

# Millbrook Leadership Team Report 2020

MARCH 2021

2020 has been a year like no other in many ways so much has happened it was easier to split the report into 4 quarters to recap on the eventful year:

## January – March 2020

- Pastor embarked on New Testament teaching, starting with the Gospels. We are privileged to sit under the teaching and wisdom of our gifted Pastor each week. We are always reassured of God's grace and love and encouraged to be both practical and intentional in sharing our faith with those around us. From the outset, and on behalf of the Leadership Team, I would like to thank the Pastor for their commitment this year, it has been a challenging year for all, and have gone above and beyond, recording a sermon into a camera is not the same as delivering in person.
- In January, the Leadership Team confirmed the appointment of a new Youth and Community Worker. Throughout 2020 they have been an inspirational addition to Millbrook Church of the Nazarene. Passion for young people is contagious and the light of Jesus truly shines through their ministry. We are continually impressed by the impact of approach and attitude in a year when Youth ministry has been extremely difficult.
- Rising community cases of Covid 19 took hold in mid-March and as a result the Church ceased meeting in person. Our first online service took place on Sunday 22nd March 2020, the first of many... (in fact by end of the year a total of 40 services have been recorded, edited, and posted).

## April – June 2020

- Challenged with the new restrictions, Millbrook Church of the Nazarene continued to Preach, Teach, Reach and Pray:
- Producing a Sunday Service online involves so much more time, effort, and expertise than a traditional congregational meeting in the Community Centre. I must at this juncture thank publicly those who through their tireless endeavor made it possible over the last 10 months. Few will know the time, and stress, committed to provide the content online including coordinating all the worship too. Thank you for your commitment and dedication in this.



- Community Pastor in waiting, and the merry band of volunteers, were dedicated to help the local Millbrook community at this time of crisis. A great response followed to support in the delivery of food parcels to vulnerable or shielded individuals. Towards the end of June, we delivered 15 hampers to local GP surgeries, pharmacies and care homes to thank those for their dedication over the difficult spring period.
- We moved our Children's message online to a Friday night slot with stories presented by several of our Sunday School Teachers. These were very well received and thank you to all those who took part.
- Easter, a most important date in the Church's calendar, was observed as best we could within the guidelines. The worship service on Good Friday was a highlight. We rejoiced on Easter Sunday morning with a new song in our hearts: "*Praise the King, He is risen, Praise the King, He's alive*". We equally enjoyed a special Easter Sunday Children's message accompanied with a craft pack delivered to each home so the everyone could all take part.
- As the weeks progressed, Pastor and those heavily involved in filming were rightly fed up being the only ones in front of the camera and encouraged other members of our congregation to take part. Members recorded material for the service including a welcome, prayer, Bible reading or music. Thank you to all those who gave of their time and talents to expand the cast members of Millbrook Netflix equivalent.
- Our weekly prayer time led by Youth and Community worker was so important during these months. We had much to pray for, and still do. The topics and needs were so thoughtfully and meticulously considered each week.
- A few events to finish off the spring quarter included a combined streamed Pentecost service with the British Isle North District, our first Millbrook Zoom communion, a dedicated Children's service at the end of June, Cheesy Nachos via continued via Zoom and an all request acoustic worship set.

## **July – September 2020**

- Kids Club in 2020 went virtual. Craft and activity packs all delivered to the doorsteps of those signed up. Over 60 homes viewed all videos across the week. It was so important to continue this ministry which has been at the core of our Church from its beginnings.
- In late August, in preparation for schools in returning, the Leadership Team were burdened for those less privileged pupils and the obligation to double up on stationery provisions. We appealed to the Church, and how generous and passionate they were, that over 300 stationary packs were made up and distributed

to 10 local schools – these were very well received. Cost to Church was around £500 and the rest funded by a combination of the community grant and generous member donations.

- Millbrook Youth managed to close out the summer with a socially distanced party which was well attended and enjoyed by all.
- Sunday School returned in September via Zoom on alternate weeks. The children love the format and enjoy sharing with each other their news. This is an important ministry to maintain contact with the children. We are so thankful to our head of Children's Ministry and their team, for their dedication and commitment to this vital outreach.
- A few events to round off the Autumn period; Home Group restarted, and Child protection training was completed, both via Zoom. A moving selection of doorstep videos introducing a number of Millbrook members to the Youth. Unfortunately, due to continued restrictions we were unable to restart Parent and Toddler group in 2020.

## **October to December 2020**

- Monthly prayer meetings resumed in October via Zoom on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. We are reminded in Philippians 4:6 *"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything"*. This has been an important time to seek God's guidance for our Church and community.
- Relaxation of restrictions in October allowed for recording to move to the Community Centre. This was a welcome change and whilst added some fresh technological challenges, the editing and production time was greatly reduced.
- Important Covid-19 risk assessments were completed and in November, after 8 months, we finally welcomed limited numbers of our congregation back into the Community Centre to our live service recording. This allowed us to continue to stream a recording of the service to those unable to join physically.
- Unfortunately, the time we could meet in person was short lived, as new restrictions were introduced late December, but not before we held our fabulous Christingle Carol Service. 2 services were available which allowed more of our congregation to attend in person.
- As a Church we did not want the restrictions to impact our ability to minister to our neighbours. In an almost military operation, over 300 hampers and Christingle packs

were delivered personally door to door by members of our Church and continue to show those in our community that we care.

## The Church in Numbers 2020

Given the restrictions on gathering during the year, the 2020 average attendance figures are reflective of just the first few months:

- 2020: 76 (56 Adults / 20 Children)
- 2019: 70 (48 Adults / 22 Children)
- 2018: 74 (49 Adults / 25 Children)

An increase on prior years which is encouraging. During the physical closure of our meetings it can be difficult to gauge how many of our congregation have continued to engage with the Church remotely on a week to week basis, but we are blessed to know that the online format has reached a number of new families.

Year ended 30 September 2020 Offerings/Gifts in aggregate were down 23% from 2019 (2020: £23,762, v £30,892), Gift Aid income of £5,915 was back 25% from the £7,893 received in 2019, broadly in line with income shift and expenses at £43,472 down 8% from £47,274 in 2019.

In 2020 we received our 2<sup>nd</sup> installment of £15,000 financial grant from the British Isles North District. This amount reflects the year 2 of a 3-year commitment from the District. The Leadership Team have allocated this fund towards the employment of our fantastic Youth and Community worker, who joined us in February 2020.

I would like to thank you all for your generous and faithful giving to this Church, particularly since March when the offerings and gifts have mostly been made online. Your giving has been even more important this year to enable the Church to continue to operate throughout this challenging year.

## Closing

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 was the 1<sup>st</sup> Online service, reading that day came from Matthew Ch5 v 13-16:

*“You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

What strikes me about this passage is the journey Millbrook has been on as a Church since this message in March. When the word “Church” comes up in conversation, the first thing

many think of is a building or a place go to on Sundays. In 1 Timothy 5, Paul describes the Church as **people** dedicated to doing whatever it takes to reach out and help others.

At Millbrook Church of the Nazarene we have always believed in this concept and the restrictions this year have pushed us out of our comfort zone and into the community where we have had the opportunity to be the Church and to be salt and light. The volunteers and outreach at the height of lockdown, hampers and food parcels to those most in need, stationery appeal to support those pupils returning to school, Christmas hampers and sharing the Christingle story. I am most encouraged by these opportunities to show the love of Jesus, through our Church, indeed meeting the need in a practical way to people on our doorstep.

Tonight, the members of this Church will have an opportunity to vote in a new Leadership Team. As Chairperson of this group of individuals, may I publicly commend each person who served over the last 12 months and thank you for your time, hard work and sacrifice given to this Church. This year has been exceptionally busy, and your efforts are greatly appreciated.

I am confident that Millbrook have a great team which possess the skills, desire and dedication to deliver on the mission statement of this Church “to be a Church in the heart of the community with the community at its heart”.

**Respectfully submitted**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Murphy', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

**Alan Murphy (Chairperson)**