

## **Outreach Ministry – Report for 2021**

The Outreach Ministry is about working with the local community. By taking a firm Christian viewpoint, the Ministry looks for ways in which the Church and its members can assist the community both locally and abroad and spread the word of Christ.

The ministry membership is comprised of:

David Thompson (Co-Convener since October 2010)

Ann Spencer-Arscott (Co-Convener from October 2010)

Michael Barany

Jill Bosch de Noya

Norma Latham

David O’Neal

Chandra Persad

Pauline Richards

(Note - I have listed the active members of the committee for the last year.)

Due to Covid the focus on Outreach significantly changed over the past few years to support of the Feeding Programme and Loads of Love.

Here is a summary of the general activities during calendar year 2021:

### **- Feeding Programme**

Commenced its operations on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020 in response to demand for food security during the Covid pandemic. To 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 we had provided 123,178 meals to people in need. As at 30 September 2022 this number has increased to 156,114. Additionally, we have been giving out food vouchers (Market place gift cards to families with young children totaling \$65,125 since inception) to help cover the cost of diapers, formula etc.

To support this programme we have had an incredible financial response from both corporate and individual donors. To December 31, 2021 the programme had received a total of \$991,544 with a total operational cost of \$646,978 to cover food purchases. (as at 30 September 2022 we received donations of \$179,308 for the ytd and our expenses for the same period of \$224,047). Currently the programme has approximately \$298,000 in funds to support continued operations.

The programme could not have had such success without the army of volunteers both from within our church congregation and outside who have rallied to give their support. We have received direct corporate teams coming to work in the kitchen and give our

volunteers some relief from Liberty Mutual, PWC and Keller Williams, to name a few. More than half our meals are delivered to recipients across the island who do not have transport or are too infirm to come and collect their meals from church. Our meals are now being delivered Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays each week on 4 different routes and we thank the many drivers who have volunteered their time and their vehicles to continue the programme. In addition to the kitchen volunteers we have hundreds of bakers who regularly come and deliver desserts to provide a full balanced meal to the recipients.

I need to give special thanks to Jill Bosch de Noya who comes to the kitchen every day to help organize the kitchen, the distribution and all aspects to make the feeding programme such a smooth operation. Also thanks to Julia Kempe and Barbara Outerbridge to oversee the logistics in making sure we have volunteers each day and drivers for the routes. Julia has the unenviable job of overseeing the distribution of vouchers every two week. In March 2021 we employed Zahra Jabbar to be our chef for the kitchen and she now runs the kitchen operation as well as managing the food ordering. (Zahra is also ably helped by Savannah Attride-Sterling who has become invaluable helping Zahra each day). Zahra also cooks meals for church functions and has in fact prepared the lunch to follow the AGM meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022. Finally, a heartfelt thank you to Alistair Bennett, Doug Frith and Chris Garland for their support. We take it in turns to provide a male presence at the kitchen when it is open (Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday each week). Throughout covid we have seen Alistair rise to every challenge from peeling, cooking and mashing 50 lbs of potatoes, to washing up, serving and giving support to all who come to the feeding programme whether volunteers or clients.

**The future** – We have now emerged from Covid into a different world. Many things have changed and things we took for granted need to be re-evaluated. The feeding programme has also changed and food insecurity in Bermuda is still a big issue and continues to grow with rising inflation and high unemployment across the island. We have focused on reducing the number of clients by differentiating between need and convenience. Many of our clients have found employment and thank us for all our support while others have little hope of surviving without our assistance. We realize the programme is here to stay as long as we can receive financial support and volunteers to ensure the operations continues. Through our contact with the needy we have been able to understand our client needs and those people we must focus on helping.

I echo some of the sentiments expressed by Arthur Wightman in his report. The feeding programme has had a huge community reach as many of our volunteers and

clients have no other relationship to the church. Given our declining congregation numbers we need to look for different ways to encourage people back to the church especially the youth. Clearly more activities outside worship will encourage people to think of us as a focus in the community more than simply a place of worship.

### **Loads of Love**

It is hard to separate the activities of LOL programme from the feeding programme as both are closely linked. Saturday morning laundry, showers and breakfast quickly turn into Saturday lunch, as Jill and I can attest to.

During Covid when the homeless were sheltered at Cedarbridge we provided laundry for them by collecting their laundry. After shelter in place we continued to provide laundry and showers and our numbers have been consistently in the range of 20-30 clients each week.

Thank you to the volunteers who have returned to give their support each Saturday morning and provide some relief to those who sleep in the open. A shower, clean clothes and breakfast provide a welcome relief.

**The Future** - We now have access to the entire building and with the support of Dawn Dunstan who has drawn up plans to expand the operation to use the available space to add washers, dryers, cloth racks, additional toilet etc to the facilities. We have been very fortunate in receiving funding commitments from several sponsors to finance this development. The cost of the development is approximately \$50,000 and work will hopefully commence in the next few months.

### **School Uniform Programme**

With Covid restrictions it was very difficult for the outreach committee to raise funds to support this programme. In 2021 we were fortunate to combine the funds raised through Fabulous Fridays along with funds available to Outreach and managed to provide \$2,500 in vouchers to Boyles and English Sports shop for distribution by the Family Center to needy families.

We plan to continue this activity and hope to resume more fund raising through the church during this year. In September 2022 we managed to provide \$2,000 in vouchers primarily with the support of the Friends of Christ Church Trust.

### **Lorraine Rest Home**

We have had little activity with the rest home primarily due to the need to maintain separation for health issues with Covid. Our plan is to resume our support of the Rest Home this year.

### **Bermuda Overseas Missions**

The trips have been postponed since 2020 due to Covid restrictions and concerns over safety for volunteers. We do plan to resume trips in 2023 and hope we can organize a trip back to Malawi where we have close links.

**School programme** – We have continued to financially support the children from the 5 villages we built in to help them attend high school. Currently we have almost 90 children in our programme (65 are girls) and we assist them with paying the school fees and providing uniforms, books, pens, pencils etc. Some of the children have graduated and 2 received scholarships to university. We have 6 more students asking for support for further education as they wish to continue their studies into medicine, law and engineering. We are reviewing these requests on an individual basis. Since we have supported their high school education it would be appropriate to continue our support for higher education.

Since the outbreak of Covid BOM has funded the continuing education programme as we had funds available. As we move forward, recommencing the annual trips, we need to organize more funding to continue the programme.

**The future** - As mentioned the trips will resume in 2023. Our continued support to provide high school education must continue and we need to reconnect with our local supporters. We've learned that the cost of high school education has increased 150%. This will have a significant impact on local families who were stretched at the old rates. However, to put it into context this means that the average cost per term has gone from \$6.50 per child per term to \$15 per child per term. This doesn't include, books, uniforms and other supplies which have also increased in cost.

We have also received a plea from the villages to help them with purchasing the maize seeds to plant. The maize usually gets planted in October during the rainy season and provides the families with their staple food Nsima. Unfortunately, the Ukraine war has far reaching effects and the cost of purchasing the maize has increased over 400% putting this out of reach to most villagers. Without their staple food many will face starvation in the coming months. We are appealing for support to help them.

I wish to thank all volunteers for their devotion to helping others, both in our local community and worldwide. You have truly made a difference and it is a wonderful testament to putting faith into action.

David Thompson, Co-Convener  
20<sup>th</sup> October 2022