

## Newsletter

Hello everyone,

And a Merry Christmas to you all!

This year we've so much to be thankful for and I'd love to reflect on some of those things now.

Firstly, we're still here! This time last year was a decidedly bleak time for those at the centre, heading into a Christmas break where it was uncertain whether we would have jobs to return to after Christmas, let alone a centre for the hundreds of guests we have contact with. But the LORD provided, not only in a financial provision (thank you, dear supporters, for all you gave this year, however big and however small, it is because of your giving that we are still here), but also with an influx of some phenomenal volunteers.

Secondly, our new volunteers. As you may know over the last year some of our long-standing staff were made redundant, we were sad to see them leave after so long on the job and the many lives they had helped along the way. But with the thinning of our staff team, we were able to develop our volunteers and this year we welcomed to our team: Bruce, Hannah, Marcus, Tom, Renee and Elaine.

Thirdly, and this one happened recently, we were able to host SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) which has been a dream of mine since I took the post of Manager over seven years ago now. There were many reasons this couldn't be put into place previously, but this year we were able to pull it together and the building was used to help those sleeping on the streets during the recent cold snap. We opened our doors for three nights and housed nineteen people within the centre.

There is so much more to be thankful for, but we need to get this show on the road. But lastly, I'm thankful for all of you, our loyal supporters, who without your constant support, your prayers and giving, we would never have seen this year out.

Thank you for all you do, you are all seen and we appreciate every one of you.

Merry Christmas from the staff team and volunteers and most importantly our guests! Also, the picture below is of our first SWEP and as you can see it was nice and cosy for them all!

Ross



### **A story we love to tell**

Not so long ago, “Douglas” (not his real name) was living in his sister’s broken car on the street and coming to Bristol Methodist Centre regularly. The Centre stored some of his belongings for him, and he took showers, had meals, used the computers and so on. Recently Douglas popped into the BMC. He didn’t want anything, except to say “hello”, and “thank you”, and to let us know that he now has accommodation and a job. As you can imagine, this is the kind of visit that gives staff and volunteers a huge boost, and we want to pass that on to you. Your support really does help people like Douglas to turn their lives around.

### **Christmas**

Our appeal is going well with over £2,800 already raised, including from the sale of alternative gift cards, handmade embroidered cards, and a community choir concert (Thank you Unity Oldland!). If you want to contribute and have not yet done so, the fund is open until 31<sup>st</sup> January:

[https://www.stewardship.org.uk/pages/BMC\\_Christmas\\_2023](https://www.stewardship.org.uk/pages/BMC_Christmas_2023)

Or you can give in any of the usual ways.

*Thanks to Gift wrapping team – please see photo below.*

The gifts will be distributed to guests on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December, and we’ll be having carol singing from 11.00-11.45 – if you’d like to come along and sing, there is still space. Please contact Naomi at [churchandcommunity@bsgc.org.uk](mailto:churchandcommunity@bsgc.org.uk)



### **Month of Prayer**

As we journey into 2024, the Bristol Methodist Centre and our partners at inHope invite you to join us for a month of prayer, seeking to bring light to homeless, vulnerable and marginalised people in Bristol. There is a daily prayer guide which can be downloaded [here](#).

The month of prayer will culminate in a joint service where we can bring our prayers together. More details about this will be shared through our website, January update and Circuit communications.

### **The “nitty gritty”**

As you can tell, BMC staff and volunteers on the front line have been busy setting up SWEP, serving meals, running the washing machines (all day most days) supporting guests to sort out their benefits, and so on. At the same time the management committee, transition group and new charity trustees have been working hard behind the scenes to get things in order for when the Centre transfers, sometime next year we hope. Some of this is legal work (drafting a lease and registering the charity)

and some of it relates to funding. Since September the BMC has secured £50,000 of funding for solar panels (which will immediately cut our electricity bills) and a digital upgrade, and just over £6,000 from four smaller grants. We give thanks for these as we wait and pray for three grants currently pending (£56,000 applied for between the three). In addition, the new charity has been awarded £70,000 funding from Bristol City Council towards the first year of operations. This is all wonderful news, and we give thanks to God! If you are reading thinking that there is no longer any need for churches and individuals to contribute, please think again! Without future funding from the Circuit and District all these grants are essential alongside your regular giving. Also, funders look to see how much the Centre is supported by the wider community as this is attractive to them – another reason why we continue to rely on your prayers and donations.

We want to say a huge “thank you!” as well as Happy Christmas!