

Minister`s Report to Ponte Sant`Angelo Methodist Church Annual General Church Meeting: June 2017

General :

Last November we concluded the **60th anniversary year of PSA**, launched the previous November with a special service. Our year ended on a high note, with the visit of previous minister and past President of the Methodist Church in Britain, the Rev. Ken Howcroft. He preached at the service during which I received a Lampedusa Cross from the Anglican Centre whose Director, Archbishop David Moxon, soon to retire, was present along with our own President of OPCEMI, Pastora Mirella Manocchio, and the new British Ambassador to the Holy See, HE Sally Axworthy. The hope to refocus our work looking out as well as in, by serving the World Church through a project in Ghana and in refurbishing our premises, was achieved through the generosity of the congregation who contributed over 4000 euros. The addition of the **Methodist Centre as a base for the Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome** on the fifth floor gives us a further resource for meetings and outreach and offers a base for those working and studying here who can support the work of PSA.

Worship :

During the year, through circumstances beyond our control, we lost the use of the grand piano (the concert organiser removed it) and the organ (it became beyond repair). Fortunately through the good offices of our organist Simone and the generosity of a church member, we acquired replacements for both. These have greatly enhanced our worship in the past few months. We know we can use a **digital projector** in church for special occasions but its siting downstairs only allows limited viewing and thought needs to be given to a larger screen and a better means of projection .

We have tried to continue the pattern of an **All Age Worship** service quarterly, thanks to the continued strength of the Sunday School because of the dedication of Sandra Mi and Angela Macquiban in their work with the children. The Christmas service was admirably conducted by Angela, assisted by our intern Lucy and the visiting student Sam in my unavoidable absence in the UK. The Easter Offering Service on **World Church Sunday** was well appreciated (and over 1000 euros given for its work) as have been the occasional contributions of our African and Filipino singers at services. The attendance at services has averaged over the past year at 66 (compared with 73 last year and 55 in 2014) within the range of 28 (Marathon Sunday!!) to 131 (May Service with Dutch group).

We have had a number of **visiting preachers** on special occasions or when I am away. Over the summer there were two ex-Presidents of the Irish and British Methodist Conferences here (Donald Ker and Tom Stuckey). We have been glad to welcome back a former minister (Pieter Bouman) and a minister sent from PSA (Peter Ciaccio) as part of our 60th anniversary celebrations with a pot luck lunch on each occasion. We had an official visit from the President of the British Methodist Conference, the Rev Dr Roger Walton, who preached on the Sunday and attended the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Anglican Centre, as well as meeting our own President and worshipping with the Sant`Egidio community. These events were well publicized and meant a lot to him as well as us.

Two **school groups** from the Netherlands have been (the last one singing in the service very effectively) as well as a number of smaller groups mostly from Colleges and Universities, including visits from the meeting in February of the **Methodist Theological Schools in Europe**, when their President, the Rev Sam McBratney preached.

Social :

It has been good to have a number of pot luck lunches as opportunities to greet each other as well as to welcome newcomers. In this respect those who have volunteered to prepare for worship each Sunday and act as ushers perform a valuable role in making people, especially visitors, welcome and accepted and to help them familiarize themselves with our services. We are hoping that these onerous tasks can be shared more widely in future, with a system to be discussed by the Church Council. A particular thanks to all those who week by week provide the refreshments for us after the services and also to those who give and arrange our flowers which enhance our worship. So too to Gladys Annan who regularly sets up the church ready for our worship.

Membership and Pastoral:

Despite losing two of our young people to Canada and Zimbabwe (we are glad when they pay us a return visit when school finishes), we have gained other people and families coming to us from the US, UK, Cameroon, India, Zimbabwe and elsewhere who have swelled our numbers. We have been glad to welcome Trevor Pook and Zeema Battaglia in **baptism** and to confirm Trevor Pook, as also with Mark Anand, and to receive Amanda Mancho into **membership by transfer**. We have also been pleased to welcome those who have come to study and work in Rome, including Rachel Barry and Chris, and Anna Twomlow, and those who have transferred their allegiance to us here from other churches.

The Church Council is considering ways in which to enhance our **pastoral care**, for which council member Lindsay Twomlow is taking responsibility. This will take particular note of those who would value visits and those who are new to Rome.

Christian Education and Resources :

The **fortnightly bible class** led by Sandra Mi continues to have a core membership of 7 or 8. This year they have been studying the Gospel of John. The **Saturday afternoon bible class** led by Alessia and Federico continues to meet in Casaletto. The **bible classes** after service on Sunday have attracted about 12 people for the hour. Taking as their themes so far an introduction to the readings from Matthew's Gospel for Advent and Lent. In June we shall give more attention to the Letter of James in a series of sermons and a bible study one Sunday.

The start of the more regular newsletter entitled **The Bridge** is now, with the excellent administrative assistance given by Lucy Cowpland, our intern, a monthly edition, available in hard copy, electronically by email and on the website, thanks to Paolo Livorati and Simone Rose.

Lucy has also started a **Young Adults group** which has a membership of up to 8 and meets on average fortnightly. They have been studying Ephesians as well as enjoying each other's company and offering mutual support.

Outreach:

The Church continues to be used for the teaching of Italian to those who value this additional help from **Consulta** in enhancing their job prospects. Lucy and I gave each of the students and helpers a gift from the Church at their last meeting before Christmas which was much appreciated. Lucy goes twice a week to the St. Paul's Refugee Centre to help in a language class for migrants.

Pastor Tim, Angela and Lucy help with the work of **Pozzo di Giacobbe** on the third Sunday evening of the month in distributing food outside Termini. In addition we have been glad to offer a welcome to Michael, a homeless travelling evangelist, who has been attending regularly.

We have again supported the work of the **Churches Together in Rome** with their Lenten Rice Bowl appeal for two projects in Ethiopia (street children in Addis Ababa) and in Syria (a refugee camp outside Aleppo) raising over 1.500 euros towards a total of nearly 20.000 euros.

Church Council:

We have met six times during the course of the past year and find it more comfortable meeting upstairs in the Methodist Centre. Our membership has been enhanced with the addition of Alessia Montelli during the course of the year. Lucy Cowpland, our intern, has been co-opted while she is here with us.

The projects for the **60th anniversary** of the English-speaking congregation at PSA include the **Ghana project** to help the disabled and a project to tidy the gallery and acquire more and better chairs. Both will benefit from the money raised during the year. We are still considering how to acquire the equipment needed to get the approved **heritage project** with OPM funding to create a cultural visitors' centre at the church led by a part time co-ordinator of volunteers. The latter will form part of phase two of the project we hope.

Improvements to the property have included the much needed sound proofing of the schoolroom which makes such a difference to our use of the space after worship (we can hear each other talk now!!) as well as for meetings and teaching. Thanks to Marcello Marinelli for overseeing these projects. We are meeting our target of giving 500 euros a month to match our outside commitments but we are overly reliant on outside bookings to cover all our other expenses including the improvements and additions.

Wider Methodist Involvement with OPCEMI and in Italy :

I have attended the annual Synod at Torre Pellice in August. This was a good occasion to meet up with old friends and make new. It was good to be present for the welcome of our colleague from the UK, Daniel Pratt Morris-Chapman and his family who are stationed in Milan. His father-in-law Bishop Titus Pratt, the Presiding Bishop of Ghana, preached at our Maundy Thursday service on his official visit to Italy, accompanied by our President and Pastor George Ennin. I went again at the invitation of the Veneto circuit in North Italy to lead a study day for preachers in Padua in November. I was invited to give a talk in a series of lectures for the Reformation 500 in Como, taking as my topic the relationship of Methodist spirituality with Luther and the Reformation.

We were pleased to receive a number of members of the Circuit to attend our Church Council in January, to share news of our church life and to hear of ways in which we could feel more connected with others in our circuit. Our collaboration with XX Settembre with

the work Sarah Mae has been doing is a positive sign of that. She and Lucy have worked on a number of projects together, including involvement in the **World Day of Prayer** there in March. I attended the annual **OPCEMI consultation** at Ecumene. The Marinellis attended the Circuit Consultation on our behalf.

Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome:

Half my time, theoretically, is devoted to being Director of MEOR and developing ecumenical links and dialogues here in Rome on behalf of British, European and World Methodism. This year this aspect on the work has increased. With the help of the intern in offering administrative help in church matters (preparation of notices and newsletters), Lucy has taken a lead in the practical hospitality we have offered to a growing numbers of people who have stayed at the Centre. To have her based there residentially has been a great help as we develop this aspect of work. It is hoped to make a new appointment for next year by the end of June.

Our relationships with other churches are particularly warm, especially with **All Saints** Anglican Church and our local Catholic parish church **San Giovanni dei Fiorentini**, to whose special events we are invited. I append a warm tribute from Canon Jonathan Boardman, the Chaplain at All Saints, which he wrote as part of his report to his AGM recently:

Notable was the fraternal support from the Rev'd Tim Macquiban, minister at Ponte Sant'Angelo Methodist Church who was, I believe, at every single special service either in a ministerial or choral role – and when singing supported as always by his wife Angela. I am glad that here in Rome we are such a good example of how the Church of England and the Methodist Church are living an ecumenical covenant.

Some areas overlap, as with my acting as Secretary and now since January as Chair of **Churches Together in Rome** which meets regularly month by month in the Centre. I am grateful to Jenny Smith for representing us on the **Consulta** as also Marius de Gaay Fortman for being on **CTiR**. We also host the monthly meetings over lunch of the Clergy Fraternal.

My membership of the **European Methodist Council** and as Co-Chair of the Methodist/Baptist international dialogue has taken me respectively to Oporto, Portugal, in September and Jamaica in February for periods of 6 and 8 days respectively. As a member of the **Roman Catholic/Methodist British Committee** I have attended the two meetings in November (London) and May (Edinburgh). I have also attended as Chair of the World Methodist Council Ecumenical Relationships Committee the meeting of the Committee of the **Global Christian Forum** in Havana Cuba in March. I have tried to balance the need to be at these meetings with preaching and pastoral needs of the local congregation. Wherever possible I want to feed back to PSA the insights of my ecumenical and diplomatic contacts.

Conclusion

All told it's been an even busier third year with the developments in the church and in MEOR! I look forward to working with you in the coming year during which I am due to have a sabbatical (probably from Easter onwards for three months) in my penultimate year. Thank you for your support for what we are doing as a Methodist witness on this strategic heritage site at the heart of this great city.

Pastor Tim