



## ANNUAL REPORT

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**January - December 2010**

The **American Church in London** is a Christ-centered community of faith in the heart of this city, open to all people seeking Christ's touch and blessing.

A healthy church is built on Jesus Christ and expressed through *fellowship, worship, discipleship* and *mission*. And so as God's church we live to fellowship sincerely, worship actively, grow in our knowledge and understanding of Jesus, and to offer ourselves in service to this community and the world.



# The American Church *in London*



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Rev. John A. D'Elia, PhD, *Senior Minister*

Stephanie Kremmel, *Director of Student Ministries*

Tony Baldwin, *Director of Music*

Dear ACL Family,

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, the one who loves us and calls us to be his church!

The past year has been filled with new challenges and new opportunities for ministry, along with the deepening of some longstanding commitments in London and beyond. Enjoy these pages! In this document you'll read some reports from leaders within our congregation—men and women who have responded to God's call in important ways as we continue to learn how to be a faithful church.

We have certainly seen God's faithfulness in this church over the past year. We continued our participation in the Cold Weather Shelter last January, we saw tremendous growth in our capacity to serve our community. More than 70 people worked shifts over 13 Wednesday evenings—what a great experience that was!

Stephanie Kremmel has been busy with youth groups, coordinating Sunday School programs, and taking the lead in our work with the Shelter. Young people are being loved, having fun, and catching a glimpse of God's amazing care for them, which is the point of student ministries.

Our giving has been faithful and generous this past year. Even in difficult times, it is this consistent partnership that has made the growth in ministry here possible. We've been able to make improvements to the church building, such as the replacement of the boiler, and more are on the way. We are finally underway in upgrading the means of access to our church building so that all people can participate in the life of this community.

The Latchcourt room-hire business is an important piece of the overall picture of how ACL operates, and any celebration of the past year has to include thanks to Monty Strikes for his hard work. Latchcourt still provides about half of the church's income, and helps us build relationships with the surrounding community. Thanks, Monty!

Behind the scenes there are volunteers who help make this place go, but who won't show up in any reports. Marshall Lawhon creates the flower arrangements that make our worship space beautiful. Dick Biddick helps to assemble the bulletins and prepares the Sanctuary for worship each week. David Smith arrives early Sunday mornings to set up the Main Hall and help make the front of the church presentable, no matter what Saturday night's revelers leave behind. It's a hard job, but hopefully not a thankless one! Thanks to both of you for your faithful service.

Jhoana Serna finished her first year in November, and has been a stellar addition to our team. She shares our heart for mission and ministry, and this year will expand into providing assistance to our guests in the The Soup Kitchen.

This past autumn Stephanie and I again attended a handful of new expatriate events, and met some great new people who have made ACL their church home. Our Thanksgiving potluck, organized by Julie D'Elia and Vicky Jones (again with the assistance of a great group of volunteers), was attended by more than 140 people. All season we've enjoyed a string of fantastic events which have drawn us together as a community: the Welcome Back Picnic, Stewardship Sunday, Thanksgiving Day at St. Paul's Cathedral, Advent Action Day, and the Santa Party and Christmas Open House at the manse. More are on the way for the coming year.

As we look ahead there are some wonderful things in store for our church. We will participate in the Biblefresh Essential 100 project, a series of readings designed to tell the story of God's love for his people and his world. The Adult Bible Study and our youth groups will join in the Biblefresh program, and we hope that some of you will form groups to study the Scriptures in your homes. We'll continue to try and broaden our experience of worship as we learn more songs and experiment with different forms, old and new.

Your Mission Committee is answering God's call to serve in exciting ways. This year we will send groups to Haiti, the Holy Land, and to work with Habitat for Humanity, and to prepare we will offer a training weekend at the end of January. Our church is blessed with resources and people who have a passion to share Jesus Christ with a hurting world. You will learn more about these projects on January 30<sup>th</sup>, as we share information about all of our mission work at ACL.

Sometimes the year-end recap letter isn't all that exciting to write, but not this time! As Julie, Ian and I begin our fifth year here, we do it with the knowledge that God is working in this place and that he has great things in store for this church family. Join me this year in praying each day for the ministry of this church.

God bless you and keep you,

John

## **Report from Student Ministries and Christian Education**

**Stephanie Kremmel and Sherry Price**

It's been a busy and exciting year for Christian education at ACL!

Our 3-7 year olds are learning what it means to worship God through our Children and Worship curriculum. Each week they hear a different story from the Bible told by gifted storytellers who skilfully create space for kids to enter into and interact with Scripture.

Our 8-12 year olds are taking part in a year long curriculum, called "It All Fits Together." They are learning that each book and story in the Bible fits together to form a big picture: a picture of God.

We continue to host both a middle school youth group which meets every other Friday and a high school group which meets most Sunday evenings. Our middle school students have been learning about the parables of Jesus as we've built friendships and community with one another. The highlight of the year for our high school students was the international youth conference in Stockholm that some of them were able to attend. They came back full of excitement and energy! Thank you to the church for supporting them not only with your prayers, but with some financial consideration as well.

We also have been able to kick off a women's Bible study on Sunday mornings as well as continue our adult Sunday school class. Many have been blessed by this opportunity to dive deeper in Scripture and the life of faith.

2010 was a great year for Christian education here at ACL. We are truly blessed with an abundance of adults who care about kids and who gladly give of their time and talent to share the Gospel in this way.

We pray that in 2011, we will continue to encourage, teach, pray over, and build community with our precious young people.

## **Report from the Director of Music**

**Tony Baldwin**

Music at ACL has continued to flourish throughout 2010. Our Adult Choir has maintained, and occasionally surpassed its usual high standard.

Our Youth Choir, led by Joanna Davies, has continued to add effectively to occasional worship services.

A broad range of able musicians has ensured that music did not cease during the choir's absence in July and August.

The Choir also arranged a fundraising concert in aid of the Habitat for Humanity mission trip, which was taking place during the summer. They raised over £500.00 towards building facilities for a vulnerable family.

The highlight of our musical year was the Thanksgiving Service at St Paul's Cathedral, which drew almost sixty singers to the augmented choir. They assimilated the music far more quickly than in some years past. It was a grand occasion, and the music provoked much positive comment.

Music through Advent has also drawn appreciative notices, and as we approached the Festive Season, our season of festive music on December 12<sup>th</sup>, and the Christmas Eve service, provided opportunities for adults and children alike to glimpse something of the wonder of Christmas.

## Report from Fellowship Ministries

Vicky Jones

2010 was a great year for Fellowship. Quiz Night, one of our most popular events, was expanded into two separate events this year (one in January and another in October). For the October Quiz Night we collected donations to benefit the Cold Weather Shelter (a practice we hope to continue for future Quiz Night events). The gifts and talents of our congregation were showcased yet again at the annual Talent Night. Talent Night is always a fun night sharing music, jokes, and even train travel fun.

Every June we say goodbye to several ACL families and friends with a Farewell Luncheon. Many thanks to Julie D'Elia and our volunteers who made the day so special as we said our goodbyes.

We had our second 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic in Regents Park and it now has a firm place in our annual calendar. We snagged a great spot in the park and enjoyed a warm Summer's day of ex-pat fun.

This year's Welcome Back Picnic was warmer than the last and we all enjoyed good food, games, and great company. We had another fantastic Thanksgiving Lunch. This year we partnered with Whole Foods Market who donated several pumpkin pies and even the time of two employees (who helped serve lunch).

Many thanks to our volunteers and cooks for making the day a huge success. A big thank you to Julie D'Elia and Dick Biddick for making these events possible and to all our volunteers who make every event special.

## Report from Personnel

**Katie Wechsler**

The Personnel Committee has been relatively quiet this year. Mary Langford stepped down as Chair of the Committee in the summer and was succeeded by Katie Wechsler. We would like to thank Mary for her contributions to the Committee and the broader Council over the last few years.

Rev. Dr. John D'Elia, Senior Pastor, has just celebrated his fourth anniversary at ACL. John continues to have full responsibility for the management and recruitment of ACL staff, supported primarily by the Council President and the Treasurer when budgetary matters arise.

In 2010 our church was blessed in that there was no turnover of staff during the year. Stephanie Kremmel, our Director of Student Ministries, is now in her second year at ACL and continues to develop both the student ministries and serve as church coordinator for ACL's involvement in the Cold Weather Shelter. Jhoana Serna continues to provide full-time secretarial support to the church office and Monty Strikes has continued to serve as both caretaker for the church facilities and business manager of Latchcourt, which continued its growth during the year. Tony Baldwin continues in his role as Music Director.

The Personnel Committee exceeded its budget during the year as a result of higher than anticipated consultancy costs related to accounting/bookkeeping services. Actions have been taken to ensure that this budget overage does not recur in 2011.

The Committee has begun a review of each employee's employment contract and job description to ensure that they are up to date and compliant with current UK legislation which will be completed in 2011.

## Report from Worship Ministries

Melanie Garrett

There is perhaps nothing more important in life than the worship of God. And worship is what brings us all together at the American Church in London each week. The Sunday morning service is at the heart of ACL's activities – it gives us an opportunity to pray and sing together and, of course, worship God and prepare us for the coming week. But worship also refers to much more than Sunday services. It extends to how we care for those in need, those who are sick, and how we generally treat those around us. The extension of worship to every dimension in our lives is a key character trait of ACL and its members.

We've enjoyed steady congregation numbers this year and our "seasonal events" such as Easter and Advent/Christmas have been well-attended. It has also been a pleasure to welcome 10 new members to ACL in 2010. As well as welcoming new members, we are also a church that says a lot of goodbyes and this year was no exception as we bid farewell to many families that have contributed a great deal to our church family. These comings and goings are all signs of a healthy church.

Music is essential to our gatherings on Sundays. The Senior and Youth choirs again provided a strong musical backdrop to the service throughout the year. The Youth choir is brimming with enthusiasm and talent and brought these attributes to Youth Sundays throughout the year. We are indeed thankful to Joanna Davies for her leadership with this ministry.

As 2010 draws to a close we are working to finalize a Worship Committee of 3-4 people in order to get feedback, assistance and new ideas to support our Worship ministry. Some of the tasks that will be performed by the committee include: flower preparation (a huge thanks to Marshal Lawhon for continuing to undertake this role and keep the sanctuary budding with foliage each week), communion prep, and music and guest speaker suggestions.

## Report from Mission Ministries

Robin Brady and Reid Marsh

The Missions committee of the church has enjoyed significant growth this year. We are happy to announce that beginning in by the spring of 2010 we had 8 people serving on our mission committee. This group of individuals served this year in helping us reach the goals and objectives we set within the first few months of meeting. Our main goal for the year was to build a culture and a spirit of 'Missions' with the congregation of ACL. We achieved this in a number of ways, one of which was through our partnership with the American Church in Paris and our shared relationship within the AICEME- (The association of International Churches in Europe and the Middle East) organization.

Our committee began the year with writing and approving a *Purpose Statement* and *Criteria for Mission Support*. These documents set the foundation for our goals, objectives and set guidelines for future growth. Additionally we set a goal to have balance in regard to the number and type of Mission Ministry Partners we would have. Striving for: 50% Local and 50% Global.

### **To fulfil the global goals:**

In the spring, we enjoyed supporting and commissioning congregation members in three outstanding mission trips. These were: Scott Bryson's trip to Sierra Leon, Robin Brady's trip to Ghana and the Habitat for Humanity trip to Portugal with participants Zena Martin and Natasha Turner.

Not only did these participants get to 'go forth in mission' to be the hands and feet of Christ to the world but each were able to return to share the blessing of their stories to our congregation giving us a full report of their mission adventures.

In the fall, our committee was able to support member Donna Mullins in providing a venue for promotion of her *Kenya Youth Sponsorship* ministry on World Communion Sunday. Our congregation generously supported Donna in offering gifts of roughly £530.

### **To fulfil the local goals:**

Our church is the home of the Soup Kitchen ("Whitefield Corporation"). The Soup Kitchen (SK) remains ACL's flagship outreach initiative. Funding of £8,000 is allocated to the Soup Kitchen out of the Mission Committee budget; this represents about 25% of the Mission Committee budget and about 15% of the SK's total budget. The Soup Kitchen serves 40-70 guests per day and has seen an increase in guests of more than 10% over the last year and an even higher increase in food costs (which has been experienced globally). However, as a result of the hard work of the Director, Miranda Suit, donations have increased by 26%.

Additionally in winter of this year we continued in partnership with the C4WS project in hosting 14 homeless men and women for 13 consecutive weeks at our Cold weather shelter. Our congregation touched the lives of these clients by offering comfort in preparing dinner,

chaperoning the evenings while they enjoyed a place to sleep and in helping prepare a hot breakfast.

Our fall also included final allocations to our ACL mission partners of: *IJM*- International Justice Mission, our *ACL Soup Kitchen* and *Cold Weather Shelter*, *URC Mission & Ministry Fund* and funds for our Local Missionary Oliver Smith with *World Harvest*. Lastly final funds were allocated to our newest and emerging partner the *Israeli/Palestinian Bible Society*.

We are ending our year with detailed plans for events to come in 2011. These will include a Missions Workshop to be held Jan 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> facilitated by *Face to Face*. This workshop will help to inspire our congregation to get involved in mission opportunities within our church and additionally train experienced, new and potential mission trip team leaders. We also have an educational mission/vision trip planned for the Holy Land May 28<sup>th</sup>-June 5<sup>th</sup> to support our news partner the *Israeli/Palestinian Bible Society*. Other trips for 2011 will possibly include trips to Haiti and another Habitat for Humanity trip.

## Report from The Soup Kitchen

Miranda Suit

It has been another busy year for the Soup Kitchen. Guest numbers have risen from an average of about 45 to 50 a day. The Christmas dinner attracted over 200 guests.

In 2010, for the first time we started recording individual help given to guests beyond free food and clothing:

30 guests, average figures per month, received extra help individually:

- 5 were briefly assessed and referred to other more specialised projects
- 4 received extra one-to-one encouragement to persevere in their situation
- 6 received emergency clothing (apart from our regular fortnightly clothing distribution)
- 9 received spiritual help from the Director
- 5 were given modest financial help with travel or medical costs
- 1 was given special assistance, e.g with accommodation, benefits, social problem which required staff to contact social services, bank or housing association

## **Report from Latchcourt Ltd**

### **Monty Strikes**

Latchcourt Limited delivered another strong performance in 2010, with an increase of over £35000 in revenue, totalling 225,000+ GBP. The Club Room alone brought in over £40000 and we hope to improve on this with further capital expenditure. The office team has been critical in accomplishing our success and with some new faces on reception Latchcourt has a happy face!

Latchcourt maintained a healthy mix of clients throughout the year. Among our long-term clients, we welcomed back the kick boxing classes and the City Philharmonic Choir, amongst others. We benefited from advertising, gaining many new film and television companies onto our books. Although we did not see much traffic from the West End Theatres, as in other years, we benefited from these new companies greatly. 2011 looks set to reverse this, welcoming back more theatrical based clients into the larger spaces. With improvements continuing to be made to the smaller rooms we hope to offer better facilities for both clients and congregation .

## **Report from the Church Office**

### **Jhoana Serna**

The office has seen an increase in continuity and harmony in 2010 due to the more permanent full-time staffing and management of office systems. There have been improvements in communications between various facets of ACL. Some of the by-products have been: continuous support to the church council and senior staff, continuous and increased support to Latchcourt Ltd, overseeing reception staff and rota, minutes of vital meetings, prompt and accurate disbursements, development of office protocol, data gathering and contribution to the church website.

The aim of 2011 is to continue providing secretarial support to the church council, staff and Latchcourt. Additionally to further enhance the ministries at ACL, specifically The Soup Kitchen and its guests.

## Report from Facilities

Shannon Hudson

The Facilities Committee oversees the three properties owned by ACL as well as the maintenance for the church building on Tottenham Court Road. This committee is always looking for members and volunteers for assistance in planning and carrying out its goals.

Every five years a structural assessment is done on each property. 2010 was a year for this Quinquennial Survey. These surveys, along with the needs of the three main businesses functioning in the church building (Latchcourt, ACL and the Soup Kitchen), help us to prioritize the maintenance and improvements required and desired for each property. Details of last year's activities and this year's projects follow.

### Stuart Tower Manse

- Unit owned in Maida Vale mansion block
- Living quarters for Associate Pastor
- ACL responsible for the flat's interior maintenance, which is ongoing as needed
- ACL shares cost of refurbishment expenditures for building

2011—completion of window replacement and electrical refurbishment

Expected cost £5,000

### Buckingham Mansion

- Unit owned in West Hampstead mansion block
- Rented to a third party, provides an income stream to the church
- ACL responsible for the flat's interior maintenance, which is ongoing as needed
- ACL shares cost of refurbishment expenditures for building

No major expenditures in 2010, none expected in 2011.

\*At the time of writing, this occupancy is in transition. Previous tenant's vacated in December 2010. Heathgate is the current managing agent.

### Parkhill Road Manse

- Freehold interest owned in multi-unit house in Belsize Park.
- Ground floor unit is living quarters for Senior Pastor
- 2 upper floor units owned by third parties
- We are responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the building
  - ACL covers 50% of costs
  - Tenant service charge is 25% per unit
- In 2010 ACL purchased the garden rights of unit #2. £20,350 to be paid in instalments over 5 years. Done to improve property value and living situation of the Senior Pastor

In 2011 we will begin exterior refurbishment work continuing for 3-4 years. 2011 expenditures are projected to be £10,000-15,000.

\*There are plans to move to a single agency for handling ACL's owned properties with respect to leasing, property management and the legal/compliance aspects of ownership.

### **Church Building - Tottenham Court Road**

The United Reformed Church owns the building and ACL has an agreement with them granting us the right to use the Whitefield Memorial Church. In exchange, we maintain the facility and contribute annually to the URC Mission Fund. Any works affecting the outer appearance of the building require approval from the URC and planning permission from Camden Council.

### **Current Projects 2010-2011**

- Disability Discrimination Act Compliance
  - Disabled access to the vestibule and fellowship hall
  - Disabled access unisex WC
  - Uniform signage throughout the building
  - Increased handrails
  - Disabled friendly model chairs
  - First phase of compliance to begin in Spring 2011

Total expenditure approx £200,000. Highest priority items comprise £125,000

\*There is a separate funding process for this undertaking and an itemized priority list has been established for project completion to be implemented as funding develops.

- Purchase and installation of two boilers and control panel

Work completed in Dec 2010 for £34,662.50

### **Planned Projects 2011**

- Full energy assessment with recommendations
  - Double-glazing for all windows
  - We are applying for grant monies to assist in costs
- Storage and building space efficiency
- Refinished pews and floors in the sanctuary
- Top floor WC
- Redoing the upper vestibule, new carpet in upper vestibule and sanctuary
- Painting/upkeep as needed

Estimated costs £25,000

### **Future Projects 2012+**

- Roof maintenance and improvement
- Remodel Men's upstairs WC
- Pew Cushions
- Continued painting and remodelling throughout building including sanctuary