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AGM 2009 - Report from Church Growth Coordinator

In January 2008, we started a new Alpha Course at APC with about 40 people and it was a real joy to see people turning to Christ. This followed on the heels of a daytime Alpha that we started in November 2007 and finished in February 2008.

In May 2008, we were back at Tynings lane with an evening course, and then on to St Thomas for a new evening course in October. In all during 2008, over 100 people attended our Alpha Courses, and many then went on to Beta (the follow on group from Alpha). This is so encouraging! Our present Alpha began in February this year and has over 50 people coming regularly and hopefully many will go on to continue their spiritual journeys through Beta.

September 2008 saw our first go at '**Back to Church Sunday**' and it went really well. Our church family got behind it, and invited their friends, neighbours and work colleagues, and on the day we had 553 at our Sunday services where the norm was between 350 - 400. It's difficult to judge how this day went other than by looking at the numbers, which were so encouraging. We plan to be involved again this year where it will be called '**Come as you are**' and will be on 27th September 2009. We shall learn from 2008 when we tackle 2009!

Our **Men of Aldridge** events continued through 2008. In February we had a visit from Betel who talked about their work alongside people with addictions. It was a very challenging evening. In May we had an outside speaker, Major General Tim Cross, a high ranking Christian officer in the British Army. This was followed in July by a Matt Wallace Olympic Quiz special, which was of course top quality, and finally in October, we had three speakers at our dinner event, Geoff Card, Darren Eales and Tony Swannie. These events have always been very well supported by men from our four Aldridge churches. It's an opportunity to come together and bring friends perhaps on the fringe of church, and usually we get between 80-100 men at each event.

Our Men's weekend at Glenfall House took place in November with a full house of 40+ men. Our speaker was Mark Harland from Walsall Community Church, and he was extremely challenging and interesting as he encouraged us to move from our comfort zones and discover just where we stood as men with Christ both at home and in the work place. A similar weekend with speaker Matt Wallace - trainee incumbent! - is planned for this year.

In 2008, we started a new '**Welcome team**' A group of over 30 people on a rota, including our teenagers, who replaced the role of stewards, and continued the work in welcoming and generally making everyone feel at home, safe, and secure at our services. We had special training for this from Rev George Fisher from the Diocese, and it seems to be working quite well. We also set up an '**Information point**' at the back of church. This is a central point where between our two morning services, and at the end of our evening one, people can get information for anything to do with the life of our church.

My work with the prayer chain and website continues, as too does my involvement with AYF Camp which forms part of my job spec., and is as enjoyable as ever!

Our church numbers each week suggest we are growing a church, and that is just so encouraging. There is still much to be done. In Luke 10 verse 2 we read, "**The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.**"

There's an enormous harvest field outside our doors, and church growth is something we all need to be involved in. Please pray that the work will continue as we all do our part in winning people for Christ and encourage spiritual growth.

Thank you to you all for helping and encouraging me so much in my role as church growth coordinator.

Rob Cook