



Godmanchester Baptist Church



# Annual Review of 2013

[godmanchesterbaptist.org](http://godmanchesterbaptist.org)



*Welcome to our Annual Review of 2013 which outlines our activities during the year and brings much encouragement as we recognise God's many blessings over the last year.*

In 2012 we were challenged by the Lord to “Guard the Heart and Grow the Edge”. Guarding the Heart means that those who belong to GBC as their church family find they are well cared for and have opportunity to worship God in appropriate ways. Growing the Edge is a challenge to build strong links into our community by the whole church. The impact of this has been to see growth right across our church community. Much of this year's Review details the ways we have been blessed by God.

As a result, 2013 has seen us **responding to growth**. The word “full” is a regular adjective for many of our activities. Key to this have been the steps of faith to start our building project which is pressing our premises outwards towards the boundaries of our site. We have also sought to equip new leaders and open up to new areas of ministry especially amongst children, young people and families.

Also of special note in 2013 has been the remarkable growth of the **FoodBank** and the start of **HAMA** (Huntingdon Area Money Advice). Both are rooted in our commitment to the acts of kindness we see in the Bible. These are fine examples of our ministry in the public square.

And yet we were still challenged, as it happens at The Mix, to lower the bar for belonging to the GBC community. We needed to move beyond welcome to hospitality; to create a culture where people can simply belong without preconditions. Yet at the same time to raise the bar in our expectation of the transforming work that Christ can do within us – that we might become Shining Stars.





During 2013 Adrian Woodbridge's ministry at Medway Christian Fellowship continued to develop to a point where he joined them full-time in September. Significant new areas of mission have opened up on the Oxmoor estate for MCF and we have continued to share in the D-Caf ministry.

We also commissioned Abe Kalyapu for pastoral ministry in Zambia.

## CONGREGATIONS

Almost everyone at GBC finds a home in one of our three congregations: Sunday morning Celebration, Songs of Praise, and Generation Rising. A new different group of people have been joining Messy Church. The diversity of style and content of each congregation provides us with a meaningful place to worship God. When our congregations meet, they are also places of learning and prayer. Our local mission activities feed into our congregations and our small groups give people deeper and closer relationships for discipleship and support.

We twice ran the Journeys course in 2013 for those wanting to find out more about the Christian faith.



During 2013, many new people have begun to be part of our church family. Adults involved in the life of GBC increased by about 20% to around 300. Three people testified to their faith in believers' baptism, seven people became church members, and we shared five dedications of children.

*"Since we first visited GBC we were made to feel very welcome and part of the church family. We got invited and involved in events and activities such as Friday Night Project and The Mix.*

*We have thoroughly enjoyed everything we have been involved in and we are looking forward to many happy years at GBC." Matt and Claire*

**Prayer** surrounds everything we do, but from time to time we set aside specific times for concentrated prayer. Of special note were the early morning prayer times in Holy Week and The Prayer Space during September.

We support world mission across all our congregations, regularly sharing news of people overseas who are linked to GBC.

Many people enable us to celebrate the goodness of God, to share our lives with each other and to make disciples in all our congregations. We thank them for giving their time and gifts and for sharing their servant hearts.

## **SUNDAY MORNINGS**

Our Sunday morning congregation has continued to grow and we use every inch of space on a Sunday morning in our Worship Area and in all the other rooms that are bursting at the seams with all our babies, children and young people.

We have benefitted from preaching series from Matthew (Vintage Jesus), Habakkuk (When God Seems Unfair), 1 Thessalonians (The Real Deal), Psalms and Genesis (Joseph: Inside an Outsider).

Our growing band of worship leaders and musicians have led us in sung worship and others have used their gifts to help us draw near to God. We are glad that a number are also able to use their gifts in support of other local churches, including regularly leading worship at Yelling Baptist Church and Medway Christian Fellowship. Crèche, Little Stars and Kids Kingdom, our growing Sunday morning children's ministry for 0-11s, and Furnace for 11-14s continue to provide an excellent age appropriate teaching programme during our Sunday celebrations.



## SUNDAY EVENINGS

The content and style of our Sunday evening services varies from week to week but regularly includes healing and communion services and a focus on one of our overseas or local missions.

## SONGS OF PRAISE

Every third Sunday at 4.00pm, our Songs of Praise congregation meets for a short service with well loved hymns, readings, prayers and a short talk. Up to 80 people have been coming and then many stay and enjoy tea together – and the chance to meet others and spend time chatting. It has been a real joy this year to see a growing number of people from our Tuesday Lunch Club and Holiday at Home attending Songs of Praise and feeling that it is their spiritual home.

## GENERATION RISING

Generation Rising has continued to develop through the last year with young people getting more and more involved in all areas: leading worship, leading the services, running the PA and projections and making cakes. A highlight of the year was Generation Rising's first baptismal service when Sam Graham was baptised.



*"I have had lots of opportunities to be involved at GBC in 2013, with my baptism and with being around and helping with lots of practical jobs around the place. This has all given me time and space to grow nearer to God and to think about what God wants me to do in the future."*

*SAM*

## Testimony

Testimony has played a significant part in our lives together at GBC during 2013. People have shared in moving and helpful ways with each other about God's blessing on their lives. Sometimes this has been during worship services and this is a particular facet of our Songs of Praise

services. Sometimes people share in other settings, such as prayer triplets, small groups and friendship groups. A number of people have faced, and are still facing, very difficult circumstances. Two of them have agreed to share some testimony in this Review booklet.



*“In July 2013, after many tests and investigations, it was recommended that I undergo a Total Pancreatectomy as my pancreas was peppered with cysts showing a raised potential for future malignancy. This procedure involves the removal of the pancreas, duodenum, gall bladder and spleen*

*together with part of the stomach and some ducting. New connections are then made. This was rather a lot to take in but God in His goodness:*

- *gave real peace and strength in times of fear and weakness*
- *ensured that this procedure was carried out in time and just at the right time*
- *enabled the preservation of my spleen which is VERY rare during this type of surgery*
- *caused the ‘textbook perfect’ responses of my body during this long and complicated procedure*
- *confirmed that the decision to have surgery was right as signs of very early changes (not requiring any further treatment) were found*

*And He continues:*

- *granting me a heightened awareness of His love, presence and care in ALL circumstances*
- *causing many different people to shower me with great kindness*
- *healing my body much faster than expected*
- *helping my family and me to adjust to my new ‘normal’*
- *enabling good control of my diabetes and digestion*

*I don’t know why God has allowed my family and me to go through all of this rather than lifting us out of it but I do know that He is good to us, far above anything that I can expect or imagine. I know that I can trust Him completely whatever happens.*

*I am convinced that the assurance, strength and many blessings given to me are the result of God hearing and responding wonderfully to the prayers of my church family and others. I hope that on reading this you will be greatly blessed and encouraged as I have been.*

*What a wonderful God we have and what a wonderful Christian family I belong to. Thank you so much for your faithful prayers, your support, your love and your kindness. I'm not quite 'out of the woods' yet so please do keep praying!" Trudy*



**"TIME** in 2013

*TIME has been a big issue for me as 2013 closed, with a husband diagnosed with cancer, 2 kids to get out of the door by 8.00am each morning for secondary school, time to see friends and family, time to feed the washing machine, time to iron, time to walk the dogs ....*

*Having grown up in the Anglican Church I have been mindful of the words in the Communion service, which say '**at just the right time**, when we were still far off', God did something amazing in Jesus. And this is where I am focusing as 2013 finishes and 2014 really gets going, not on time whizzing past but rejoicing that at the right time, God brought us into GBC, He has given us support in an amazing way, we have had time together at home, both of us have stopped work, God has given us enough money to manage on. So in all these things it has been 'at just the right time'.....*

*Ecclesiastes 3 v 1 says, 'There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens'*

*Sometimes looking forward is not easy for lots of reasons, but looking back I can see so clearly that **AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME** .... God has given us so many people to care for us, support us, and walk with us in our lives – there*



*is a danger of over focusing on the situation now, because cancer is involved, when the truth is we sometimes forget to take time sooner, to be, to relax, to rejoice in what we have, not what we lack – we are after all human beings, NOT human doings.”*

*Jude*

## Small Groups

We continue to work out our vision of being a small group community in many ways with people ‘loving, learning, doing and deciding’ together – whether that is in a prayer triplet, a team working together in many of our services, activities and events, or a small group.

Thirteen small groups meet on a weekly basis for caring, sharing, praying, studying, worshipping and reaching out.



*“Metamorphosis (a group for 20s and 30s) has been a great experience for me over the last few months. At its inception we hoped that we could build relationships with people of a similar age in order to support each other. I really do feel as though that is happening! By meeting casually but regularly, we can chat, unload and have fun*

*without worrying too much about work, life pressures or family commitments. Certainly for me, I have found these months invaluable! As a group we are going to the Momentum weekend in Sherwood Forest's Center Parcs in March and we are all incredibly excited about having time and space to grow together as a group in a completely different surrounding; as well as hearing speakers talk on topics relevant to us. An exciting start to 2014!”* *Abbi*

*“I want to thank God and GBC for my prayer triplet. We have seen many answers to prayer over the last few years. We each separately spoke to John Smith about prayer triplets and were put in touch. I cannot express how much this has meant to my whole prayer life which was at a point of*



*stagnation. It is the best way of having the most confidential Christian support when your job relies so heavily on discretion and confidences. My prayer triplet partners are true friends and we have all seen joyful answers to prayer in the trials and tribulations of our lives through our persistent prayer*

*before God. We still have not got life sorted, but we have the confidence to pray it through with one another and listen to God together. "*

*Stephanie (pictured at FNP Super Heroes Ball – not her prayer triplet!)*

## **New for 2013 Women's Ministry**



April 2013 saw the launch of the Women's Ministry at GBC, in the form of a Retreat Day at Bluntisham Baptist Church. Having had women's ministry laid on my heart for many years the pictures that came related to water and the verse that stuck in my mind

for us all was Isaiah 58 verse 11: 'The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.' We felt refreshed at the Retreat and since then have gone on to meet in various groupings for different activities once a month. We trust God for all that He will show us and achieve through us in the future and hope that you will be able to join us on this exciting journey in 2014. *Delia*

# Szentendre

The link with Szentendre Baptist Church was strengthened by a visit in February by eighteen Hungarians. During the five day stay, our friends visited historic sites in Ely and Cambridge as well as Godmanchester. *“They were very interested in our Roman history,”* said Rachel Thurley, who organised a local tour, which included a visit to Island Hall and to see the finds from an archaeological dig in her own garden.

The visit also included opportunity for both churches to share news and discover more about each other’s work. Sunday church services completed a busy schedule. Zsolt Dani was our guest speaker in the morning whilst in the evening everyone gathered for our communion and healing service.



Six young people from Szentendre came back in August and joined our group at Soul Survivor and then helped with the Holiday Club.

## World Mission

We held a World Mission Sunday in June focusing on mission in China, and we have shared financially and prayerfully through the year in the work of

**Abraham Kalyapu** pastoring a church in Zambia;

**Anglo-Indian Concern** in Chennai, India; **Cambodia Action**;

**Kathryn Thompson** working at Rehoboth to provide educational support;

**Mission Direct** working around the world; and

**Rehoboth Children’s Homes** in the Philippines.

In addition, during 2013 some members of our congregation have been on short-term assignments with some of the above projects.

# Seniors Ministry

## LUNCH CLUB



Our weekly Lunch Club, organised in conjunction with Churches Together in Godmanchester, is held in our small hall every Tuesday. We enjoy a two course meal with tea and coffee, and plenty of time to enjoy a good chat. This year we have welcomed a number of new members and now have an attendance

approaching 50. Quite a number from Lunch Club now also attend the monthly Songs of Praise service, which has been an encouragement. We enjoyed a coach outing to the Flower Festival at Ely Cathedral, and, this year, instead of a trip to the pantomime enjoyed a Christmas Lunch together at the White Hart.

## HOLIDAY AT HOME



Anticipation was high as the bookings came in for our annual Holiday at Home – a week of fun and fellowship for senior citizens from GBC and the wider community. Each day saw a variety of activities from Cliff Richard’s Summer Holiday to Laurel & Hardy; music making by the children of GMC Primary School;

community singing and poetry; our now traditional bingo with plenty of quality prizes to be won; and the daily quiz. On the Wednesday we had a coach outing to Dobbies Garden Centre near Peterborough and were blessed with lovely sunshine. Each day we enjoyed a light lunch together, and later afternoon tea followed by a short Thought for the Day from the Bible and a small gift to take home to remind us of what we had heard.

Great fun was had by all, and at the end folk were saying “can we do it again next year?” – yes you can!

## **SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION**

During the year there have been regular monthly services held at McCartney House in GMC and at Langley Court in St Ives. These have been appreciated by all who come, some of whom would be unable to get out to a service at church. We also organised three very well attended Carol Services at McCartney House, Oak Tree Court and The Chestnuts.

*“We had an especially uplifting Carol Service at McCartney House in December. It was led by people from two small groups and the musicians playing the keyboard, guitar and violin looked so joyful: it was infectious. We sang lots of carols, chosen by our visitors and also residents. My heart was lifted in praise to the Lord. After a short message, which was well received, the visitors chatted with the residents whilst enjoying warm mince pies and sherry or fruit juice, provided by Jackie, our Manager. I gave thanks to God for such a joyful service and pray that many of those present received a special touch from the Lord.”*

*Ruth*

# Children, Youth and Family Ministry

What an amazing year we have had in the children, youth and families ministry. So many people have been part of so many different activities.

During the week we continue to run a varied programme with activities for all ages. Lots of people come to all of these activities and at times our building is full.



**Monday evenings Football Project** at Godmanchester Community School for those aged 11-20, in two age groups.

*“Football Project welcomes local youths from all backgrounds and not just those who attend the church regularly. It brings all of us younger members of the community closer together and is great fun” AARON*

**Wednesday mornings Littlefoot Club** for babies and toddlers and their parents and carers. We had a great Littlefoot outing this year – to Stanwick Lakes in July.

**Thursday evenings Explorers Children’s Club** for those in years 3-6. We had an outing too this year – a bowling trip with the Kids Kingdom group!



**Friday evenings Friday Night Project** for those in year 7+. FNP has had a great year with lots of amazing events happening – finishing with the Dr Who versus Superheroes Christmas Ball.

*“FNP feels like a great place to chillax after a stressful week at school.” SAM*



*"FNP is a great place to socialise. It's fun!  
Without it my Friday night would be spoilt."*

*Connor*

*"FNP is almost like a second home, because I  
don't have to pretend to be anyone else. I  
love it." Maisy*

The Space Academy **Holiday Club** in the summer and the **Family Fun Event** at the end of the week were very successful again with lots of children and families getting involved.



**Messy Church** has continued to grow during 2013 and the team have decided to hold Messy Church more often – with 6 afternoons planned for 2014.

The work in **Schools** continues to expand with assemblies and CURious (Christian Union) at Hinchingbrooke and LOGOS lunchtime club and assemblies at St Anne's Primary School continuing. Involvement at GMC Community Primary School is also growing which is very encouraging.

### *New for 2013*

After the very successful establishing of the **Girls Only Project** to mentor our teenage girls, 2013 saw the start of the **Da Lads** mentoring project for the boys! *"Da Lads mentoring started In March 2013 when a few of the lads and potential mentors spent the weekend in the Peak District. It was a great weekend where we had the chance to get to know each other in a relaxed atmosphere. The snow was a great addition to the weekend and plans changed each day, but the snowball fights were of a high standard! The project started with seven lads signing up over a number of months. In 2014 there are quite a few lads who will be old enough to be included and we pray they will be keen to be part of Da Lads mentoring."* Ian

**Soul Survivor** and the **Frontier Youth Centre** trip have been great times away.

# Community

## FOODBANK



The work of the foodbank is motivated by Jesus' teaching on poverty and injustice.

We operate according to Christian principles of compassion, honesty, integrity, openness, kindness and care of all people, regardless of backgrounds or beliefs. We believe in turning faith into

practical action, living out God's love for the poor by seeking to fulfil Matthew 25:35-36 "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me..." Whilst we are part of the local church, we serve people of all faith groups and beliefs or none. We are passionate about inclusion and being non-judgemental is central to what we do. We believe that everyone has the right to have food on their plate, dignity, skills, a chance to work and hope for the future. The foodbank is there to help people in the local community in a time of crisis by providing a place where they can be listened to in a non-judgmental way and receive practical help.

2013 was a busy and exciting year for the foodbank with lots happening. The start of the year saw the formation of a steering group and the commencement of open house sessions, thus relieving some pressure from the church office. Opening twice a week, a team of volunteers are available to welcome visitors to the foodbank and provide a listening ear over a hot cuppa. 562 parcels have been given out during these open house sessions, feeding over 1000 adults and children.

During the year the foodbank has become much more widely known, both nationally and locally. We have joined the Trussell Trust, the national network of foodbanks, and benefitted from the increased publicity and profile this has brought. The foodbank now has its own website [godmanchester.foodbank.org.uk](http://godmanchester.foodbank.org.uk) which has attracted 1,111 hits in the last



four months of the year from 771 unique visitors. Locally, members of the team have given talks to a number of groups, including community groups such as the Women's Institute, day time groups at other churches and statutory agencies within the local authority as well as three interviews on local radio. In October we hosted a Showcase event when we welcomed guests from local agencies and community organisations along with people from local church congregations who came to find out more about the foodbank and even have a tour of the stockroom. We now have 55 agencies registered with the foodbank who hold vouchers to refer those in need.

In the autumn we assisted the Churches Together in St Ives, led by the Parish church, to set up a foodbank in St Ives by operating as a satellite to Godmanchester foodbank for a few months until they were established. Having decided that joining the Trussell Trust was not for them they have now branched out to be an independent foodbank in their own right.



In the summer our stock fell very low and we put out a request for food. The response was amazing and our shelves have never been empty since. Many have supported the foodbank with ongoing donations, both from within our own and other local congregations and from others in the local community who regularly bring in donations. We had two supermarket collections at Huntingdon Waitrose, one in May and another in September. In addition we took part in the Trussell Trust national supermarket collection at Tesco at the end of November, when we were overwhelmed by the generosity of shoppers and collected 2,597Kg. A number of local primary schools held harvest festivals and donated their offerings to the foodbank. To everyone who has donated we say a huge THANK YOU. We could not do this without you.





We finished the year with our Christmas hamper project. This was a massive undertaking, but with a huge amount of preparation beforehand by Jude, it took a large team of volunteers just a few hours to pack and distribute 94 Christmas hampers which provided not just the basics but some Christmas

treats too. Hampers were given to families and individuals who would otherwise not have had much to eat at Christmas, and were very well received.

**New for 2013** **HAMA** (Huntingdon Area Money Advice)

Pay freeze; bedroom tax; benefits cutback; increased energy costs, and so on and so on.

All of us are aware of the changing economic environment in which we live. For many of us it means a bit of tightening of the belt; for some it is devastating. Debt is an increasing problem in our society – and the offers of quick fixes like pay-day loans seem very attractive when you have no money left at all, but like so many of these things it is “too good to be true” and the problems escalate. And of course once in debt it is hard to get out of it and the light at the end of the tunnel gets forever darker and you end up dreading the phone ringing or someone banging on your door because it is just the next person harassing you for payment with money you don’t have.

In October 2013 the churches in the Huntingdon area set up a money advice service to help those in the local community – HAMA. It operates out of three centres, with GBC being one. It helps people with debts – preparing a debt management plan, negotiating with creditors on behalf of the clients, and assisting with budgeting. People approach HAMA for help themselves or are referred to HAMA by others such as social housing groups. HAMA is staffed by volunteers, three of whom are part of the GBC

family, who provide their services free of charge to any who seek its help. It offers appointments to clients Monday to Saturday, during the day or evening. In the four months that HAMA has been going about 30 people have sought its help. If you are interested in supporting the work of HAMA or know of someone who needs help with money matters, please speak to Keith Doe, Geoff Collett or Roger Hickling.

**Other activities in the community**, many of them in co-operation with people from other churches, which individuals and groups from GBC are involved in, have included

- **Cambridge Street Pastors**
- **Christian Aid Week Collection**
- **Cornerstone pregnancy advice service and Cornerstone PHSE lessons in secondary schools**
- **Gala Day and Worship in the Park**
- **Hospital Services at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital**
- **Mayor's Carols and Godmanchester Christmas Market**

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