

The Bethany Story

40 years of love
and service – a story
about people, hope
and God's grace.

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Dear Friends,

It is my privilege to introduce Bethany's Annual Report 2023. 40 years ago, in 1983, a story began to unfold in Leith, Edinburgh. It is a story about people, about a growing hope, and about the grace of God. It is the story of Bethany Christian Trust.

*Bethany is a story about
People - 40 years of staff
and volunteers working to
love, serve and value people.*

Reaching men, women and young people, on the margins, labouring together to see countless lives changed, weeping with those facing hardship, trauma and setback, and rejoicing with every step forward, for each person whose life has been touched and changed, and brought out of homelessness.



Bethany is a story about a Growing Hope - a hope and a future. I know men and women in various parts of Scotland, trophies of grace throughout the world even, who have found a new radically changed life whilst they were at Bethany, and they now live fulfilled lives. It is a story of a growing hope because Bethany has grown in response to meeting multiple needs across Scotland.

Bethany, ultimately, is a story about the Grace of God - we are ordinary people. So much has been achieved, and there is much more to do, but as our co-founder Anne Berry says,

“We are a group of ordinary people serving an extraordinary God.”



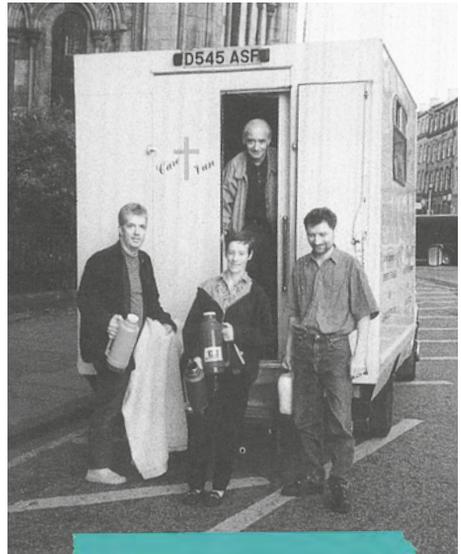
You, our supporters, are a reflection of that grace. The goodwill and kindness that you show in faithful giving, and in supporting this life-saving work across Scotland, are pivotal to all that we are achieving, and can achieve - together in partnership.

Bethany is a living, unfinished story that I hugely appreciate you being part of as a valued supporter. I hope you enjoy reading this year's annual report containing just a few of the thousands of personal stories about people, about a growing hope and about the grace of God.

Thank you for all your encouragement, and ongoing support for the work of Bethany Christian Trust.



Alasdair Bennett
Chief Executive
Bethany Christian Trust



Anne and Alan's Story

Founders, Anne and Alan Berry reflect on the early days of Bethany Christian Trust

Alan

I would finish preaching a sermon and get to the door and there would be a person waiting, and asking, "I need this" or "I need that" or "I have nowhere to stay". I said to the church, we really need to do something about this. It's absolutely hopeless. I'm preaching that we should help, and I get to the door and I've got no answer for people in crisis. I suggested we purchase the house opposite and set up a place where we could offer help. This was a true vision before its time – God's time came two years later.



Anne

We wanted it to be like an extended Christian family, but we had not long started when we realised that homelessness was just the presenting need.

Sometimes it was mental health, drugs or alcohol use. There was a lady who came to us in the early days because of an abusive relationship. Homelessness was maybe the overriding thing, but there were all sorts of reasons.

If we'd known what was going to happen, we never would have done it because it was too scary. But the good thing was that we only knew one wee bit at a time.



The impact on people who have come to be helped, has been many changed lives. What we wanted to do was help people who were vulnerable, but the impact has been wider.



Alan

We were into taking risks. I mean the buying of the first house was a big risk. The extending of it was a big risk. We were learning on the job in those days... and then there was the derelict tea factory which became Bethany House.

Anne

One of the exciting things is seeing people who came in needing help, and are now giving back. I mean, there are sadnesses too, because it didn't always work. There are people that we have grieved over through the years, who seemed to be making it and then something happens and they don't.

Alan

People who've supported
Bethany over the years
have invested in people's
lives and have made
a real difference.



Anne



And it would not have happened without them. When you think of all the volunteers as well, some people have been on the Care Van for absolutely years and years - they've been so faithful.

Where is Bethany going? I think the answer is it will go where God wants it to go. Bethany is seeking to help people one person at a time.

There are always going to be situations where people are needing help. And so, I don't know where it will go. But just as in the last forty years, we pray it will go where God leads.



John's Story

I came to Bethany Christian Centre in 1987. I'd been homeless and sleeping rough in Edinburgh and I was given the opportunity to come off the streets and try and get my act together.

Sleeping rough wasn't comfortable. I had lost my dad in 1983 and I just couldn't cope with it. My life kind of spiralled out of control and I started to drink to numb the pain. One thing led to another and I ended up estranged from my family. They couldn't cope with my drinking, my drunkenness... and they had to let me go, which was painful for them. But it was the best thing that happened to me as I had to stand up on my own two feet.

When I first came to Bethany Christian Centre, I thought they were nutters, Froot Loops, Christians. I thought they were soft in the head

and yet very quickly I realised that there was something very special about them. Every other place I'd spent my rent and I was evicted immediately whereas here, rather than putting me back on the street, Alan Berry would sit with me and talk to me and ask me what was going on in my life. That was the difference. I'd never experienced love like that.

I knew my family loved me. I was the youngest in the family and I was probably spoilt by all my siblings and my parents, but this was a different kind of love from people that I wasn't related to. It felt that I belonged and it absolutely transformed my life.

What made the biggest difference for me was the unconditional love I received. They just listened to me for as long as I needed to bleed out my pain.



*They listened to me, they
comforted me, they encouraged
me, and they gave me hope.*

I decided to work for Bethany because they had helped me so much in 1987. Once I'd moved on from the Centre, I wanted to do care work. I moved into looking after elderly folk and then in '94 I got the chance to come and work for Bethany as a project worker. I just have this desire to pay it forward and help as many people as I can.

I am retiring soon and the feelings are mixed. When I reflect back on it, I have a sense of peace that I've done what God's called me to do. But I mean, you never stop – I'm sure there's other things God will use me in, going forward!

For anyone facing homelessness or crisis right now, I would give them hope. I would tell them that there is hope with organisations like Bethany Christian Trust.

We are here to show God's love in action in a very practical way, to help people, to find homes for people, to give people life skills.



*And I know it sounds cliché, but
to give people hope and a future.
Genuinely, that's what I am.*



To all who have supported Bethany over the years, I say a massive thank you. Without your help and support, we could not have achieved what we've achieved over the years. I would encourage you to continue on your journey with us because the vision going forward is immense.

The need is immense across the country. Multiple deprivation in Scotland is sadly growing. The need is growing and more and more people need help. I would encourage those who have so generously supported us thus far to continue journeying with us as we seek to help and serve more people across Scotland.

Bethany Christian Centre opened its doors in 1983. Today it is a supported residential community for men who are homeless, providing assistance to individuals in their recovery from addiction.

James' Story

I live in Northern Ireland with my wife and three children, working with offenders coming out of prison.

I was born in Armadale, a town in central Scotland. Unfortunately, my dad was a drinker. I grew up in a domestic violence home. None of it was aimed towards me, it was always towards my mum.

My brother was born when I was eight, and I was trying to shelter him from the abuse that was going on down the stairs, the shouting, the smashing, the whatever. I was trying to, you know, cover his ears... So I had to grow up very quickly.

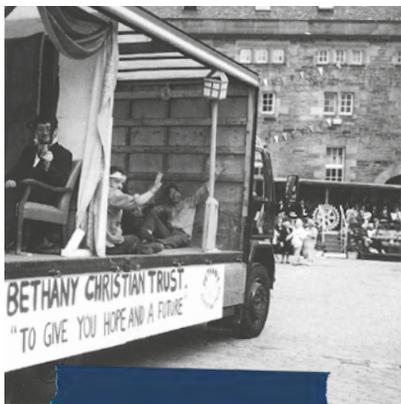
I'd spend a lot of time in the local park, which quickly spiralled into drinking, smoking cigarettes and things like that. I moved on very quickly to cannabis, which snowballed out of control. I didn't have much to do with school at that point.

I had witnessed a lot of stuff. Things that you shouldn't hear when you're a child. Those experiences shaped my early years. I would attempt to live a normal life but I think a lot of my development had been slowed down.



I was trying to evaluate what I was becoming. My mental health had taken a real hit. I was starting to get really paranoid, anxious and depressed.

I had no hope.



I was streetwise but I was immature and I had no real moral compass at that point. I became this person that wasn't trustworthy. I was robbing people but I didn't want to become that... at the age of 18, I was distancing myself from my family.

One of the fundamental things that I remember when I was young is that I was hopeless. I was told that – “you're a hopeless case” – or something like this. And it stuck, it became a reality.

I left home and was directed to Bethany House in Edinburgh. I felt embarrassed because I was going to a door and asking, “Can I come in here and stay?”

When I went off the tracks, I thought that was me. I thought everybody would be ashamed of me. But it wasn't the case. I was welcomed back with open arms. It was like a real love.

And I felt love not only from everybody there, but from my Father in heaven...

So that took me to 2001 when I got the opportunity to go back and volunteer and become a volunteer project worker at the Centre.

I served there for two years. Seeing and being part of real breakthrough was absolutely wonderful. Volunteering there has been one of the pinnacle points in my life. Bethany Christian Centre is a place that I will never forget. I'm now over two decades free from substance dependency.

It's strange because the place is bang right in the middle of Leith. There's lots of noise around. There's addiction. But at the end of the day, the Centre's a safe haven.





*The Centre is a place where
God brings people into an
environment where they
can hear Him.*

Rachael's Story*

I am originally from Dublin but have been living in Edinburgh for coming up five years. I came to study nursing at university, but unfortunately, COVID and the complications of Brexit meant I could no longer continue my studies.

As the cost of living increased, it became quite difficult to make any sort of limited resources stretch, particularly for food, and it came to a point where you couldn't afford to eat every day.





I decided to be resourceful and searched online for 'food within the community'.

One of the things that came up was the community meal that was happening inside a local church, and it had contact details for Rebecca and Felicity [Senior Community Development Worker for Bethany].

They were both very approachable. When I turned up, I felt that it had answered the question that I was looking for. It was food, freshly prepared food. That was a big deal. This is a community meal that I'm within walking distance to.

There is the socialising part of it as well. There are people from all over, for some English is not their first language, but we still find a way to communicate.

It's kind of breaking down barriers and allowing people to come and engage and be involved.

As the weeks went on, you're having a conversation with someone and people ask you about where you're living and what's happening and you might mention in passing that you're having a specific difficulty or you're experiencing barriers, or getting access to some crisis funding... sometimes you do start to talk about it in your socialising circle because you feel wheeled down, exhausted.



I mentioned that my washing machine had broken down and the lack of clean clothes was really affecting my dignity and my mental health. It was this huge expense on my to-do list which I knew I wouldn't be able to pay for... I felt boxed in a corner.



I wasn't expecting to get help from Felicity and Rebecca because I thought they were just the facilitators, but thankfully Felicity helped me to apply for a bursary.

I can still remember the date when the new machine was delivered. It was just like Christmas.

*I know that sounds so sad,
but it really did feel like this
huge weight off my mind, my
worth had been restored and
it's going to be taken care of.*



When I was originally doing my research, my priority was food. But this is big picture, proper action within the community. I know it's classed as a community meal but sometimes it feels more far-reaching – it's an opportunity to learn as well as an opportunity to ask for help.

Community Support and Development grew out of Community Education, a service that has been a part of Bethany since its inception.

It is a service working to support local people and revitalise communities where the potential for homelessness is a real concern.

Levi's Story

I used to live with my carers and I had a good time there, but I'm an independent person and I felt like it was time to move on. So, I asked them to speak to my social worker and they helped me with moving out. At first, I didn't think it was the right choice for me, but I was ready to leave. When I moved to Kharis Court I was asked if I was nervous about moving... and, while it technically was a big change, I wasn't nervous at all. I was quite excited to move. I'd been anticipating it.

When I got here, the staff and other residents were very welcoming. I felt accepted. It was very unusual to me. This really helped my independence and confidence grow. I also felt I was supported in a lot of things that I wanted to do, like cooking as a hobby. I cook for the residents and staff quite a lot!

I feel like all of the support that I've had whilst I'm here has made the biggest impact and difference to my life... well that, and moving to a full, more independent flat which I really enjoyed and I am still enjoying.

To the people who support Bethany Christian Trust, I feel like I've already summarised how good this place is, but you must be doing something good. So, however you're helping, it's not going to waste. It's doing something good and it helps this place [Kharis Court] a lot.

Kharis Court opened its doors in December 2010. It is a 24-hour residential housing support service for young people aged 16-25 in Bathgate, West Lothian.



Sam's Story

I'm a single mum of five. Three of my children have got autism or ADHD, and one of my daughters was really struggling to communicate. I was at home so I approached the church for help with that, which brought me to Connect Café. So, for me, up until that point, I'd been pretty much housebound, too scared to leave the house, too anxious to go out. I was quite isolated, I had a small set group of friends who weren't very good for me...

Coming along for the first meeting [at the café], I felt sick, ill. I was absolutely terrified. But it was such a welcoming atmosphere that I continued to come every week. And then, over the course of time, I realised that they were needing volunteers. I was keen to help out where I could and that led me to become a more active part of the community and branch out to other community things.



*I was able to make
new friendships, more
positive friendships.
And in time I brought
my daughter to
volunteer also.*



I love it. Absolutely. Love it. It's my main social thing to do in a week. If I can't get to the cafe for whatever reason it messes with my week. I just love coming to the cafe. I've got my group of friends that I meet and I get to speak to other people and, yeah, love it.

I've just been supported to be me, you know, the person I am. I like to help, I like to be part of the community. I mean, being a single parent, there's nobody at home, it's hard. Being able to speak, to get things off my shoulders has helped me. I've met people with similar experiences, so yeah, it's just being able to talk...



And coming along to the café has helped me branch out to other things. I run my own wee group now, which helps bring funds into the local area.



And I'm also part of [Bethany-supported group] Building a Stronger Menzieshill which helps our local community as well. And I've introduced several different families to the café who have all got help when they've needed help. If it wasn't for the café, I'd probably be stuck in my own four walls. So, thank you.

Connect Café opened its doors in September 2017. It is a community café run in partnership with Bethany Christian Trust, Menzieshill Parish Church and CrossReach. It's run by volunteers from the community for the benefit of the community.

Outputs & Outcomes

April 2022 to March 2023



Homelessness Prevention

Community Support & Development West

160 People supported
247 Significant conversations

Connect to Community

22 Gate releases
84 Liberated & being supported

Inspiring Leith

176 People linking monthly
9 Regular community activities

UpStream

234 Young people supported
110 Families supported

Community Support & Development East

955 Individuals supported
625 Sessions facilitated

Creative Expressions

104 Sessions facilitated
Audience reach of 1,919 people

Community Support & Development North

189 Individuals supported
70 Sessions facilitated

Access through Advocacy

52 Referrals received
156 Face to face meetings

Crisis Intervention

Care Van Edinburgh

20,562 Presentations
11,040 Lunches provided

Rapid Re-Accommodation Welcome Centre

13,672 Bed spaces provided
65 People on average nightly

Bethany House

41 People moved on positively
100% Satisfied with support

Bethany Christian Centre

100% Improved accommodation
604 Recovery group sessions

Gateway to Homes & Communities

1,026 Households furnished
6,798 Home starter packs

Care Van Glasgow

2,493 Presentations
1,856 Lunches provided

Anne Hope House

100% Developed new skills
436 Activities & groups facilitated

Care Van Perth & Stornoway Outreach

381 Presentations in Perth
72 People supported in Stornoway

Housing and Support

Kharis Court

18 Young people supported
89% of residents successfully
moving on to secure accommodation

Housing First Edinburgh

14 People supported
8 Accessed housing

Supported Housing Dumfries

15 Moves to stable housing
925 Drop-in attendances

Bethany Homes

74 Supported flats in total
36 New tenancies commenced

Housing Support Fife

111 People sustained tenancies
29 Attendances at hub

Move-On Support

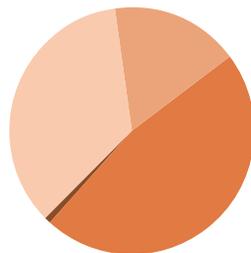
36 People supported
88% Tenancies sustained

Finances

With so much of our income coming from your fundraising activities, donations and prayers, we feel it is important to show you how it is being spent. You can access our most recent Consolidated Accounts by visiting our website: www.bethanychristiantrust.com/publications

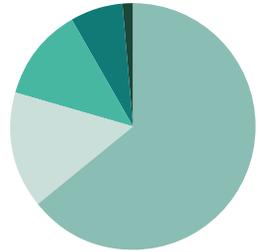
Income

Statutory	■	£3,691,835	46.92%
Fundraising	■	£2,793,172	35.50%
Retail	■	£1,333,207	16.94%
Other	■	£50,584	0.64%
Total		£7,868,798	



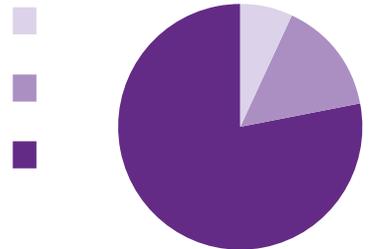
Expenditure

Charitable Activities	£4,920,435	64.17%
Retail	£1,180,535	15.40%
Support Activities (Business Support)	£941,073	12.27%
Fundraising	£521,698	6.80%
Governance and Administration	£104,022	1.36%
Total	£7,667,763	



For every £1 you give us

- 7p** goes towards raising the next £1 (7%)
- 15p** develops charity shop income (15%)
- 78p** goes towards ending homelessness in Scotland (78%)



Thank you

A warm and heartfelt thank you to all of the volunteers and donors who have supported Bethany Christian Trust this year with their time, talent, prayers, and donations. It's your generosity that makes our work possible.

How to get involved

We believe that prayer grounds all the work that Bethany does. We invite you to join with our staff, volunteers and supporters in using the prayer diary and online resources to pray for the services and challenges in overcoming homelessness across Scotland.

Pray

Giving ensures that we are able to plan ahead and empower people with long term, practical care. Thanks to the generosity of people across Scotland and beyond, our work continues to benefit more and more people every year. Every gift, be it clothing and furniture for our shops, a donation towards one of our appeals, or a commitment to regular monthly giving, gets us one step closer towards ending homelessness in Scotland.

Give

For more information please contact:
supporters@bethanychristiantrust.com
or call us on 0131 561 8927

Alternatively, you can give directly on our website: www.bethanychristiantrust.com



Every day across Scotland, hundreds of volunteers partner with Bethany to provide vital support to people accessing Bethany's services. Volunteering at Bethany is a great way to meet new people, learn new skills, give back to the community and boost your confidence. Our volunteering opportunities are diverse and flexible to ensure that you benefit too. Please get in touch today to chat about how you can join our team!

#BCTheroes

For more information please contact:
volunteers@bethanychristiantrust.com
or call us on 0131 561 8965

Volunteer

Thanks to our trust, foundation and statutory body supporters

Aberbrothock Skea Trust
Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership
Alexander Moncur Trust
Carlton Charitable Trust
Challenge Trust
Charles Hayward Foundation
City of Edinburgh Council
C L N Trust Fund
Cordis Charitable Trust
CORRA Foundation
Cruden Foundation Ltd
Cycling Scotland
DG Haxton Charitable Trust
Dr Guthrie's Association
Dumfries and Galloway Council
Dundee City Council
Edinburgh & Lothian Trust Fund
Edinburgh Bar Association Benevolent Trust
Edinburgh Integration Joint Board
Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council
Family Action
Fife Council
Garfield Weston Foundation
Glasgow City Council
Glasgow Eastern Merchants & Tradesmen's Society
Inchcape Foundation
Inspiring Scotland
J&C Fleming Charitable Trust
James and Jessie Shaw Charitable Trust
James Inglis Testamentary Trust
JK Young Endowment Fund
JSM McN Charitable Trust
Kilpatrick Fraser Charitable Trust
Leith Benevolent Association
MEB Charitable Trust
Miss WHS Wallace's Charitable Trust
NHS Grampian Endowment Fund
Nimar Charitable Trust
Petty Trust
Pilgrim Trust
Raymond Kenneth Thomas Harris Trust
Scott Thomson Charitable Trust

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
Scottish Government
Scottish Social Services Council
Sir Iain Stewart Foundation
Sir Tom Farmer Foundation
Spurgin Charitable Trust
The Alfred Haines Charitable Trust
The AMW Charitable Trust
The Anber Fund
The Beatrice Laing Charitable Trust
The Castansa Trust
The Charles Neil Sharp Charitable Trust
The Glendalough Trust
The Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust
The Grace Trust
The Graham Trust
The Hanley Trust (1987)
The Hinshelwood Gibson Trust
The James M McNab Trust
The James T Howat Charitable Trust
The James Wood Bequest Fund
The Jerusalem Trust
The Lady Marian Gibson Trust
The Leigh Trust
The Mackie Foundation
The Miss Eliza C Pedersen's Charitable Trust
The Nancie Massey Charitable Trust
The Netherdale Trust
The Pettigrew Charitable Trust
The Riada Trust
The Russell Trust
The Social Bite Fund
The Souter Charitable Trust
The Trusted Executive Charitable Foundation
The Volvox Trust
The Westwood Charitable Trust
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Thanks to our Legacy donors

Every year, we are blessed with the thoughtfulness of our supporters who remember Bethany Christian Trust in their Will. These legacies are an extraordinary help in our work across Scotland, and reflect the often longstanding connection that people have had with Bethany. Their generosity now makes a lasting impact beyond their lifetime. We would like to acknowledge the following legacies left to us since our last Annual Report:

Brian Curtis
Timothy Young

We would also like to pay tribute to all whose lives have prompted generous donations in their memory through the year:

Alec Mann
Alex Snowdon
Ann Wigglesworth
Bill Cowie
Bill McBratney
Betty McDonald
Colin Jackson
Dorothy Begbie
John Rennie
Jenny Mundie
Mary Kearney

Thanks to our church partners

We would also like to thank the many churches and communities across Scotland who partner with us. Due to the scale of your support we cannot acknowledge every generous act, but each and every one is greatly appreciated.



Chief Executive and Secretary

Alasdair Bennett

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