

FFWPU UK: 2022 In Review, Community Spotlight: North Thames, London, UK

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Let's take a look at how the year of 2022 went for our communities across the UK. For our next Spotlight we have North of Thames!

Much of the focus of the past year has been integrating the three communities that have existed north of the river Thames for many decades – North London, East London and East Anglia (ELEA), and Central London. The new region stretches from Milton Keynes in the north-west to Norwich and Southend-on-Sea in the east. For this reason, although the three communities have joined together, they have each continued to worship locally: North London in Hatch End, ELEA in Romford, and Central London in Lancaster Gate. As part of the merger process, two pastors who faithfully served their communities for many years – Jeffrey B. and Francis F. – stepped down. We are very grateful for all their investment. A new Merger Committee was established, ably chaired by Chris L. B. It was decided to look for a new pastor, and, in June, Ruth and I were appointed.



Installation Prayer for the North of the Thames Region pastorship.

The name of the Merger Committee was changed to North of the Thames Council, and Joanna S. was appointed as treasurer and Helena S. as secretary. The council meets regularly most weeks and minutes are kept. Recently, a financial committee was established to administer the region's charity monies, and

another committee to administer a new community fund to support members of the community who may be facing some need.

Worship is at the heart of our communities and, after the disruption caused by lockdowns, regular services have been re-established. Attendance is gradually returning to its pre-Covid levels, although a number of members of the congregation have for various reasons chosen to watch the worship services, which continue to be streamed online. Central London and ELEA always have a meal after the service, which facilitates fellowship. The North London prayer group meets as it has done for more than 20 years.



Remembrance worship service in Lancaster Gate for Queen Elizabeth II. We all sang "God Save the King" at its conclusion.

Education is very important for our community and our Sunday School has been happening regularly for around 30 years. Even during lockdown, it continued online. Recently, it has been organised and run by Diana VDS. and Kiyoko R. It is very important, not only for children's education, but also for them to make friends with each other. Summer Camp for young children has happened every year at Cleeve House for more than 20 years. For most of this time it has been organised by Chris LB., however he is now passing it on to the next generation of young people who attended the camps themselves when they were children. Patrick and Yebuny H. are leading members of the ESGD and have been involved in the education of young people for many years, supporting them not only within our own community but also throughout the UK and Europe.

One of the major events that happened in our community was the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the blessing of the 2075 and 6000 couples by True Parents in 1982. The event was organised by David and Christa Rennie and their family in Milton Keynes. It was a whole-day affair and culminated in a delicious dinner, with entertainment held in the Church of Christ the Cornerstone where five denominations worship.

Many members of our community support a range of activities and projects. Robin Marsh, a former pastor in North London, has been leading UPF for many years, together with Margaret A. from South London. Mitty T. was the president of WFWP in the UK for many years and we wish to congratulate her on her recent appointment as president of WFWP-Europe. Françoise M. and Jeffrey B. have been very involved in supporting interfaith activities in Watford for many years. Last year, a new Bridge of Peace Arch was opened in the Peace Garden, which both Françoise and Jeffrey were instrumental in creating. Françoise also chairs the Seonghwa Ministry for widows and widowers and Jeffrey is director of the UK Blessed Family Department and is very active in supporting people in the community through counselling. Peter G., who is a fine musician, has started his own cultural organisation and fundraises to support refugee children in Congo. Through David R., our region donated £1000 to support the development of a school in Moldova for refugee Ukrainian orphans. Below on the right, you can see a classroom for refugee orphans in a building which we sponsored in Moldova.



40th anniversary celebration of 2075 and 6000 blessings.

John O. has for many years been publishing the Morality Forum, a magazine which campaigns to support traditional marriage and family and exposes the activities of those who seek to undermine these institutions. He also supports BCLC by reaching out to Christian ministers. Our region also supports the national-level movement by providing most of the staff for HQ. Our ELEA community has been very involved in supporting various activities in Africa.

All members are invited to a planning meeting in February to flesh out our priorities for the coming year:

1. Worship
2. Community building
3. Serving the community