

2019 UPDATE

NEW COMMUNITY NETWORK

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New Community Update 2019

New Community Church is a resource church called to serve the city, the nation and the nations.

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Introduction

Our theme for the year was 'laying foundations for growth' based on the Scripture in Isaiah 54:2:

"Enlarge the place of your tent,
stretch your tent curtains wide,
do not hold back;
lengthen your cords,
strengthen your stakes."

We have set out a very ambitious 2025 Legacy Vision, and as we move towards it, we have identified some things that need to be in place for the vision to be realised.

The Trustees have done a lot of work in ensuring all of our legal frameworks are fit for purpose. A huge thanks to Chan, Shelly, Kevin, Theodora, and Chris. We have put some time into working through how the various parts of our organisation work together - running a church,

and charitable activities, and a business, and a wider apostolic ministry can have its challenges!

In March, the takeaway from the Pioneer Leaders Conference was 'If we want to go further, we have to go deeper'. 2019 has been a year of going deeper in every way, not only organisationally, but individually. As we continue this journey into 2020 and beyond, we are trusting that the foundations we are laying, and



the seeds that we have sown will bear much fruit.

Thank you for your continued support.

Billy Kennedy

Church Life

Last year our church communities continued to thrive, seeing people of all ages and backgrounds come together to encounter Jesus for the first time, get to know him better and feel as though they belonged to the family. We ran Sunday services alongside a range of midweek activities to further develop community life.

Across our Sunday services and midweek activities, we saw fresh faces passing through our doors with new individuals, couples and families added to our number, and our building being utilised to promote the arts across our city.

As a community, we continued to reach out to our neighbours, running successful Alpha courses and community events such as Family Movie Nights, Quiz Nights, Pitstop, and further outreach events. Our Easter and Christmas celebrations were

widely attended, seeing faces old and new join us to celebrate two of the main dates in the church calendar.

In June, we joined with the church worldwide for our Thy Kingdom Come week of prayer, during which New Community partnered with local churches in Southampton to host our first Beacon Event at Central Hall, which was available to watch via live stream.

For six months of 2019, we ran weekly Going Deeper encounter evenings, looking to create space for worship and encounter, prayer and the prophetic.

In September 2019, we launched our Next Generation Pathway, which is for children, youth and students from ages 0-18. Up to 120 children attended one of our two Sunday morning services each week, and we interacted with around 45 youth either on Sundays or at our midweek groups.

In the autumn term, we launched two new monthly evenings; Awaken, a development of the Six+, hosting inspiring speakers like Pete Greig and Ness Wilson; and CityWorship, creating a new space for worship within the city.

In November, we had our first Church Away Day in Winchester, with around 200 people attending. We had fun, got to know each other better, and were inspired to step out in faith by John Scott and Jamie Watters.

We ended the year with a number of wonderful Christmas celebrations, including Kings Chamber Orchestra, our evening Christmas Celebration, Christingle service, and an all-age pop-up nativity service. For the last Sunday of the year, many of our Central congregation gathered for a forest walk followed by a bring-and-share lunch.

Central Congregation

2019 has been a year in which God was calling us deeper into Him and closer together as a community so that we might be more like Him, and shine more brightly within our city.

This year, it was exciting to see people across the generations powerfully encountering God and looking to go deeper. We have been encouraged by what God has been doing amongst us this year, creating fresh environments for people to meet with Jesus. The stories of people discovering a fresh passion for Jesus, experiencing a new sense of belonging, and stepping into new daily rhythms with God, were really encouraging.

We have focused on developing the life of our community, on helping those who are new to get connected into the church community, and to take a fresh look at our connect groups. Over the year, we baptised 10 people, and have seen a number of new families and individuals join the church.



Sholing Congregation

This year at St Andrew's, we worked hard, had fun, and made Christ known within our local community. It was a year to celebrate all that God has done over the past 50 years.

This year, we saw a growing sense of belonging and deepening relationships forming within the church family. Foundational discipleship principles were taught in a daytime group, and a new Connect Group was launched. Engagement with the local community continued to grow through many successful initiatives including the Cafe Bar, Quiz Night, Movie Nights and Halloween Pit Stop.

In November, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the opening of St Andrews Church, Sholing. We hosted a Sunday celebration service, which included a time to reflect, celebrate and pray for the church and local community into the future, with contributions from several community groups.



Next Generation

New Community Church are passionate about seeing the next generation encounter Jesus for themselves.



In 2019, we pursued wisdom from those who have gone before us, stepped out to try new things, and persevered with our call to pass faith onto the next generation.

Highlights of the year included; the launch of the youth weekend away in Swanage, which saw 30 young people building community, growing closer to Jesus and encountering the Holy Spirit; and the children's Easter Holiday Club, where 30 children from both New Community Church and Hope Community School spent two days engaging with games, crafts, worshipping and learning about what Jesus has done for us.

This year, we also appointed a new youth worker, carried out two secondary school assemblies, hosted a children's leader network breakfast, began to build stronger relationships with churches in the city, and launched the City Worship events.

After much thought, research and development, New Community's Next Generation Pathway was launched in September 2019. The Pathway focuses on 'the journey that our children and young people take towards Jesus as they grow up', and consists of five core elements, that are values at every stage of the Pathway: truth, encounter, family, gateways, and milestones.

Throughout 2019, our church children's and youth groups continued to thrive, with steady numbers and enthusiasm throughout the year at both Central and Sholing. Our two community toddler groups, Tiny Treasures at Central Hall, and Stay and Play at St Andrew's, continued to impact many families in the local communities.

All of our Next Generation activities would not be possible without the help of our great children and youth teams. Over the course of the year, 70+ people were involved in serving at one of our Next Generation groups.

House of Prayer

Encountering the Presence through a heart and passion for worship.



This year, we sought to encounter God's presence together as a community, raising the profile of worship, prayer and the prophetic within the congregation.

With a sense that God wanted to meet with us in a very simple but powerful way, we started six months of weekly 'Going Deeper' evenings in March, ensuring that the Holy Spirit had space to move, shape and direct our meetings. We saw healings, words of knowledge shared, and God speak to people in fresh ways; the flow of worship, prophetic and prayer coming together. We are ready and open to hear what God wants to do next.

The House of Prayer team provided opportunities to access Guided and Contemplative Prayer sessions, as well as enabling the church to participate in the Thy Kingdom Come week.

Our Thy Kingdom Come week of prayer was a great success. Our week commenced with 'Presence', a chance for people to come and reflect in a more contemplative manner. We then held encounter evenings from Monday to Friday, with around 40-50 people at each meeting. Each evening had a different prayer focus including; Hope Community School, the city, the nation, our youth and children, and families.

The Thy Kingdom Come week concluded with our Beacon Event, where churches from around the city came together in partnership to pray and worship together. The week's events were underpinned by the Pray For Five initiative – mobilising the church to pray for those yet to know Jesus.

Alpha

As a church, we recognise that Jesus' extraordinary, unconditional love for us is where life starts.

As always with Alpha, the aim is to provide a relaxed and informal environment where people, regardless of age, background or past experience, can explore and ask questions about the life-changing and life-giving message of Jesus.

With over 1.5 million people in the UK and 23 million people worldwide having been on Alpha, the course enables people to discover how Jesus is relevant to their life and the world we live in today.

In 2019, New Community Church organised and ran a fantastic seven-week course at Coffee Lab (on London Road), on which we had 20 guests, from a wide range of ages, backgrounds and past experiences, attend. A number of those guests have since gone on to get connected into our church family, growing in their faith and serving on teams.

One guest spoke about how, before doing Alpha, he felt very low and adrift, questioning the very point and purpose of life. He had always thought Christianity was nothing more than a 'set of rules', none of which he felt able to keep. Having completed the course, he has discovered Christianity, at its heart, is about a relationship, in which he is loved and valued by Jesus in a way he never thought possible.



The Hub

A continuing experience of sharing life, care and honour amongst a special group of God's people.



The Hub is a regular gathering point for those aged 50 and over to get together over lunch.

The aims of The Hub are to share fellowship, enjoy the rich experience and faith of the attendees, and to look to make our full contribution to church life, particularly through prayer and sharing the fruits of many years following Jesus. We have lunch together, a short talk or a discussion on a current topic and share a time of Communion.

In 2019, The Hub met together monthly and built a strong sense of care and valuing each other. This year, there was a strong emphasis on prayer, both for the issues we face as a group, and for the church that Jesus is building. This year, Senior Leader Billy Kennedy has been carrying a word for The Hub age group, particularly the 'Remainers' – those that have continued in their faith over decades – to 'pray

specifically with faith and authority to see significant fruit'.

In line with our aim to encourage across the generations of the church, in March, we had children from Hope Community School's reception class join us one lunchtime. The children brought their storybooks to read to Hub members and, in return, had a story read by Hub member Maggie Orchard.



Community Café

The Community Café makes a difference to the lives of the poorest, vulnerable and marginalised in our city.



Community Café

The Christmas café and, soon after, the Community Café, first began in the Christmas of 2006. Since then, every Sunday afternoon and at Christmas, Central Hall has hosted a free cooked meal to some of the most vulnerable people in Southampton, including many of the city's homeless.

With growing numbers of homelessness on our streets, the café is still as relevant in 2019 as it was when we first began the journey. Every week, the cafe provides a friendly and inclusive space that brings together a vibrant and diverse community that often feel marginalised, neglected or misunderstood.

During 2019, the number of guests attending the Community Café grew by about 10% on the previous

year, feeding around 85 guests and 10 volunteers each week, and exceeding 100 guests on a couple of occasions. The Christmas Café served 108 guests on Christmas Day. We had a great response from the community through the donation of gifts and through people offering their time to volunteer. The team continues to feel privileged and humbled to be part of the café and are incredibly grateful for the continued support from New Community and the amazing team of volunteers who make the café happen.

2019 has seen an increase in hardships for many of the poorest in our city. This has been reflected in higher attendance and, on occasions, more tension between guests. However, something that always helps to soften the atmosphere at the café is the local ukulele community band, who join us once a month to play and sing, with many of the guests joining in.

Hope Community School

As a church, New Community is committed to supporting Hope Community School and contributing to its Christian ethos.



Hope Community School

At the end of 2019, we had 32 volunteers giving their time and using their skills to support the children and families at Hope Community School and in the local community. We are so grateful for all those who partner with us in bringing hope and making a real difference to the children and families in our community.

This year, we have continued to run Creative English, engaging 37 learners. Our weekly Bake Club continued, with 23 Bakers and a special half-term kids baking club, which was a real success. After-school Lego club and dance clubs (Hope Hopsters) were run for the children, as well as weekly 1:1 reading support for children who do not have an opportunity at home or need a little extra encouragement. A number of school staff and parents also engaged with the offer of chaplaincy, requesting support.

Our weekly coffee mornings continued to grow, connecting between 15 and 20 families every week. Parents really engaged with sessions looking at both our Christian school values and well-being. This year we also opened our prayer shed, situated in the playground to offer children the opportunity to learn how to pray and to explore the Christian value of the week.

A story of Hope: We ran our first daytime Alpha, seeing seven families attending for one or more sessions. We had some great conversations and times together and are looking at how we can develop this in the new year both offering the same opportunity to more families, as well as continuing to journey with those who came to our first course.

International Projects

With your generous support - praying, fundraising, and volunteering for overseas trips - we were able to make a positive difference for many international communities.



School of Ministries

In 2019, we set out to develop our leadership training schools in Asia, Africa and Europe; to establish a new centre in a Muslim nation, and to see an increase in finance.

School of Ministries is a teaching and training programme which aims to develop and train leaders in Christian ministry, working mainly in developing countries where leaders would be unable to attend traditional training establishments. This year, a successful school was launched in the Muslim nation of Sierra Leone and a new school was begun in Kosovo, Eastern Europe. We also saw a significant increase in our financial support and made a great start made in the updating of our materials.

A report from Ruiru, Kenya:

Our main teacher was Themba Malaba from South Africa, who taught on Evangelism with great passion. We had about 50 church leaders and pastors, both men and women, from more than ten different denominations.

The teachings were very rich in content, powerful and motivating, and have changed mindsets on who evangelists are and how to get passionate about reaching out. When some students did their evening assignment of sharing their testimony, six people came to faith. And when we practised evangelism in pairs in the area surrounding our church, 33 people give their lives to Christ.'

New Community Kibera

This year, we continued to support, facilitate and develop, alongside our friends in Kibera, the following areas: micro-enterprise, community health care, soccer academy, Elpo School, community centre building development, the bi-weekly feeding project, and the Hope for Kibera Charity.

Three visits were made from the UK to Kibera facilitating: A revamped micro-enterprise project with a local management team and a collection

service; the release of affordable micro-loans to develop and expand a number of new small businesses; an introduction to community health care course; the launch of a campaign aimed at tackling menstrual poverty; a football coach training course for 60 Kibera coaches, followed by a locally organised football festival; an introduction to school safeguarding and classroom management for 18 informal primary schools; the launch of a new website; and the support of an ongoing feeding project and Elpo school lunches.

Working towards tackling menstrual poverty:

Dealing with menstrual poverty is rarely high on the to-do list. The reality is that it affects not just the individual, but it has a huge impact on female independence, social order, education and the local economy. Exclusion from education and work during menstruation, poor understanding, traditional culture and social stigma urgently need to be tackled. The introduction to the concept of 'moon cups' in recent Kibera healthcare training caused quite a stir. Although not for everyone, for a small investment, the impact could be huge. It has to be better than carrying donated boxes of tampons in hand luggage.



The Pioneer Network

New Community Church is part of the 'apostolic' Pioneer network of churches founded in the mid-80s. Pioneer is committed to the re-evangelisation of our nation and to seeing the Kingdom of God expressed in every sphere of society and culture.

The Pioneer Network

2019 marked a time of transition in Pioneer. Billy and Caroline Kennedy have been leading the Pioneer Network since 2009. In recent years, the work expanded into a number of other nations, and it was right that leadership of the work in the UK was handed on.

At the annual Pioneer Leaders Conference, it was announced that Ness Wilson from Open Heaven Church, Loughborough, would be stepping up to lead the UK team and Billy would assume the role of International Leader.

Networks of Pioneer churches have now formed in Australia/New Zealand,

SE Asia and Kenya, with ongoing work with networks in Cuba, Uganda, and Zambia. There are also a number of churches connecting in the USA.

In the UK, Pioneer partnered with a number of other churches and organisations to host the Wildfires Festival in West Sussex. This was a great opportunity to gather together, be inspired and seek God together for the nation.

2019 was a year of transition, enabling us to see new horizons, make new connections and serve others across the globe.



New Community Network 2018/2019 Financial Report

On an annual basis, we review and forecast a plan for our budgets and pray about where God wants us to use His money, while walking in faith that God will challenge us and stretch us to fulfil our vision.

We realise that we could not do all the work that God has for us as a church without you. You have been faithful in your giving, and together we are making a real difference. Our total giving this year was £664,380 (2018: £855,442) (includes restricted giving). (The variance with the previous year's figure is due to having received £185,000 for the sale proceeds of Orchard Lane.) On the whole, giving income has remained consistent.

A Culture of Generosity

A big thanks to all those that give financially. This year, we were able to give away £103,619 (2018 £159,315) to partners both in the UK and overseas, over and above our commitment to our local area (for example Community Cafe). Your generosity has transformed these UK-based organisations: Amber Charity, Barnabas Ministries, Christians In Science, Flowers of Justice, Firgrove Family Trust, Fusion, Hope Community School, New Life Homes Trust, Steve Lee Limited, The Children's Society, Pioneer Trust, and Wildfires Festival.

The continued financial support for the work of New Community Network from both regular and one-off donors in 2019 has been deeply encouraging.



New Community Ventures

The long-term goal of New Community Ventures is to make enough profit to cover the operating costs of both the church and Central Hall, so that in the future all church tithes can be used for mission and community projects.

Events and Buildings hire

Alongside continuing to be the temporary home of Hope Community School, Central Hall became a popular events venue in 2019, hosting live music, sporting events, comedy, theatre and celebrating the arts. The venue playing host to the Band of Skulls established the suitability of the venue for mainstream bands in terms of equipment, crowd flow, and facilities. The Music of Cream and the George Michael Story were just two further examples of live music events held at Central Hall, paving the way to

Seth Lakeman and Lloyd Cole appearing in 2020.

With so many new events hosted at Central Hall, many attendees were first-timers in the building. Many never knew of the venue and loved what they saw, while others spoke of their childhood experiences within the building and appreciated the building's rich history, which can be seen on our unique history wall. There were many days when Central Hall was alive with vibrancy, in line with the original Central Hall vision.

From a marketing perspective, brand guidelines, a new logo and tagline were introduced for Central Hall, alongside a services brochure and corporate videos, marketing Central Hall as an events space to new audiences. A CRM platform has been softly rolled out to track and measure ticket sales

for events. An audit of PA and lighting was done to accurately reflect the equipment available to various promoters. The introduction of a bar in the venue proved to be profitable, servicing guests attending events at the building.

This year, important behind-the-scenes structures and procedures that have been put in place to create a strong, compliant organisation.



CCTS

Central Counselling & Training Service (CCTS) continued to provide professional and accredited personal counselling, as well as training courses in counselling and supervision for those seeking to gain a Christ-centred and holistic approach to counselling.

In 2019, CCTS delivered 943 counselling sessions; a 17% increase on the previous year. Over the course of the year, counselling income was increased by 37%. Of our counselling clients, 89% said that they would highly recommend our service to others.

The introduction of a new pilot counselling scheme with Hope Community School was received positively by children, parents and teachers. We are planning to continue this service into 2020, also offering the programme to a second school.

Our profile and reputation grew this year through the fresh emphasis put on marketing our services, which included; rebranding, a new website, a fresh emphasis on social media, sending mailshots, networking, and running courses. Referrals have significantly increased (around 50%) since the new website was launched, leading to a three month waiting list for our services.

This year, our training courses grew in popularity and attendance, with the Pastoral Conference and our Introduction to the Enneagram both selling out via Eventbrite. We received consistently positive feedback from the courses and have set out a full programme for 2020.



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