

NEWSLINK

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER, 2022

CANTON UNITING CHURCH



Canton Uniting Church Deacons

Alison Walker (Chair)	029 20221380.	a.m.walker47@googlemail.com
Andrew Wilson-Dickson		
Audrey Takle	029 2037 7757	audreytakle@live.co.uk
Barbara Morgans (Minutes Secretary)	07811 405186	
Beverley Kibble (Treasurer)	07786 144115	bubbev71@yahoo.co.uk
David Smith	01633 266781	ds@davidsmith.org.uk
Debbie Cheshire	07791387067	debbie.cheshire@hotmail.co.uk
Fiona Harding (Secretary)	029 2025 7783	
Marieke Arthur	07890 804764	marieke@pie-in-the-sky.org.uk
Megan Atherton		megan.atherton@uwclub.net
Sian Jones		
Steve Phillips		

Canton Uniting Church Secretary Annual Report June 2022

The last time I presented an annual report to the church AGM was in May 2019, which means I guess that this summary is more of a triennial report. And what a three years it has been. I reported on the fact we were coming out of a time when we were without a minister and had been working with the other churches in the pastorate to explore our shared future together. Shortly after the AGM we met Martha and David, and as a pastorate welcomed them into ministry in the Cardiff and Penarth area a few months later. The pastorate started to share some more experiences, starting with the ordination of David and Martha in October 2019, and were looking forward to more ways of being together.

I really don't want this to be a report about the pandemic but inevitably it will feature. From March 2020, we found ourselves looking at a very different way of being church, mixcloud services were being created and Zoom became the new medium for so many people to stay in touch on Sunday mornings and in mid-week Bible studies. Although, for a variety of reasons, not everyone attended these services, many who did made new friendships and enjoyed the times of fellowship together.

The pandemic forced new ways upon us, some of which have stuck – such as online Deacons' meetings. Sadly, many church activities were unable to meet in alternative ways, but thankfully some of these have started up again. Junior church met up a few times when we were in lockdown, but it is so good that we can all be a church family together on a Sunday morning once more. Although several church groups are yet to return to meeting, it has been a pleasure to see a new group springing into life (quite literally at times) in the form of our teenagers. We are conscious that although restrictions may have officially been lifted, this doesn't mean that everyone is comfortable with meeting face-to-face quite yet, and we think of those in our fellowship who have for this reason or another, chosen not to return to Sunday morning worship.

The church buildings of course could not be used during the pandemic, so it has been really encouraging to note that, since we have been able to open up, Audrey has had many requests to hire rooms for both occasional use and regular or semi-regular bookings, including children's parties, community groups and local elections.

Much of what has happened has been mentioned in the reports presented by others. The last couple of years have challenged how we worship, as I have already mentioned, and now that we are back in the buildings, we continue to explore different ways of worship, shaped by our experiences. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who lead worship in the church, with special thanks to Megan who, as our pulpit secretary, never actually has a week off!

Also many thanks to everyone who kept the business of the church running even when our doors were not open – the garden warriors, the development group and the deacons, officers and our ministers, as well as a number of other people who are often not mentioned – Hugh who produces the Newslink and Alan in his role as assistant treasurer. A special mention too

for Alison who has worked tirelessly in her role as church Chair, and has borne the brunt of the workload involved in organising the return to in-person services.

Although you might not believe it, the buddy groups were put together just a little under 3 years ago. They are all a bit different from one another, some have a greater proportion of members who are more technology minded so stay in touch in that way, others keep in

touch by phoning one another. Inevitably, some of the groups have 'worked' a bit better than others, and the deacons are mindful of this so plan to have another look at it again over the coming months.

Several new babies have been born since the last AGM – although some of them are not really babies any more! We welcomed 2 of them – Nye and Caian - into our church family through baptism on Easter Sunday.

We have been saddened by the loss of dear friends during the last 3 years: Barbara Ball, Peter Edwards, Barbara Farnham, Keith Flynn, Sylvia Neate, and Nanci Waterfield, and we remember their families and all of those in our fellowship who have lost loved ones this year.

It has been more difficult to share social occasions together over the last 2 years, although we did manage an online Gift Day – I think we had about 20 participants at that – and so it was lovely to be able to hold an in-person Gift Day in February. Around 35 people came, and we shared an afternoon tea together, and enjoyed music provided by members of the music group. We are also thankful to those who make possible the most important part of the Sunday service – the refreshments after the service– and once again continue to ask for volunteers to serve and/or provide milk and biscuits!

Raising money for charities has been something much harder to focus on this past couple of years, however it is good that we have been able to support the Cardiff Foodbank and, recently, Christian Aid. We will be holding a flower crafting/coffee morning this coming weekend to raise money for charities working with Ukrainian refugees. The deacons welcome suggestions for events to support charities in the future charities.

It is good to be back to normal, or 'new normal' as seems to be the popular phrase. May God bless us and help us to discover what our 'new normal' might look like as we endeavour to serve him in this church, and in Cardiff.



Worship Group Report for AGM

It would be fair to say that the Worship Group lay dormant through the pandemic when we could not meet for services. But not completely! Some of us were active in the online services, not least in the recording of music. But the slow return to regular in-person services started in Summer 2021.

The Climate Change/Creation series was a first foray into worship leaders across the Pastorate contributing videos of reflections and prayers and we played our part as CUC in that process, as well as using various pieces of the recorded material in our services in church. Thanks to our tech experts for their support.



Advent saw a joyous if slightly nervous return to weekly services, still masked, spaced and as well ventilated as could be managed. And we had the particular joy of the Nativity service written with typical wit and putting the Zoom into the company of angels!

There was a thoughtful discussion between Worship Group and the Deacons about whether weekly services should continue in January and February or whether the winter conditions and the still high levels of Covid infection argued for returning to the more cautious pattern of two services a month. We went for the cautious approach.

But we began weekly services again in Lent and benefitted from the second run of Pastorate video materials, a series on different kinds of prayer in church. It was a very rich and accessible series. Much had been learned about better recording of sound and our worship leaders taking the services during Lent made excellent use of the recorded materials.

It's really striking how a larger number of our members and friends have grown in confidence in leading our services. We are hugely grateful to our ministers Martha and David who have been so diligent, creative, supportive and inspiring during the tough periods of lockdown isolation and when we started to come together in person again. But the plan in calling these fine people was always that we had to work, in our churches and in sharing resources across the Pastorate, to build lay leadership of worship.

I think it has been a rich period of development in hard times. And it's been particularly encouraging and delightful to see the growing involvement of our

children and young people in worship – Palm Sunday was a great occasion from that point of view. Our thanks to them and their teachers.

As we look ahead, we will be considering different forms of worship that may reflect contemporary needs, styles and the people resources we have. Churches in the Pastorate have already begun to explore café-style services and conversations and also worship experienced on walks or in open spaces. In exploring new worship forms, we shall not in any way abandon our concern for the richness, depth and reflective structure of our worship; but we may be able to find those qualities in new forms from time to time.

The Worship Group will also assist the Deacons in planning services from this autumn which focus on our pandemic experiences as the people of God and on how we develop our mission to serve our community, particularly through the garden project.

Finally, on behalf of the Worship Group, I want to thank all those who worked so hard to

sustain the gatherings on Sunday mornings in respect of Covid safety. The careful welcoming, the sanitising, the spacing of chairs and the organisation of Communion all made service organisation much more difficult and demanding.

We are a remarkable body of God's people. For all our inevitable flaws and errors, we are blessed with an extraordinary range of spiritual and practical gifts. But we are sometimes stretched for numbers in getting things done. Our achievements in worship, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, are so encouraging in that light.

Phil George

Garden Project

With God's help the garden survived the winter, again, looking gorgeous whatever the weather . A good place to be, whether for a quiet time or for play opportunities with younger children. Apparently pebbles, water, or just places for hide and seek, is enough equipment with some supervised sensory sampling of the mint and other herbs, and then there are bees, snails and birds!



For the food part, there are some beets, onions, mustard lettuce and rocket growing to liven up your regular mixed salad. The potatoes are doing great again this year. Again we cannot thank David Williams enough for providing much needed timing and planting advice, for many of the seedlings, and all around support despite his very busy professional and home life.

A big thank you also to Isobel, Ore and Koredi who did a sterling job putting up the bamboo green bean support, and planted the beans. An uplifting contribution in every sense. Thanks teens!

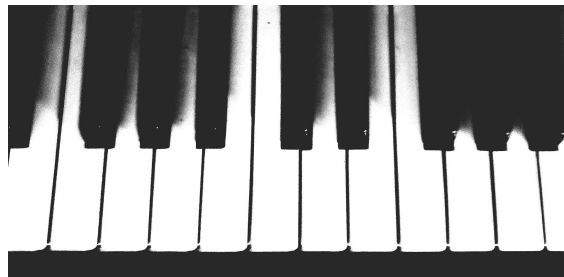
The garden is supported by Eva, Lucy and Andrew, Alison, David and Marieke, part of a steering group now, to link the present garden with networks of community gardens and supportive organisations working on climate change . The coming six months will be actively spent engaging the neighbourhood and together planning for the future: a much larger garden that will contribute much to life in this corner of Canton/Treganna.

Marieke



Music Group Report 2022

The last music group report was delivered in May 2019. It was quite upbeat, reflecting on the loss of key players (Gareth Williams, Siarlys Evans) but also on the entry of a younger generation - Emily, Ore, Korede and Gloria. Little did we know that less than a year later we would be struck down, silenced and isolated by the lockdowns of Covid 19.



Do you find it hard to orient yourself through the privations of Covid? I think it started in the latter half of 2020, when our services at CUC were abruptly curtailed. Over the next 18 months at least, services for the pastorate were by zoom and, in parallel, recorded on sound only through Mixcloud. Everything happened at arm's length, which was debilitating, but the positive side was that we acquired the feeling that we were part of a wider community. It was fortuitous that, not long before, CUC became part of the Cardiff Pastorate of six churches and our musicians shared their voices and instrumental sounds with those of Beulah, City Church and Elfed Avenue particularly. Every week, either I or John Cheer (of Beulah) put out a call for people to record their singing against a backing track which would be combined to make a virtual music group from several churches. This was an immense labour on everybody's part and in the end produced recordings of more than 100 hymns. For me, a highlight was the Lockdown Lessons and Carols, a 40-minute recording of readings and song from across the pastorate and hugely successful, I think. I hope it won't be forgotten, and then a year later, a couple of videos of most of the singers implicated, now socially distanced, but able to meet.

Now we are back to 'normal': the Munnik family have joined us - which is transformatory (in a good way!), Gloria and Emily have continued with their piano lessons and we have heard their contributions to the music group as well as soloists, which is hugely encouraging as they represent the future. However, the numbers in the music group (as you can tell) are not enough to provide a really good musical leadership and I long for more people to make the modest commitment to a little training on a Friday evening to make the singing stronger. For as long as we feel that music is a key element in worship, we should have a stronger core!

I wrote that we were back to normal, but perhaps in a weakened and battered state. I think the congregation hasn't recovered its numbers yet from before the pandemic (the cancellation of the Big Day Out is an indication of this). I'm delighted that John Cheer has suggested we could have a musical jamboree here at CUC in place of the Big Day Out. I hope it happens, as an opportunity for people who met virtually by zoom and LogicPro now to meet for real and to realise that music can bring us together, not just symbolically by blending our voices, but personally, so that 'the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony'. (Colossians 3:14)

AGWD June 2022



Financial Statement for the year ending December 2021

The financial statement shows the consolidated income and expenditure of funds controlled by Canton Uniting Church. The Treasurer and Deacons are responsible for the general financial oversight of funds administered for the benefit of Canton uniting Church and its long-term financial planning. The Treasurer and Deacons ensure that proper procedures are in place for the maintenance of accounting records, controlling and monitoring the accounts and the preparation of financial statements in compliance with UK law and accounting standards.

January – December 2021 Income and Expenditure comparison

Income	2020	2021
Collection	£27,585	£30,093
Gift Aid	£32,554	£8,816
Donations	£5,717	£2,383
Charity Giving	£558	£636
Hires	£4,154	£1,938
Sundries	£700	£0
Transfers (from buildings acc.)	£13,634	£8,676
Gift day	£2,675	£0
	<u>£87,577</u>	<u>£52,542</u>
Payments		
URC	£19,827	£23,980
Pulpit	£2,584	£586
Energy	£10,678	£2,678
Cleaning	£2,127	£2,453
Building Maintenance	£943	£3,655
Admin & Insurance	£4,732	£4,076
Next Steps	£11,634	£6,300
Sundries	£290	£32
Community Gardens	£73	£216
Charities/Christian Aid	£964	£305
Transfer to Buildings Acc.	£24,740	
	<u>£78,592</u>	<u>£44,281</u>
Opening balance		£15,336
Closing balance as at 31/12/21		£23,597

Income – in 2020 we managed to **claim Gift aid** and back date it for 4 years which gave us £32,554. However, the majority of this was transferred into the Buildings account as money had previously been borrowed from the buildings account and needed to be replaced. 2021 gave us nearly £9,000.00 in gift aid which helps the accounts a great deal. We managed to pull some money in from **Hires** in 2020 but this was drastically reduced in 2021. People were just not ready to return to “normal” social gatherings just yet. However, we have already seen an upturn in this, so 2022 Hires income should increase, although of course, once building work commences the hires income will reduce again. **Donations** are less than half than in 2020 but we received two bequests in 2020. **Sundries and Gift Day** has a £0 amount in 2021 as we didn’t have a Gift Day in 2021. A Gift Day event was held in February so this will show in the accounts of 2022.

Expenditure – **URC payments** slightly increased in 2021, the main increase is due to URC slightly reducing the payments through Covid in 2020. URC payments generally increase at a rate of around £1000.00 a year. **Admin and Insurance** cost are slightly lower in 2021 as 2020 includes historic Baptist Union fees. Insurance costs are increasing year on year especially with parts of the building not being used (increases premiums)

There is a huge difference in the **energy costs** for 2020 against 2021. Obviously, we were not in the building for a major part of 2020 or 2021. However, the majority of energy costs in 2020 were in the first 4 months of the year in total over £6k plus as a lot of the bills were estimated we ended up with credit on the account which brought the 2021 bills down. I am expecting a considerable rise in the 2022 energy costs due to the building being used as nearly back to "Normal" and of course the significant rise in energy costs.

We reduced the amount of **cleaning** through 2020 while the church was not open, however once we began holding services again we had to increase cleaning and increase the cleaning again once we were hiring out spaces again. The cleaning company has also increased its cost and this has been taken into account when setting new hire charges. We did compare prices with other companies and looked at hiring an individual to take on the cleaning but that in itself comes with difficulties. We decided to stay with Prestigious cleaning after negotiating a better price with them.

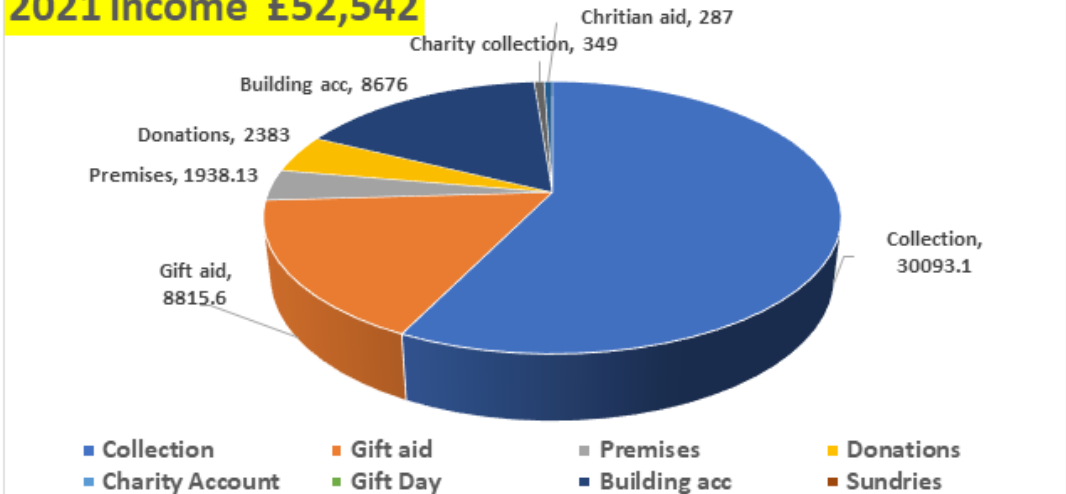
As you can see there is a large increase in the amount spent on **building maintenance** last year this was mostly down to preparing the building to be used again, Legionnaire testing, Europest loft clearance and carpet removal.

Pulpit costs are not really comparable as we have not received the bill for 2021 yet but it will probably be in the region of £2000.00 as it was in 2020

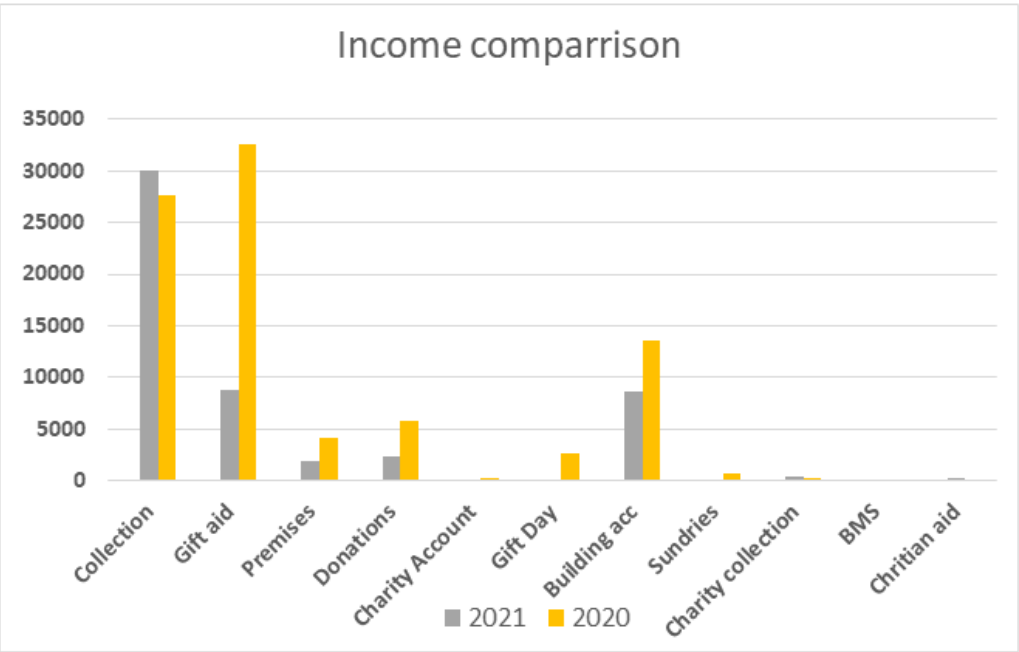
Summary – Given that 2020 and 2021 have been difficult years, The church has done very well over both years in maintaining a good level of income that covers the expenditure. Ideally and normally a surplus would be made over the year to allow us to build a reserve which would allow us to continue doing Gods work wherever and whenever we can. Hopefully when the new part of the building is complete we will be in a position where we can support projects that need our help while maintaining a risk reserve to see our Church through any difficult times.

All the accounts for 2019, 2020 and 2021 have been successfully audited by Phillip Tuckett

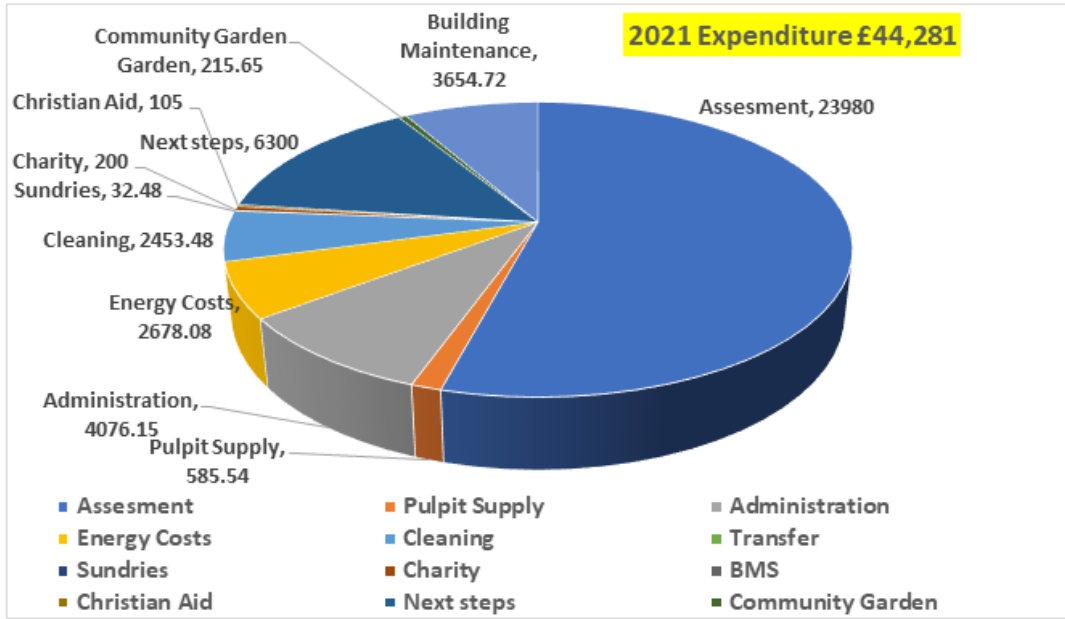
2021 Income £52,542

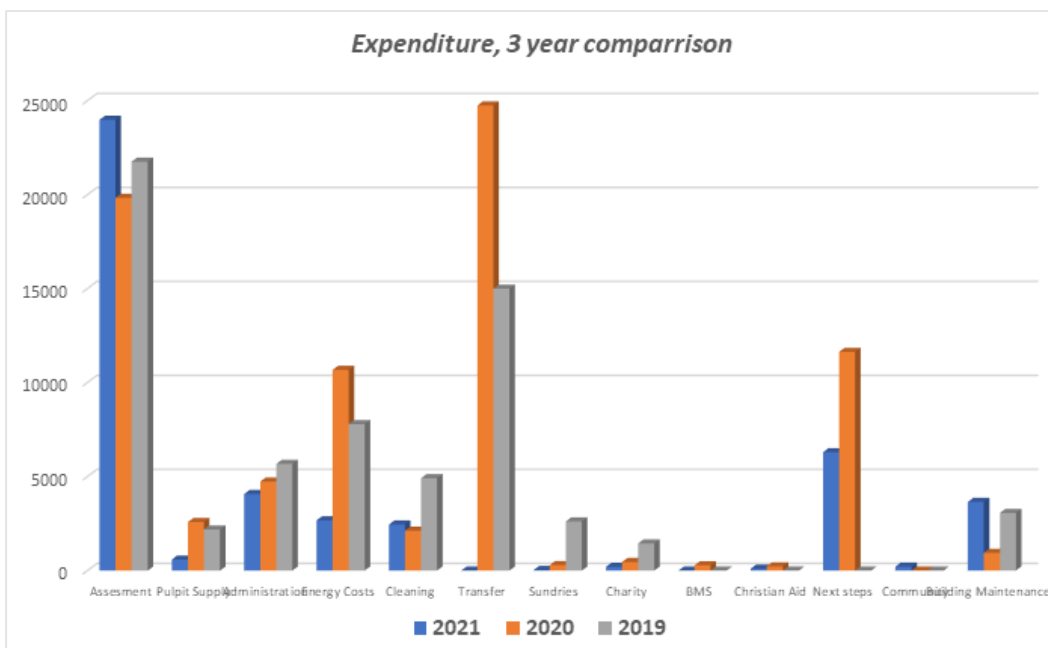
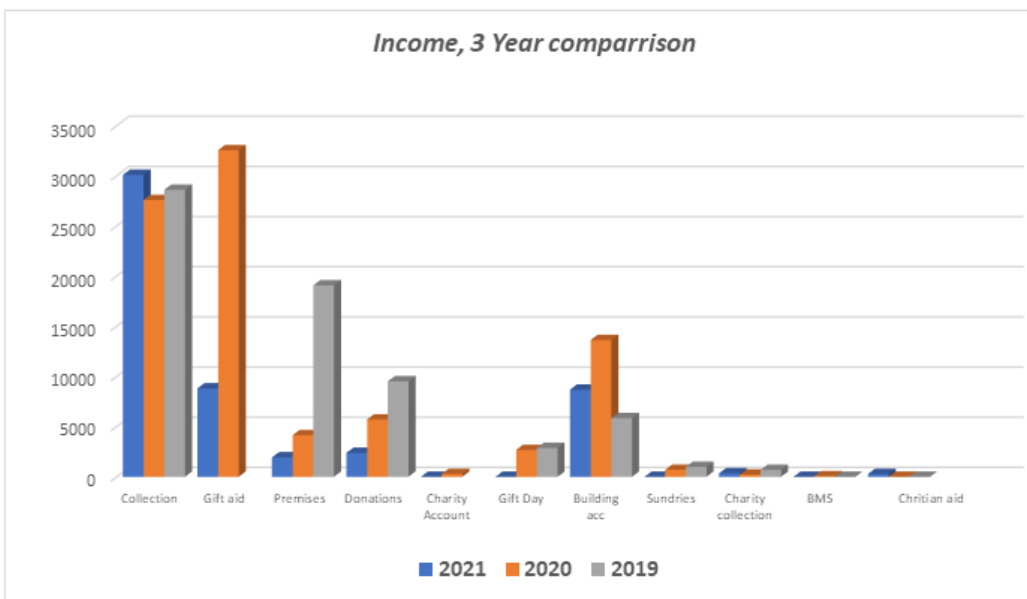
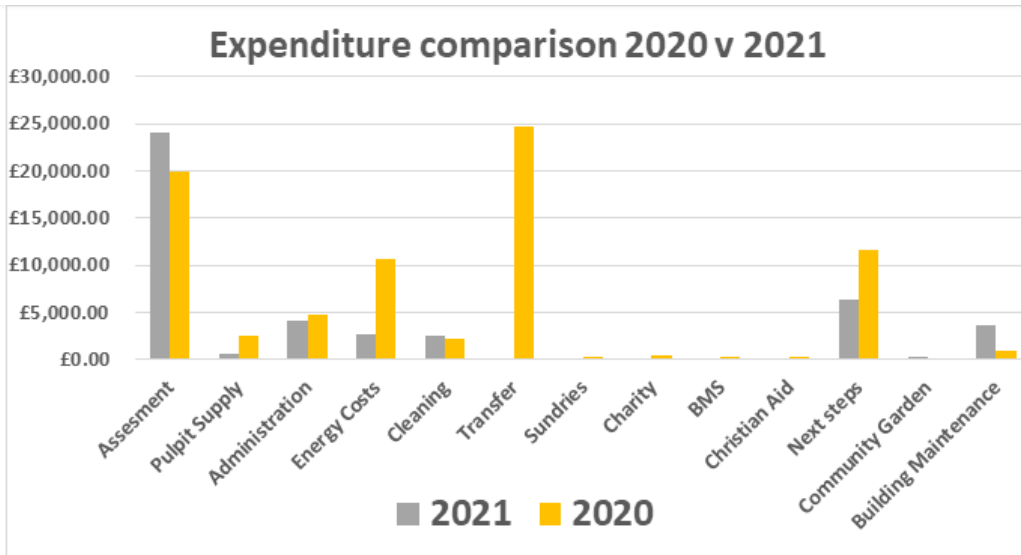


Income comparrison



2021 Expenditure £44,281





Canton Uniting Church - Annual Accounts

Year to 31st December 2021

General Fund Receipts and Payments Account

Receipts

Offerings

Collections	£30,093.10
Gift Aid Receipts	£8,815.60

Other Voluntary Giving

Donations	£2,383.00
Gift Day	£0.00
Charity Giving	£349.00
BMS	£0.00
Christian Aid	£287.00

Premise Reimbursement

Hall Rentals	£1,938.13
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Sundry Income	£0.00
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Transfers

Transfers from Building Account	£8,676.00
Transfers from Charity Account	£0.00

Total General Fund Receipts £52,541.83

Payments

Ministry

URC Assessment	£23,980.00
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Pulpit Supply	£585.54
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Premise Costs

Energy	£2,678.08
Cleaning	£2,453.48
Building Maintenance	£3,654.72
Administration	£4,076.15

Next Steps & Consultancy Expenses	£6,300.00
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Community Garden Expenses	215.65
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BMS Payments	0.00
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Sundry Payments	£32.48
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Christian Aid	£105.00
Nominated Charity Payments	£200.00

Transfers

Transfer to Building Account	£0.00
Total General Fund Payments	<u>£44,281.10</u>

Summary

Total General Fund Receipts	£52,541.83
Deduct Total General Fund Payments	<u>£44,281.10</u>
Surplus/ (Deficit) for the year	£8,260.73

Balance brought forward	£15,336.42
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Balance carried forward	<u><u>£23,597.15</u></u>
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Women's Fellowship (Forming Part of the General Fund Account)

(Bequest from Mrs Phyllis Morris)

Receipts	£0.00
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Payments

Summary

Total Fund Receipts	£0.00
Deduct Total Fund Payments	<u>£0.00</u>
Surplus/ (Deficit) for the year	£0.00

Balance brought forward	£289.61
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Balance carried forward	<u><u>£289.61</u></u>
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Charities Fund Receipts and Payments Account

Receipts

Donations	£13.10
Interest Account	<u>£0.23</u>
Total Receipts	<u><u>£13.33</u></u>

Payments

Transfers General Account	<u>£0.00</u>
Total Payments	<u><u>£0.00</u></u>

Summary

Total Fund Receipts	£13.33
Deduct Total Fund Payments	£0.00
Surplus/ (Deficit) for the year	£13.33

Balance brought forward £2,348.60

Balance carried forward **£2,361.93**

Building Fund Receipts and Payments Account

Receipts

Donations	£0.00
Interest from Building Account	£7.10
Transfers from General Account	£0.00
Total Building Fund Receipts	£7.10

Payments

Transfers General Account	£8,676.00
Total Building Fund Payments	£8,676.00

Summary

Total Building Fund Receipts	£7.10
Deduct Total Building Fund Payments	£8,676.00
Surplus/ (Deficit) for the year	-£8,668.90

Balance brought forward £75,879.29

Balance carried forward **£67,210.39**

Assets

Bank Balances

Lloyds Bank Current Account	£23,886.76
Lloyds Bank Charities Account	£2,361.94
Lloyds Bank Building Account	£67,210.39
	£93,459.09

Representing balances on the following funds

General Fund	£23,597.15
Women's Fellowship	£289.61
Charities Fund	£2,361.93
Building Fund	£67,210.39
	£93,459.08

ANNUAL REPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT GROUP, June 2022

The Development Project Group tried to keep the development of the church site and the creation of a community garden moving through the worst of lockdown. It has been great in this past year to be able to meet together again and to be able to share progress, ideas and issues with the church so that this becomes, once again, something that belongs to the whole church.

At the first church meeting where we were able to gather together (date??), we shared the journey that we had been on and the reality of what we could expect to achieve. The Group had explored a wide range of options with the Design Team at Caroe & Partners, but these were limited by the funding and resources available, the challenge of fundraising and the significant increase in building and other costs that had taken place during the pandemic. The outline design that our project manager, Chris Atherton, showed the church provided the basic accommodation needed. However, it also gave far more scope and space for the development of the community garden.

The Church Meeting understood the difficulties and agreed that the Development Group should continue to work with Caroe & Partners on the designs for the building. There would need to be consultation with the church and community before agreeing the final plans. Caroe would also then help the church to get the building control and planning agreements needed.

At the same time, the Church Meeting agreed that the Development Group should progress plans for the garden. Thanks to great connections that have been made by Eva Elliot, Lucy Robinson and Marieke Arthur, the church has joined the Social Farms and Gardens Network, and also made local connections with Edible Cardiff and Grow Cardiff.

Most importantly, Eva secured us mentoring support from Renew Wales. This organisation is funded to support community groups to become more sustainable. The connection has led to specialist advice from Peter Draper of Rounded Developments, on how we can take the church buildings, old and new, closer to carbon neutral. Renew Wales has also provided support from Isla Horton to pave the way for community involvement to get the garden growing. We are exploring how to change Treganna Family Centre so that it can become the charity that helps us take forward plans for Treganna Community Garden. However, our garden enthusiasts have started calling themselves, About the Rhubarb!

At the service on 15th May, many of you contributed ideas for what you would like our garden to be and do. People agreed that it should be a place of wellness and healing, as well as a touching place with the community. The Worship Group are now planning linked services which will help with our reflections on how we use buildings and garden for our mission in the Canton community. We will come back to the church with an update on the plans for the buildings. In the meantime, anyone interested in helping with the garden can join About the Rhubarb to discuss what you would like to see and how you can get involved.

The coming year will see further progress: the Development Group remains committed to helping the church to be good stewards of God's creation and the resources that have been entrusted to us, especially in the face of the climate crisis.

Prayer Call

August			
1st	Eva Elliott	2nd	Barbara Smith
2nd	Calum Ellis	3rd	David and <u>Malou</u> Smith
3rd	Alan Farnham	4th	Our discipleship of prayer
4th	Ceri and Phil George	5th	Liz Williams and family
5th	Linda Gibbs	6th	Kenneth Woods
6th	Rachel, Kate, <u>Evan</u> and Emily Gill	7th	Rita, Francis, Gloria, <u>Gabriel</u> and Michael
7th	Those working with animals	8th	Tom and Marieke Arthur
8th	Bronwyn Gregory	9th	Chris and Megan Atherton
9th	Rob, Fiona, <u>Isobel</u> and Alistair Harding	10th	Geraint Atherton
10th	Jean Hawkins	11th	Our daily work
11th	Barbara Jones	12th	Gwyn Atherton
12th	Sian, Joshua and <u>Harri</u> Jones	13th	Lowri and Amelia Baldwin
13th	Elinor Kapp	14th	Keith Bick
14th	HIV and AIDs	15th	Catherine Blakemore
15th	<u>Olaide</u> , Taiwo, Ore, <u>Korede</u> and <u>Nifemi Kassim</u>	16th	Doreen <u>Cassam</u>
16th	Jenny <u>Keenor</u>	17th	Debbie Cheshire, <u>Paige</u> and Lola
17th	Beverley, Christopher, <u>Ioan</u> and Evelyn Kibble	18th	Racial justice
18th	Cindy Lim, <u>Arwyn</u> McCabe, Nye Buckle and <u>Caian</u>	19th	David Cooke
19th	Ann and Tom Lloyd	20th	Clive Curtis and Constantino <u>Dumangane</u>
20th	Angie Luther	21st	Fred and Rowena Davies
21st	Doctors and Nurses	22nd	David Dean, Martha <u>McInnes</u> and family
22nd	Millie McQuade	23rd	Ann Dobbins
23rd	Audrey Morgan	24th	Marc and Alison <u>Dummer</u>
24th	Barbara, Hugh and Bence <u>Morgans</u>	25th	Farmers
25th	Michael and Katie <u>Munnick</u> , Isla, <u>Leo</u> and Tate	26th	Gareth Dyer
26th	Danielle Phillips, Laura, Will, Cian and Ruby	27th	Hiroko, <u>Richard</u> and Emily Edge
27th	Mandy and Steve Phillips	28th	Toni Edwards
28th	Retail and office workers	29th	Eva Elliott
29th	Abigail, Matt, <u>Brooke</u> and Toby Powell	30th	Calum Ellis
30th	Julie Richards		October
31st	Janice <u>Richens</u>	1st	Alan Farnham
	September	2nd	Cardiff Food Bank
1st	Lucy Robinson and Andrew Wilson-Dickson	3rd	Ceri and Phil George
		4th	Linda Gibbs

Pastoral News

We pray for Millie McQuade and her daughter, Helen, who have both been unwell. They are being looked after by Caitlin and Natasha.

We think of Tom Arthur, expecting to go into hospital in the next week for a hip operation.

We remember Barbara Jones, Toni Edwards and Jean Hawkins in our prayers.

We think of Norah Morgans, being cared for at home by John, and by her family.

We remember Cath Blakemore, who is receiving more treatment at present.

We think of Ceri George, who, having recovered from covid, suffered a fall, and has just had surgery. We hope she has a speedy recovery.

Alan Farnham who has been struggling with mobility issues.

We pray for all members of the church family who are on holiday. We look forward to being together in September.

Anne and Tom Lloyd celebrated 50 years of marriage.

It is a joy to welcome Katie and Michael Munnick into membership of the church.



A flavour of Japan was brought to the Rhondda last term, when Hiroko and friends from the Japan Society visited YGG Llyn y Forwyn in Ferndale as a part of an international theme. Hiroko played the koto and sang to the Junior Department children and parents of year 6 pupils.

Diolch, eto!

Notice:

Joy & Dave Thompson have changed their email address. It is now. - gjt1939@icloud.com

Sunday Lectionary Readings for August and September, 2022

7th August, 2022 “Right here right now.”

Genesis 15.1-6; Psalm 33.12-22; Hebrews 11.1-3,8-16; Luke 12.32-40

Jesus tells his disciples not to be afraid for God is offering the kingdom. Treasure is in heaven rather than on earth, because ‘where your treasure is, there will be your heart also’ (v.34). God is like a master who is ready to serve his own servants – but be always alert and ready, because you don’t know when he will arrive.

The Gospel reading makes an astute connection between treasure and our emotions, between what we value and the values that drive us. The challenge is to understand what real treasure is. Real treasure comes from God. This is treasure that will last forever. Yet, it can be found right here, right now; and we find it by looking at what God is doing all around us and joining in the work of his kingdom.

This week we explore where we are looking for treasure.

14th August, 2022 “An eruption of emotions”

Jeremiah 23.23-29; Psalm 82; Hebrews 11.29 – 12.2; Luke 12.49-56

Jesus warns that following his way is likely to bring conflict and division, even within a family. He also encourages people to see and understand what is really going on in the world, just as they understand that a cloud usually means rain.

There are powerful words in this week’s reading about the impact of the choice to align yourself with Jesus. And the potential to divide people who choose discipleship over familial loyalty leads to an eruption of emotions from Jesus. The emotions expressed allow us to see the humanity Jesus shares with us. He displays vulnerability and, as we think about how he felt, we can take a moment to look at our own vulnerabilities and strong emotions.

This week we explore what happens in moments of vulnerability.

21st August, 2022 “Set free”

Isaiah 58.9b-14; Psalm 103.1-8; Hebrews 12.18-29; Luke 13.10-17

When Jesus encounters a crippled woman in the synagogue he heals her. However, it was a sabbath and some in the synagogue didn’t like it. Jesus accused them of hypocrisy: they would happily care for their animals, so why do they object to him caring for this woman?

Whether the woman, who had lived with her condition for many years, had been ignored or overlooked we don’t know, but Jesus saw what she needed and responded immediately. There is no excuse for a lack of care and compassion. What might we be missing, overlooking or ignoring? How can we respond like

Jesus to the needs of others even when they're hidden or ignored?

This week we explore what stops us seeing and responding to needs.

28th August, 2022 "Finding a place for all"

Proverbs 25.6-7; Psalm 112; Hebrews 13.1-8,15-16; Luke 14.1,7-14

Jesus is invited to dinner on the sabbath where he is closely watched. He challenges the behaviour of his host and other guests by telling two parables: one reminds people to be humble, and the other to give without necessarily expecting anything in return.

The words exclusion and inclusion are very familiar to us, but these are not modern terms or ideas. In the ancient world, issues of inclusion were also very important. Just as today, being included by the right people allowed someone to move 'on and up' in society. But Jesus has a very different message. He challenges the practice of making sure you are in the right place at the right time, and tells those around him to seek instead a life of humility. Not only that, he says they should actively seek to include and give priority to those who were excluded by society. For Jesus that meant the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. Who does it mean for us?

4th September, 2022 "Navigating Decisions"

Deuteronomy 30.15-20; Psalm 1; Philemon 1-21; Luke 14.25-33

While travelling with a large crowd, Jesus tells them that following him involves difficult choices. He speaks of conflict, renouncing family ties and economic security, and of 'carrying the cross'. He gives two brief illustrations (parables) that caution against making a hasty decision. It's easy to allow our faith to be an added extra to our busy lives. This week's readings challenge us to explore whether we are willing to accept the consequences of following Jesus, even to the cross. By what standards do we live? What truly influences us? And is God's way evident in our whole life?

This week we explore the choices and consequences of travelling with Jesus.

11th September, 2022 Mission Possible

Exodus 32.7-14; Psalm 51.1-10; 1 Timothy 1.12-17; Luke 15.1-10

Jesus tells two parables that explore the importance of searching, of not giving up on that which is lost: one about a shepherd searching for a lost sheep, the other about a woman who cleans her house until she finds a lost coin. Jesus' parables of the lost sheep and coins are a reminder to us that God never stops searching for those who are lost. These stories were told to religious people to challenge them about who they discounted. Have we become complacent and forgotten the call to

love all people?

This week we explore why it matters to search for the lost.

18th September, 2022 Real- life stories

Amos 8.4-7; Psalm 113; 1 Timothy 2.1-7; Luke 16.1-13

Jesus tells one of his most challenging parables. A manager's dishonesty has been found out and, frightened for his future, he makes a series of dodgy deals with his master's clients. The disciples are then invited to reflect on how best to live in the real world, and whether their true master is God or worldly matters. All the readings this week challenge us to think about the way that we use who we are and what we possess to bring transformation to the communities where God has placed us. It's easy for us to separate the sacred from the secular – but God doesn't make that distinction.

This week we explore being faithful with the resources we've got, in order to build community.

25th September, 2022 "Life before Death"

Amos 6.1a, 4-7; Psalm 146; 1 Timothy 6.6-19; Luke 16.19-31

Jesus tells a parable about an unnamed rich man and a poor man called Lazarus. In this life, one of these has all the comforts while the other has nothing; but in the afterlife, their fates are reversed. Jesus challenges his audience not to neglect the demands of justice in this life. The readings today ask us to consider whether we walk the walk or just talk the

talk. Can we begin to build the kingdom of God here and now? What can we actually do to make this a reality?

This week we explore what it means to live by our Christian principles.

2nd October, 2022 "Faith and Freedom"

Habakkuk 1.1-4; 2.1-4; Psalm 37.1-9; 2 Timothy 1.1-14; Luke 17.5-10

When the disciples ask Jesus to increase their faith, Jesus reminds them that if they have even a tiny amount of faith they can achieve extraordinary things. Then he says that they are simply being invited to fulfil the task given to them. In a world of constant advertising, fake news and peer pressure, our faith in Jesus can be our one fixed point. However frail our faith may seem, it gives us a freedom from other pressures. Do our lives reflect that freedom we have in belonging to Jesus?

This week we explore who we belong to and how that

CANTON UNITING CHURCH was established in 1995 when New Trinity United Reformed Church joined with Llandaff Road Baptist Church and in 2013 joined with Grand Avenue United Reformed Church Ely which in 2005 had united with Saintwell URC. We are committed to ecumenism through our links with Cytûn, the Covenanted Churches and Churches Together in Canton. Our previous minister was the Chair of the Committee of the Covenanted Baptists which, with the Church in Wales, the Presbyterian, Methodist and United Reformed Churches seeks to bring about the goal of uniting together.

CONTACTS

Ministers: Revd. Martha McInnes - Tel.: 07519 831405
Revd. David Dean - Tel.: 07772 714388

Secretary: Mrs Fiona Harding
23 Llanfair Road, Cardiff CF11 9PZ - Tel: 029 2025 7783
Email: cucsecretary@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer: Mrs Beverley Kibble
75 Bartley Wilson Way, Cardiff CF11 8EN – Tel: 029 2140 6306
Email: bubbev71@yahoo.co.uk

Chair: Mrs Alison Walker Tel: 029 20221380.
Email: a.m.walker47@gmail.com

Website: www.cantonuniting.org.uk

USUAL WEEKLY DIARY & MONTHLY EVENTS -

The Wednesday evening prayers on Zoom have finished.

CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

AND FINALLY ... Please hand in material for the next Newslink to Hugh Morgans by the end of the Morning service on **Sunday, the 18th of September, 2022.**