



Godmanchester Baptist Church

Annual Review of 2016

Deeper in worship
Clearer in society
Younger in age
Happier in community
Bolder in testimony

godmanchesterbaptist.org

Welcome to our Annual Review of 2016 which outlines our activities during the year and brings much encouragement as we recognise God's many blessings over the last year.

“Here is the church. Here is the steeple. Open the door and see all the people!” Wrong! Each year this Review shows that the church IS the people. People who share their Christian lives together and then their lives with their community. Worshipping people. Loving people. Serving people.

In 2016 we've spent time thinking about what it means to go deeper in worship, to be happier in community, to be bolder in testimony, to be clearer in society and to be younger in age.

GBC is a great place to belong. Great worship, great teaching, great people and, to my personal delight, great coffee. We've worked really hard this year at providing people with a great welcome which has been appreciated by so many who have started to worship with us on Sundays. With the largest numbers ever coming into our Church Centre for services, we have found some of our facilities and teams stretched as never before. That's triggered a serious review of the remaining part of our site which wasn't redeveloped in 2014/5.

During 2016, we have been challenged to focus to be more outward looking than ever. Joe and Bethany Warton joined us at the beginning of the year. Joe was appointed our Discipleship Pastor with the remit to champion whole life discipleship. He has developed a number of resources to help people express their faith in their day-to-day life, including a series of successful sector evenings concentrating on people's real



Joe, Bethany, Katie and Zoé

experience of work. It has been great to have Bethany leading worship for us on some Sundays.

I'm privileged to be part of a great staff team and Leadership Team. Their hard work, wisdom and enthusiasm makes a significant difference to the life of GBC. They will value your prayers as they lead the church.

So welcome to our review of 2016. If you are new to GBC, I hope you'll discover more about us in these pages. If you lived through 2016 as part of GBC, I hope you'll be inspired to give thanks to God for what he did amongst us and continues to do now.

John Smith, Senior Pastor



Daniel Beckett
Children & Youth Pastor

John Smith
Senior Pastor

Joe Warton
Discipleship Pastor

Ruth Blakey
Administrator

Laurel Fennell
Parish Nurse

CONGREGATIONS

Almost everyone at GBC finds a place to worship in one of our congregations: Sunday morning Celebration, Songs of Praise, and Generation Rising, or at Messy Church. The diversity of style and content of each congregation provides us with a meaningful place for worship, learning and prayer.

We support World Mission across all our congregations, regularly sharing news of people overseas who are linked to GBC. There are two personal stories of trips to India and to The Philippines later in this review.

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.

During the year many new people have begun to be part of our church family. Five people testified to their faith in believers' baptism and twenty three people became church members.

Karen writes, "During 2016, God challenged me afresh about being bolder in testimony and after praying about it for a while, I decided to invite first one friend and then another to read the Bible with me for thirty minutes a week for seven weeks using a resource called 'Face to Face With Jesus: The Seven Signs in John'.

Here's what happened and how they both became Christians:

'Karen asked me if I would like to learn about 'The Seven Signs in John' after attending Littlefoot toddlers' club and Messy church at GBC for some time. I have always been curious about faith since my son started to attend St Anne's school, Godmanchester. I found it to be a great introduction to learning about the Bible. This has enabled me to help



Alison

answer any questions my son may have. Since completing this, I am now following the First Steps Basic Bible studies booklet. Myself and my family attend GBC every Sunday and we are part of a missional community.'

Alison

'In 2016, Karen asked me if I would be interested in studying 'The Seven Signs in John'. I had begun to take an interest in Christianity, mainly because the majority of friends I made at Littlefoot were Christians and I really admired their values. I found the study really eye-opening and thought-provoking, it made me question things about my life and how I could live a more Christian way of life. Since the study, I attend church when I can and have become an active member of Friday group in Godmanchester.'

Emma



Emma and Oakley

Why don't you find a friend and invite them to read the Bible with you? It's exciting and who knows what might happen?" Check out: godmanchesterbaptist.org/sevensigns

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Our Sunday Celebration continues to grow numerically and spiritually. During 2016, we took a detailed look at some of the key spiritual disciplines: how we can bless others; the ways we encounter God; and we finished the year with a series from 1 Peter about standing firm in our spiritual lives. Our communion services continued to focus on things of “first importance” and then on the reasonableness of our faith in an uncertain world. We have valued the faithful service of our worship bands, some of whom also lead services in other churches, as well as those who form our welcome and prayer teams.

SUNDAY EVENINGS

In 2016, we began to use the second Sunday evening service to go deeper into the presence of God by leading one another in worship and prayer. Our evening Communion Service remains a key time when, in the context of worship and the Lord’s Supper, we seek the health and wellbeing of others.

SONGS OF PRAISE

At 4 o'clock on the third Sunday of each month (except August) the Songs of Praise congregation meets. The services include testimony, prayer, and a time of singing some older hymns usually chosen by members of the congregation who explain why it is a favourite of theirs. Often too, we get an interesting explanation of how the hymn came to be written. Everyone is then invited to stay for afternoon tea with homemade sandwiches and cakes, and there is a real buzz as folk chat together.

GENERATION RISING

Generation Rising meets every Sunday evening at 7.00pm.

It is a congregation for young people where they can meet with God, learn about God and encourage each other in their faith, all done in

ways that make sense to them. There are a few older people who get involved as well.

The young people take responsibility for lots of things including leading worship, setting up, clearing up, and providing refreshments.

Any young person is welcome, it is mostly aimed at 13-18 year olds.

'I would like to thank everyone at GBC for welcoming everyone who came to my baptism. I have had a journey with God which has never ceased to amaze me. My baptism was probably the hardest day I have been through knowing that I would have to speak about the places in which God has come to me.



Carrick

At the very end I was over the moon knowing I have been accepted by God. I was reminded of God's calling and someone prayed over me that I will bring God to the poor. I have kept this in my heart. I would like to ask for continued prayer but also encourage people to speak about the way God has spoken to them. I would like to thank the whole group of Generation Rising for their support even though they did not know what I had gone through.

I am a shy boy and am often cast to the outside by groups but they have made an effort to include me. Going forward in 2017 I would like to say that I can't wait for the times we will spend together. He has many things planned for people in the congregation. I am looking forward to a fun experience at The Mix and Soul Survivor with a time to make new friends.' Carrick

WHOLE LIFE DISCIPLESHIP

Joe Warton, our Discipleship Pastor, writes here about some of the initiatives he has been involved in at GBC during 2016.

GBC Survey

The Great GBC Survey gave us all the opportunity to reflect on how we are doing with God, church-life, and our lives outside of church. A whopping 138 people responded and the results were massively encouraging! There is much to celebrate indeed for God is clearly at work among us. In the face of many challenges (stress, tiredness, less than optimal mental & physical health, wrestles with God, to name just a few), many of us have: continued to seek God in prayer and Bible reading; been a source of comfort and encouragement to those in our small groups, prayer groups and the wider church; made a difference by volunteering in countless ways; and we've been seeking to be a Kingdom influence in our families and workplaces. Praise God for all that he is doing in us and through us!

As well as giving us many reasons to celebrate, the survey has helped to identify some of the areas where we want to grow and make further progress. Feeding nicely into our vision for this year, it has revealed that we need to know more and more of God's and one another's love and affirmation; to continue to be transformed by God's Word and Spirit; and to keep exploring what it means for us to be effective disciples of Jesus in the places where we spend our time during the week. The results of the survey will help to shape what happens for months and years to come.

Sectors

In the first of two Sectors Services held in 2016, Andrew Shefford, Cliff Broadhurst and Mark Jordan shared their passion for integrity and excellence, and their desire to make Jesus known within the world of finance. Then with Jane Fasham, John Stevens and Rosemary Steen on

the panel, we learnt about what retirement can look like for a Christian. These were great opportunities to reflect on what God thinks about these areas of life, what challenges we face here, and how we can love God and others in these settings. There were a few laughs too, especially when Jane revealed that now she 'is getting old', she and Andrew are only able to cycle '50-60 miles in a day'! And John let us in on a little secret: spouses aren't always as happy about our retirement as we might expect!

Hyphen

The transition from youth to full-blown adulthood is tricky in all sorts of ways, especially with regards to our faith. After their sabbatical, John and Karen launched Hyphen: a monthly evening service specifically for those of us aged 18-30(ish). Not only has this been a great time for the young adults to get to know one another, it's been a key time to explore what difference our Christian faith can make in our times.

Beyond the Walls

From school-age to retirement, from poetry to parenthood, from tennis to technology, from pharmaceuticals to farms, from Waitrose to wedlock, 16 GBC regulars bravely shared on camera what they do during the week and how God is making a difference in their daily lives. A special mention must go to Beca Hamilton for her patience and creativity in editing and uploading these videos. If you've not seen them yet, visit godmanchesterbaptist.org/beyondthewalls.



Phil

Bible Snacks

It's important that we all connect with God in prayer and through Scripture on a regular basis. Recognising that carving out time to do

this before we start our days isn't always easy, we launched Bible Snacks. These are audio-based short reflections on a Bible passage that help us to connect with God and think about how we can walk with him throughout the day. The first two series explore what it means to have Jesus involved in our daily lives and the ways in which God enables us to grow. To listen or download, visit godmanchesterbaptist.org/biblesnacks

PARISH NURSING

Laurel Fennell, our Parish Nurse, writes: As I look back over the last twelve months I am very conscious of the Lord's leading and guiding in so many different ways. I have been privileged to have shared communion in members' homes on a number of different occasions and these visits have provided special times for all involved. I have undertaken many home visits, but have often come away feeling very blessed and uplifted from the contact. I continue to work mainly term time but have changed to working two mornings instead of one longer day in the hope of seeing more people.

During the year I ran the New ID course, a course dealing with our relationship with food, again which gave lots of "food for thought." I also attended hospital appointments with a number of different people, liaised with GP's, District Nurses and Social Workers and made plans to form an MS Support Group which has since started on the fourth Friday in the month. I have also been involved in arranging and staffing night sits.

On one occasion I was able to have a telephone consultation with a local GP which avoided the necessity of a home visit and I was able to collect a prescription from Cliffords and take it to the patient, hopefully making the service more efficient. I have had numerous conversations both on Sundays and during the week relating to health issues.

The Pastoral Care Team meets fortnightly and I have also started to meet with the staff team regularly to share pastoral concerns, which has helped us to work more effectively as a team. I have attended the annual Parish Nursing UK Symposium which provides both an opportunity to meet and network with other Parish Nurses but also to attend training sessions, so meeting the Nursing and Midwifery Council professional requirements. As an Eastern Region we also meet termly for support and to share ideas. In accordance with the Parish Nursing UK guidelines I have monthly clinical supervision and also spiritual supervision and I am very grateful to those who give up their time to help me and to support the work within Godmanchester.

PRAYER

Prayer surrounds everything we do, but from time to time we set aside specific times for concentrated prayer, including some prayer walks around our community.

We have people coming forward for prayer most weeks in our Sunday services. It is so exciting to see what God is doing and what it is that he wants to do amongst our GBC family. For the Prayer Team it is such a privilege to pray with others. We wait on God to hear his voice about situations that he wants people to come forward about. People are often excited saying "That word was for me." God talks to us all in different ways and we DO believe God is still talking today. "Let those who have ears let him hear."



Prayer Team

We long to hear how God has answered prayers: A GBC member writes:

'A few weeks ago I responded to a call to come forward for prayer. I had just had an x-ray and had been diagnosed with osteoarthritis. I had already prayed myself. On Sunday John gave a word that someone had trouble in the lower back, left side. I felt God saying 'Come up'. If John had said right side I probably wouldn't have gone up but because it was so specific I went up. I was in so much pain and that pain eased that very day after going forward for prayer. I still have aches but not THAT pain. Ever since I have been so thankful and would definitely go up for prayer again.'

If you would like to join our prayer team please have a word with one of us. *Liesl*

TESTIMONY

'Last year proved to be the most difficult we have ever had to face. An MRI scan for a long standing problem with tinnitus threw up an incidental finding of abnormal brain tissue! The initial diagnosis of a TIA (very small stroke) was then replaced with one of a 'likely low grade



Helen, Richard, Katie and George

tumour'. The advice was to remove it as this would lead to the best outcome and could be the only way to ensure a firm diagnosis.

Understandably the thought of neurosurgery was frightening especially with two young children to consider. However the surgery went ahead on 25

July and it couldn't have gone more smoothly. The initial histology seemed to confirm the surgeon's initial diagnosis. God ensured that the recovery from the operation couldn't have gone better. All of the things that we had been warned of from infection to seizures didn't occur.

In November we went for a further scan and the results of the final histology, and this is where the miracle we had been praying for took place. The neurosurgeon told us that something 'strange' had happened and that the histology showed a growth rate which was normal and there was no mutation showing. He said that none of his colleagues could explain it but their conclusion was that it was 'probably not a tumour'. He also said that neither he nor his colleagues had ever come across this before and that they could not really explain it! There will be another scan in April 2017 and then hopefully check-ups will become yearly.

Throughout this whole year we have been really blessed by God. God spoke to us in so many different ways that it would be impossible to write them all down here. There are, however, two key verses that sustained us through so many difficult months. At the beginning of this journey a verse appeared on Richard's Bible App (when he had not even opened it!) on his mobile from Philippians 2 '... But God showed mercy to him and not to him only but also to me - so that I would not have

grief upon grief' This was particularly poignant for us as we were still coming to terms with the loss of Richard's Mum and Helen's Dad just 7 months apart from each other. Another verse which we were given was from Jeremiah 29, 'I have it all planned out, plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for.' We felt that God made it very clear that he had got our backs on this one and that we needed to trust him. This is obviously easier said than done but our faith grew immensely during this time as we learnt to lean on God more and more. We can't be certain of what our future holds but we can have absolute certainty of our eternal future with God.

We have been overwhelmed by the love and support given to us and the children throughout the past year. Our over-riding concern has always been for the children and thankfully they still seem very unaware of the severity of the operation. In fact they just talk about it as 'when Mummy had an operation on her head'! We appreciate how sensitive people have been with the children to ensure that they remain protected.

We feel so blessed to be part of the church family at GBC and are so grateful to so many people who were praying for us, some who we hardly knew. Friends and family helped with the children when we had hospital appointments to attend, and lots of lovely people cooked delicious meals for us. We will never be able to thank you all enough for what you have done for us. Thank you.' Richard and Helen

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.

Small groups are the key to our pastoral care for one another. Our fifteen small groups meet for caring, sharing, praying, studying,

worshipping and reaching out. They are a great place to form good accountable supportive relationships.

We launched our first missional community focussed on families connected to St Anne's School.

Hyphen, for 18s-30s, met on a Sunday evening during 2016 and from it a new small group emerged.



Liz and Martin

'Our small group has been meeting together for a few months, following most of us starting at GBC at the end of 2015 and forming friendships as newbies of a similar age! We have quickly become a close knit group, sharing what's happening in our lives and supporting one another. We're also set to rapidly grow with three babies arriving between February and June 2017!

It has been great doing the Bible studies as a group as it's so good to hear other people's points of view and interpretations and gain a new insight. It's also wonderful knowing there's a pool of people praying for one another and we have seen God at work answering these prayers.' *Liz*

'Small group is important to me because it has been a relaxed way to get to know people. It is a safe place to open up and ensures that you stay connected and accountable.' *Jess*

If you would like to join a Small Group in 2017, please contact Ruth Blakey.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

We seek to: come together to be encouraged, built up and empowered to become what God wants us to be as the women of the Church; explore and fulfil our individual and collective commissions within our church and the wider community; have healthy minds, healthy bodies and healthy spiritual lives; address the issues pertinent to women and to provide another expression of Church, loving God, loving each other and making disciples in our community.

So in 2016 we have: had the opportunity to worship and learn alongside other women at a New Wine Conference day; spent time sharing life's joys and challenges whilst enjoying coffee and meals together; joined with others to have fun scrapbooking and completing a Christmas Challenge involving all of our senses; raised money for a local lady in need of help and support through a Keep Fit event; addressed the issue of 'Challenging Negative Thoughts' during a presentation; connected with other churches locally and around the world praying for the women of Cuba; taken time out with God during our Retreat day to consider what it means to be a 'woman of faith'



Brenda, Lynn and Rachel

Thank you SO much to all of the people who have made this possible and we look forward to what God has for us in 2017. *Delia*

MEN'S MINISTRY

In February 2016 a group of us attended a weekend away with another group called Cutting Edge. Eric Delve spoke on Echoes in Eternity. Using scripture alongside excerpts from popular films, he spoke on the themes of men being Prophets, Priests, Kings and Warriors. An excellent weekend! In June another group of us went to The Gathering #TG16, organised by Christian Vision for Men. One member of the group was able to bring his not yet believing nephew along. And in July we had our annual summer barbecue and no one got food poisoning due to Mark's BBQ fork thermometer!

Look out for details of more events in 2017! *Mark*

SENIORS MINISTRY

TUESDAYS @ 10

Instead of Holiday at Home for a week at the end of July, a programme of activities was arranged on Tuesdays during the Summer holiday period called Tuesdays@10. Each morning started with a number of table quizzes together with a cup of tea or coffee followed by a main activity for the day. These were different each week and included table games, craft activities and musical entertainment. Some days we were led in some gentle exercises to music, listened to stories and anecdotes and each time a different speaker gave a Thought for the Day. Three of the Tuesdays concluded with a light lunch and two took the form of a Coffee Morning. One Tuesday we met at Island Hall and owing to the unseasonal weather were kindly invited inside the house instead of spending the morning under a marquee and gazebos outside. Although we were not able to explore the gardens, this did not dampen the spirits of those who were there. About 30 came each week to enjoy the variety of activities and spend time together. *Philip and Jenny*

LUNCH CLUB

During 2016 Lunch Club provided an opportunity for elderly folk from church and community to meet up on Tuesday lunchtimes for a good chat over a freshly prepared hot meal. However, circumstances have meant that it has now had to come to an end. The highlight of the year and the final event was the Christmas Lunch, at which there was an almost 100% attendance, plus helpers who had “retired”. This gave an opportunity to say a big “thank you” to all those who had contributed to its success over the years.



Since January 2017 there has been a new opportunity for folk to meet up for a chat on Tuesdays at our new “Tuesday Treat” coffee morning (10.30 to 12.30 during school term time). We hope that this new venture will continue to meet the need for friends from church and community to have somewhere to meet. And for those who come we can guarantee some good coffee (or other hot drink) together with a selection of cakes, toasted teacakes and other treats.

Tony and Rita

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Most Tuesday mornings during term time, a group of us met to explore the Bible together before Lunch Club. Over the course of the year we studied the life of Abraham and then followed the story of the early church, including the adventures of the Paul the apostle, learning what it meant to have a faith in God in many different circumstances. There is always a lively discussion with opportunity for questions, sharing our own experiences and praying for each other.

Philip and Jenny

SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

Many of those who attend Tuesdays @ 10, Lunch Club, the new Tuesday Treat coffee mornings and our Songs of Praise congregation live in the various sheltered accommodation settings in Godmanchester. It was good to be able to make our annual visit to those settings on some evenings in December and share carol singing, the Christmas message and some festive refreshments with the residents.

There is also an afternoon service on the second Sunday of each month at McCartney House.

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Daniel Beckett, our Youth and Children's Pastor, writes about an exciting 2016.

We have 4 main age groups which we cater for within the children's and youth ministry: 0-5, 5-11, 11-14 and 15-18.

On a Sunday morning we continue to have lots of amazing volunteers involved in our children's ministry: Creche, Little Stars and Kids Kingdom.

Each Sunday between 40-50 children go to various rooms around the building to worship and learn together. In 2016 we looked at some people from the Old Testament such as Jeremiah and Daniel and we learnt about how we can trust God in our everyday living. We try to do this in a fun and engaging way.



The older teenagers meet on a Sunday morning in **Furnace** (11-14s) and at their own congregation, **Generation Rising**, on a Sunday evening (15s+).

We had three residentials in 2016 – across the age groups.

In February, we had a children's residential at GBC called **The Journey** – looking at the life of Moses. We looked at the physical journey he made out of Egypt and the journey of faith. A large group went to **Soul Survivor** in Stafford in July. In October, we took a group of young people in school years 7–9 away for the weekend to **Letton Hall** in Norfolk, with CROPS. They had a great time, being challenged to live an exciting life of faith – and they also had great fun on the go karts!

'Letton Hall was great, there was always something fun to do, even during our free time. The most exhilarating thing that happened was

when Daniel had to climb a tree. There was also go-karting, wide games and lots of other fun opportunities. However, lots of serious activities also took place, involving Bible studies and half hour hold. By the end of the week we had all learnt something new and met someone new.' Loren



Katie and Lizzie

Macedonia Mission Trip *'Last summer, 13 of us young people (and some older ones too) went to Macedonia on a missions trip. It was an incredibly powerful experience in which we saw God move through us to impact the people living there. We went for two weeks doing all manner of activities, such as painting houses, doing outreach in the local community and delivering food packages. We saw first-hand the*

poverty of the people living in the mountains - living in one room, using the sunlight as an oven, the place swarming with flies. But we were also able to make differences to others' lives, such as Suzana, who is disabled but cannot fit her wheelchair in her house. Thanks to a donation from GBC after we left, she can now afford a helper to clean her house and help her up when she falls. This was such an amazing yet challenging experience, not because of the warm feeling you get after doing hard work or something good, but because of what this means to them. All they can offer is their gratitude, love, friendship (normally expressed through Turkish coffee) and amazement



that we would step out of our comfortable, English lives to come to a country that hardly anyone has heard of, to guide them in how to lead their youth, to support them in simple, community outreach and to show them that God's love stretches across countries and through borders - both physical and metaphorical - and leaves no one out.'

Katie

The Summer **Holiday Club** in August was very successful again with lots of children and families getting involved. This year it was written in-house - ourjourney.org.uk.

During 2016 I have continued to have contact with both **primary schools** in Godmanchester. I have done assemblies at both schools talking about lots of things such as: how God sees what we are on the inside and doesn't judge us on our outward appearance, and the importance of being a friend like Ruth was to Naomi.

In **St Anne's school** I have done 2 prayer stations sessions. This is a national initiative where a class at a time spends an hour at different stations reflecting on who they are and what they believe and praying if they want to. The school has been really appreciative of these.

At the **Community school** I have done a few lessons including 'What happens when I die?' and 'Why is the Bible so important?' These are great opportunities as the curriculum requires the students to talk to 'real Christians' and to get 'their point of view' on these things. The students are encouraged to ask questions in these lessons so I am asked things like 'Do you think I should read the Bible?' and 'What is the best bit of being a Christian?'

I continue to lead the **Christian Union at Hinchingsbrooke** school and do assemblies once a term.

Messy Church met once a month during 2016 with lots of families getting involved and learning about Christianity in creative ways. For example:

- trying to lift sand bags which are heavy and then using a pulley system to make it easier – to illustrate that prayer makes life easier
- putting vitamin C tablets into water and watching them dissolve like our worries do when we ask God to help
- trying out a maze where you can only turn right – as a reminder that with God we go the right way.



Wednesday mornings Littlefoot Club, 'The best group for miles around'; 'I came because I heard how good it is'; 'We love it here'; 'My friend said I must come'; 'My child can't wait to get here, there's so much to do'. Just a few recent comments from Parents and Carers about Littlefoot. We've been particularly busy recently with over 150 families registered with us and at least 70 families attending each week. It's



been great to welcome many new families, loads of new babies and even folk whose children are now at school but still drop in for a chat. A number are now attending Messy Church and several have discovered Jesus for themselves. If you are free on a Wednesday morning, please come in and see what goes on! We could really

do with more people to chat and get alongside the very wonderful people who come. We thank all our families for being friendly, kind and

inclusive and we thank all of our volunteers for their inspiring commitment, creativity and hard work to make Littlefoot a highly-rated and much appreciated community resource. *The Littlefoot Team*

Thursday evenings Explorers Children's Club for those in years 3-6 continues to meet with lots of fun. Each week we have games and crafts and learn more about God's story in the Bible.

Friday evenings Friday Night Project for those in year 7+. FNP has had a great year with lots of young people attending and we have received two grants for the on-going work: £2,000 from the Crime Commissioner and £1,000 from Cambridge County Council.

During 2016 we saw a lot of our young people spread their wings and set off for University, Bible College and ministry overseas! We miss them but thank God for his leading in their lives.

WORLD MISSION

We held a World Mission Sunday in June welcoming Matt from Frontiers who helped us understand better the issue of Christian mission in the context of radical Islam.

We have shared financially and prayerfully through the year in the work of

Anglo-Indian Concern in Chennai, India;

Cambodia Action – supporting the disadvantaged in Cambodia;

Kathryn Thompson working at Rehoboth to provide educational support;

Mission Direct working around the world;

and **Rehoboth Children's Homes** in the Philippines.

MISSION DIRECT IN LALITPUR, UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA.

'It was my first time in India, and the immediate sensation on arrival was as expected, but even more so – colour, noise, crowds, heat, smells,

cows everywhere, crazy driving, beauty, awful poverty all mixed up together. We were a team who went to contribute practically to a refurbishment project on a dilapidated, totally unfit for purpose, Christian hospital serving the very poorest in society who are unable to pay for their medical care.

My abiding memory is of the devotion of the doctors and nurses who work there, choosing a sacrificial life of service over financial reward and worldly success, and earning just 20% of what they could be paid in the government hospitals. As we travelled in an ancient ambulance



Dorne

into the villages alongside these people in their palliative care outreach work their gentleness and compassion touched me deeply. One particular memory of grinding up the morphine with a pestle and mortar to mix with water and spoon feed to the patients contrasts so strongly with our high tech western experience of medical care. It was like being in a different world and on coming home I experienced significant reverse culture shock. I think it has caused me to be more reflective about how I live life and express my faith. I hope we were able to bring encouragement to those we met as they continue to be the hands and feet of Jesus in that place. Being there was a real privilege; I'm hoping to go back on the staff team in October 2017.' Dorne

REHOBOTH CHILDREN'S HOMES IN THE PHILIPPINES

2016 was a particularly special year for Rehoboth as it was the 35th anniversary of the founding of the home in 1981 by Connie Andrews and her late husband Vernon. The Home in the Philippines celebrated this anniversary in October and a party from the UK were privileged to be able to join them. Connie and Rosemary recount their experiences.



Team from the UK

'There had been a big typhoon at the weekend and now, 2 days later, a smaller typhoon visited just to the north of our area in central Luzon. Life out there frequently borders on the hazardous. Praise God that we arrived without incident. During our time there, we travelled to a settlement on a river where a few of our families live. The devastation was remarkable. The road was badly damaged and several structures had been washed away by the river.

The anniversary weekend was outstanding from start to finish. It began for me when a young woman who had grown up at the Home came to see me on the balcony of Girls' House. The celebration was held in a large hall at Tarlac Agricultural University where some of our young people are studying. About 200 people joined us and several, including the mayor of our market town gave encouraging messages from the stage. The young people sang special songs and performed dances which they had been practising for weeks. One of the highlights of

course was the return of a number of past residents, for example, Joffrey who is a social worker and Alfredo who studied nursing and was the first of the Aitas Tribe to gain a university degree. After church on the Sunday there was a lunch with the alumni, a wonderful event indeed.' *Connie*

'We got stuck into life at the home and spent most of the time sharing with the children and staff. We led Bible activities and did a number of craft activities. We also played games and read with the children.

Kathryn Thompson, who works as a full time volunteer, had organised a varied programme for us. This included a trip to a beach resort with all the children, it was a great place to relax and to cool off in the sea.



Kathryn

We also went out in smaller groups to visit some of the children's homes and to look round the local town of Camiling. The children were very responsive and loved having us there and they and the staff made us feel very welcome.

The most memorable thing for me was meeting up with the children and their families that I sponsor. You pray for them and write to each other but to be able to spend time with them was great.' *Rosemary*

COMMUNITY

SZENTENDRE

Godmanchester is twinned with the town of Szentendre in Hungary and over recent years GBC have built up a great relationship with the Baptist church in Szentendre, with groups visiting each other. Our latest visit was in February 2016.

'A group of us from GBC made an early start to fly to Budapest where we were met by some of our hosts from Szentendre Baptist Church.'



Cheryl and Delia

On the way to Szentendre we stopped at Korosi High School which is a Baptist operated school. We were split into two groups and joined two classes where we talked with the students. Their English was definitely better than our Hungarian! Before leaving we had a PowerPoint presentation by the school chaplain.



The Szentendre Group at the Town Hall

On arrival in Szentendre we had a walking tour of the town followed by the protocol meeting at the City Hall where we had a tour of the building before refreshments of schnapps and cake! We dispersed to our hosts for the night.

The following morning we had a tour of Budapest, including St Stephen's Basilica where we were asked to sing. Led by Charlie we gave a rendering of Amazing Grace. On the way back to Szentendre we visited an unused cafe which had been donated to the Baptist Church. A youth meeting at the Church followed ending with a pizza party.

On the final morning we attended a communion service at the Church where hymns were displayed in both Hungarian and English. We all had a goodie bag to remind us of the weekend. A buffet lunch was provided before we were taken back to the airport for our flight home after an unforgettable weekend.' Pat



FOODBANK

Reviewing the work of the foodbank over the past year always brings mixed emotions.

It is a complete privilege to work with a great team, who respond to our clients' needs with compassion, care and real concern; who support each other through friendship, team effort and humour; and across the areas of Sawtry, Yaxley and Huntingdon.

It is tough to see so many people coming to us for help, sometimes through low income situations, sometimes through benefit issues, sometimes because their choices have not been great. But each time the team meets them the same, with smiles, coffee and patience.

We measure the food donated to us by weight and we also measure what we give out to people in hampers, and this year the amount going

out is up by 14,000kg on last year, to a staggering 36,100 kg. These figures scare me, because while we can and do help people, it also concerns me how big the need is.

As we go into 2017 I am thrilled with the help, the support and team effort that is involved and with the help that we are able to give people. I am proud of the help we have given, and above all say thank you to all the people who donate to the foodbank, who helped build the Christmas Hampers and have donated via school assemblies too.

The team works so very hard. I can honestly say God's generosity to us in people, food and effort continually surprises and blesses not only me but the clients we can reach out to. Not only in the food but signposting them to agencies who can help, debt services who can advise and people who can listen.

Difficult situations can happen to us all, but what an amazing chance to help our neighbours in need. *Jude*



HUNTINGDON AREA MONEY ADVICE

Huntingdon Area Money Advice (HAMA) is a free debt advice service, established in 2013. The

service is provided by Christians from local churches, particularly GBC – and we are very grateful for the contribution each makes. We are supported financially by churches (including GBC), individuals and grants. We also benefit from the provision of facilities for meeting with clients. And we are powered by God's Spirit.

Most clients come from the Huntingdon/Godmanchester/Brampton/St Neots area, although some come from much further afield. In the past 12 months we have had over 60 new clients in addition to clients we were already supporting. I am pleased to say that a new adviser came

on board during the year and there are now four advisers (but *always* room for more!) Towards the end of the year we also recruited a paid administrator for the equivalent of 1 day/week.

Our clients come to us with a variety of circumstances – there is no such thing as a “typical client”. In many cases clients have got into debt because of unexpected changes in circumstances such as loss of employment, relationship breakdown or significant health issues. In some other cases the cause of debt is because budgeting is a challenge – some have never been trained to budget; for others it is almost impossible to budget because they work on zero-hours contracts and never know what their income will be from week to week.

During the year a number of clients became debt free or were in the position where they were in control of their debts, giving them the opportunity to focus on a new start instead of worrying each day about debt and debt collectors. The change in an individual over the course of the process is tangible – many start in a very dark place, with feelings of failure, of being unloved, and that life has little meaning or purpose. Although many of the life challenges they have remain, it is very noticeable how their spirits are lifted and there is a bounce in their step and they can see clear light at the end of what was a very dark long tunnel. And above all, our prayer is that clients will realise something of the love that God has for them – not only there at the end of the tunnel but walking with them through what seems like the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

“Your service provides valuable support to our clients at a point when they are in crisis and there seems no way out, you give them hope”
Housing Support Manager

“I really don’t know how I would have coped without your assistance.”
Client

Roger

THE CLUB

The Club meets every Monday afternoon from 2.30 – 3.30pm. It is a time for friendship and fellowship for those people who have had, or are experiencing, issues concerning mental health. We seek to support one another over a hot drink, fruit and homemade cakes and biscuits. Most weeks there are ten or more of us sharing our news and discussing all manner of topics.

One of the first members to join the group says, *'I have found the club empowering and supportive. I love coming each week.'* Jane

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

- **Christian Aid Week Collection**
- **Gala Day and Worship in the Park**
- **Hospital Services at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital**
- **Mayor's Carols and Godmanchester Christmas Market**

AND FINALLY

Ruth Blakey, our Administrator, sums things up:

Wow! What an amazing year. I'm sure that if you've read this far you will be able to join in with these words from an old hymn, 'We'll thank him for all that is past, and trust him for all that's to come.'

We've already noted our delight that so many new people, across all ages and stages of life, have joined us at GBC in 2016. We long for everyone to feel included and to find a place here where they really belong. We love to see people using their God given gifts and passions to serve him, each other and our community. If you'd like to get involved in any of the ministries outlined in this Review, or to do something new, please contact any of the staff team – we'd love to talk to you about it!

To help put names to faces we've included a few extra photos this year.

In addition to John Smith, Daniel Beckett and Ruth Blakey, from the staff team, the other members of our Leadership Team (as at March 2017) are: Hazel Bray, John Brown, David Fennell, Joe George, Tony Goodwin, Jo Hitchins, Brett Mickelburgh, Delia Steer and John Stevens.

We would also like to record our thanks to Ian Lasseter and Sally King who were serving on the Leadership Team in 2016.

And we are delighted to have welcomed during 2016 Tony Davis as our part-time caretaker. He and our part-time cleaners, Kirsty Botham, Rachel Fennell and Maureen Game, do a great job of keeping the Church Centre in good order for the hundreds of people using the place each week.



**Hazel
Bray**



**John
Brown**



**David
Fennell**



**Joe
George**



**Tony
Goodwin**



**Jo
Hitchins**



**Brett
Mickelburgh**



**Delia
Steer**



**John
Stevens**

Godmanchester Baptist Church

East Chadley Lane Godmanchester
Huntingdon PE29 2BJ

01480 458565

godmanchesterbaptist.org

Registered Charity No 1089263