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AGM 2008 - Report from Church Growth Coordinator

January 2007 saw my first Alpha Course at APC as coordinator. We had about 40 people doing the course, and using 'live' speakers, found it a great success and several came to know Christ personally. From that Alpha, two Beta groups were started and under the leadership of Gill & Mike Carr and Jenny Wiedeman together with myself and Sue Fung. They ran for 12 months before becoming two new small groups within the life of our church family.



It was such an encouragement to see Leo & Angie Luik take on the one Beta group with Steve and Angie Mills taking responsibility for the other as they became small home groups.

We were then freed up to run the current Alpha course that at the time of writing has one week to run. New Beta course(s) are expected upon completion.

It was a particular joy for me to see Rob & Vicki Richards who were total newcomers to our church, complete the Alpha Course in January 2007 and then later take the responsibility of running the new children's FREEZER group and are currently leading a Youth Alpha!

It was also a particular joy to see one of the new Beta groups take on some of the preparation, cooking and serving for 2008's Alpha, so in effect 12 months ago they were served and 12 months later were doing the serving. Wonderful!

In April 2007, we started a morning Alpha with about 15 people attending. We held this in church and this time used Alpha DVD's with Nicky Gumble from the Alpha Organization being the recorded speaker each week. This ran well too, but numbers were obviously lower because of work commitments during the day.

In May last year, we started another evening course but this time at Tynings Lane Church. Numbers here were about 25, being a mix from Tynings and the Parish Churches. We used 'live' speakers again, and the Tynings team did an excellent job and from that Alpha they then started a Beta group, as indeed I did, and together with some from the morning Alpha just mentioned, we started a Thursday Beta group which is meeting weekly, with help from Elaine Clark and Paul Puttergill. That group has about 14 in it.

Then in November 2007 I started another day Alpha and with the help of Lynne Trew held it once more in church using DVD's again. There were about 15 on this course and

it finished in March. I now have 5 people from this course wanting to do a Beta, and I am in the process of sorting that through which is a delight.

No Alpha was done at St. Thomas last year, but I understand there will be one in the autumn of 2008 which is great. We try to share the Alphas round the three churches, so as to spread the load and give more church members an opportunity of being involved.

A huge thank you to all who have help at the Alphas in the last 12 months. Hours of work in cooking and serving and preparing the courses was put in, and it is VERY much appreciated.

I have also been involved with the organising of several 'Men of Aldridge' events throughout the past year. We had some lovely times (& meals!) together, and had a varied programme including quizzes, one being a joint Christmas event with the ladies group 'Embrace' which was excellent, with quiz masters Matt Wallace and Sue Fung doing an excellent job.



We also had visiting speakers like Cyril Regis, Charlie Hale, and a group of men from an organisation called Betel, who help people with addictions. Another event is planned for the 30th April, where Major General Tim Cross will be our speaker. Tim held high positions in the British Army, is a committed Christian and has served in places like Bosnia and Iraq.

At all these events, we've had between 80-130 attending. Again, thank you so much for all who have helped organize these times together.

We had a great men's weekend away at Glenfall house in Gloucestershire, where over 40 men from the three Aldridge Churches, listened to Richard C and Gavin do some excellent talks on The Holy Spirit and another is planned for November this year.

Part of my role as Church Growth Coordinator was to assist at our AYF Camp in the summer of 2007 and despite the weather, a great time was had by 132 of us, resulting in commitments to Christ and a memorable time all round.

These activities together with my input to the prayer chain and website have kept me busy during the last 12 months and much is planned for this year including a 'Come Back to Church' Sunday in September.

It's such a joy to be part of an energetic and committed staff team here in Aldridge.

Please pray for the outreach and evangelism in our church. This is a work we should all be involved with in some way, as we seek to live out the instructions from Christ of telling others of the good news of salvation.

*"God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age." **Matthew 28 vs 18-20 The Message***

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