist Frenchay, Holy Trinity Stapleton and Stapleton Baptist and the leaders regularly pray together and discuss how we might reach the community with the gospel.

During 2019 we participated in the Easter dawn walk to the top of Purdown Hill where we prayed together over our city. We met three times for a joint celebration evening service including in February where we held our first CTiW Communion Meal together.

We continue to support Waterbrook with their senior's lunches around Easter and Christmas and these times are so appreciated by those guests who attend.

Along with Frenchay Parish Church we have delivered many CTiW Welcome Packs to the new estate and have had encouraging interactions with the new residents including arranging a christening service.

We were invited by the Beckspool Pond Committee to provide some spiritual input to their annual carol singing event. This event was very well attended and was an ideal opportunity to remind people about the true meaning of Christmas and also to pray publicly over the community.

In September 2018, at the start of the new academic year, "Open The Book" moved from Begbrook Primary School to Frenchay Primary School. This was an example of where as one door closes another opens. A small regular team of around 6 people visit the school roughly every other week during term time to bring Bible stories to the children in the form of a small drama. These times are greatly appreciated by the staff and children and we look forward to returning in 2020.

Waterbrook hosted an Alpha Course at the beginning of the year and we were invited to support them. There were a number of guests present and it was another opportunity for us to work together in sharing the gospel.

Zambia

We continue to support the Beacon of Power Academy in Solwezi, Zambia through our ongoing sponsorship programme School4Kids. The primary school now has 67 pupils and in addition, a secondary school has been established which now has 48 pupils many of whom will be taking GCSE equivalent exams this year.

Several more buildings have been completed this year, in particular a brand new science block, staff rooms and a computer room.

Our support really does change these young lives for the better.





One thing we can often take for granted is that when we turn on a tap, water comes out. Our friends in Zambia didn't have this luxury and relied on a bucket lowered into a hand dug well under a few planks of wood.

Thanks to the amazing generosity of our church members, our families and friends, early in 2019 we were able to raise £5,000 to fund the drilling of a bore hole within the school grounds and the installation of a pump and storage tank which now provides fresh running water to both schools, the church we support and also to the local community. What an amazing blessing!

In October we visited Solwezi to see the school and meet with Pastor Evans Luwi who we continue to support.

We had the opportunity to see the school in operation, turn on a tap and see running water and also to speak at the church's annual conference and share communion with them.

We don't plan to visit during 2020, but are looking at some exciting possibilities for 2021 which hopefully will mean many more people can visit.



General Church News

Woodlands Associate Church

One of the most important events in 2019 as a church was deciding to formally associate ourselves with Woodlands. The NLC leadership had begun to develop a closer relationship with the team at "Woodies" and realised that we share the same heart and vision, especially for our own city.

Whilst retaining our own identity and legal status, and following discussion with the Woodies leadership and NLC church members who were unanimously positive, we made the decision to associate.

So, on Sunday 30th June, when Rob Scott-Cook came to preach, he prayed over us and we officially became a Woodlands Associate Church.

Visiting Speakers

It is important as a church to maintain healthy external links and we've been greatly encouraged this year as speakers from other churches from around the city and the region have visited us and confirmed God's word to us.

In addition to Rob and Pam Scott-Cook, Tim Dobson and Dave Mitchell from Woodlands, this year we have had 6 other visiting speakers including: Richard Pollard from Fishponds Baptist, Simon Williams from Woodspring WsM, Alan Sutton from Dunstable, Tony Davies from Waterbrook, Tony Martin from Glastonbury and Melanie Goodway from One Church. We were also hugely blessed to welcome Ben Goodway during the year as our first visiting worship leader.

We are honoured that pastors who are busy leading their own churches are willing to come and share God's word with us. We are also really blessed that more people within NLC are now stepping out in faith and preaching on a Sunday morning.

New Wine

This was New Wine's first year in Peterborough and of course it was a much longer journey than travelling to Shepton Mallet. Significantly, it was at this year's New Wine that God started to speak to us all about doing a new thing and he has continued to speak to us powerfully since then.

Sadly, our time at New Wine was cut short due to extreme weather forcing the event to close on the Thursday. We all got home safely and many of us are expectant, praying for sun and already booked in for New Wine 2020.

Prayer

In May we participated again in the international call to prayer "Thy Kingdom Come" where churches across the world were encouraged to pray between 30th May and 9th June, for a powerful move of God for salvation through evangelism.

Since then there has been an increased stirring for prayer within NLC and across the city.

Towards the end of 2019, the leadership and trustees joined together in a 40-day prayer initiative called "Draw the Circle" in response to all that God had been saying to us over the previous months. They pressed into God to determine what we need to do next. Truthfully, this time didn't really answer that question, but it did bring us all much closer to God and excited about moving more in the Holy Spirit.

Consequently, the whole church is now engaged in 40 days of prayer, starting 1st January.

External Giving

As a church we continue to be generous when we learn about needs. In addition to our considerable and regular giving to work in Zambia, we have made several substantial gifts to local projects such as BCWNS project, Noise 2019, New Wine Trust and many smaller contributions to specific individuals and charities.

A Message from Pastor Richard

Wow!

What a great year we've had in 2019. We've been involved with some amazing examples of God's love within our local community and across the city.

It's been an honour to represent NLC as I've networked with various church groups and organisations during the year, including Global Horizons South West, New Wine leader's hub, Woodlands leader's learning community, CTiW leadership meetings, city wide prayer breakfasts and MentorMe/Sixty-One.

I also had the privilege of representing NLC and being invited to participate in the blessing of a new church that was starting up in Fishponds called "The New Restored Pentecostal Church". This new congregation is led by Pastor Elizabeth Brown who, along with her husband Bill, attended NLC for a few weeks last year as they were getting established. I know they were greatly blessed by their short time with us.

It's been a joy to be asked to represent NLC and preach at other churches during 2019, although I try to limit the amount of time spent away from NLC. With this in mind, I preached at Waterbrook, Stapleton Baptist Church, The Sanctuary and Grace Church Glastonbury.

In July I completed a Graduate Diploma in Kingdom Theology. Studying theology for 2 years has been really challenging but I have also found it extremely beneficial. It has given me insights into scripture I didn't have before and a fresh appreciation for God's word. I look forward to sharing all that I have learnt during the coming months and year.

I'm so excited for what God has in store for us in 2020 and I know prayer is going to be really important to us. There seems to be a wave across the country where church communities are being called to prayer and I want to continue to ensure that as a church we remain in step with God's heart and purpose for us; that we don't go rushing ahead of ourselves, nor do we lag behind when God brings challenges upon our lives.

By praying together, we can all capture the same heart and mind of God and encourage one another to move forward into all that he has planned for us. I'm sure this is going to be a really important year for us.

Finally, I want to say a big thank you to Dave and Nicky Summerhill for faithfully standing alongside Kim and I within the pastoral leadership of NLC, and Sue Hall for providing that important connection between the spiritual leadership and our legal responsibilities as trustees. Once again, thank you all for the love and support you continue to give to the NLC leadership team and for making our work a joy.

God bless you all

Richard

Pastor Richard Brown