



Godmanchester Baptist Church



Annual Review of 2014

godmanchesterbaptist.org

Welcome to our Annual Review of 2014 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. Very few of us would have thought then how our edge might have grown in a very practical way as we push our buildings out to the edge of our site.



Our Oikodom Project has seen over £200,000 raised during 2014 and a start made on the building works. By the end of the year, the external structure was finished and the project well positioned for completion in 2015. John Stevens and his team have already undertaken a magnificent task of planning and project managing the project so far. It has been a remarkable time when the faithfulness of God has been seen in the generosity of the GBC family and from external grants. The

project exists because we are responding to growth in all areas of church life and our desire is to ensure that our buildings better enable us to serve people in our community.

However, the fact that this Review is full of testimony to the goodness of God in people's lives and the flourishing activities, groups and projects that make up life at GBC, shows that Oikodom has not distracted us from being a worshipping and small group community committed to loving God, loving one another and making disciples.

One of the new ways we have shown our commitment to seeing lives changed is by the appointment of our new Parish Nurse, Laurel Fennell. Parish Nurses work alongside the local church and other healthcare providers, combining knowledge of the body with a focus on spiritual care. They work to bring 'wholeness', giving individuals a sense of worth and purpose. It is very good to see this ministry beginning to develop again at GBC.

CONGREGATIONS

Almost everyone at GBC finds a place to worship in one of our three 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 ran the Journeys course in 2014 for those wanting to find out more about the Christian faith, and during the year, many new people have begun to be part of our church family. 6 people testified to their faith in believers' baptism, thirteen people became church members, and we shared 4 dedications of children.



*'Hello from a couple of new girls!
GBC has been a very welcoming
church and we've found it easy to be
part of the fellowship here especially
working in the kitchen together.
Most Wednesday mornings you can
find us there preparing refreshments
for the Littlefoot crowd. Biscuits go*

*out at 10.00am – with healthy options such as carrot sticks also on offer.
It's amazing how the toddlers can tell the time – they seem to know when
it's ten o'clock! We're also involved in catering for afternoon tea for the
Songs of Praise congregation – at the other end of the age spectrum. At
Christmas we joined in with a group that were involved in preparing*

Christmas hampers for the Foodbank. It made us very aware of the needs and difficulties some people are facing in present times. It's lovely to be able to chat with others about a variety of activities and events – it has helped us to engage in the life of the church. We have both been challenged by the Alpha course and we are finding out more about our own Christian faith. Thank you for welcoming us and helping us feel useful in a small way in God's plan for GBC.' Chris and Cynthia

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. A new initiative for 2014 was the Prayer Course – attended by thirty people over 6 Tuesday evenings.

'The Prayer course challenged me and taught me amongst other things that I need to listen more to what God has to say to me as well as speaking to Him.' Annette

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 uses 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 been working harder at providing more variety in our Celebration and especially in the time we all have together. A popular change has been to 'worship in the round' at our communion services.



We have benefitted from preaching series from Philippians (The Joy Manual), Esther (God in Silhouette), Proverbs and Acts (Spirit Fall Down). Our worship leaders and musicians have led us in sung worship and others have used their gifts to help us draw near to God. 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.

Some of our Kids Kingdom children have written the following comments:

I like Kids Kingdom because

- *the groups are fun we get to do fun activities in them*
- *all my friends come here*
- *the learning about Bible stuff is fun*
- *we do fun stuff, especially the biscuits and the leaders*
- *I like working with my group*
- *I like making lots of friends*
- *we learn about Jesus*



We are glad that a number from GBC are also able to use their gifts in support of other local churches, including regularly leading worship at Medway Christian Fellowship. For many years, one of our worship bands has led services at Yelling Baptist which came to an end this year with the closure of the church.

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

Most third Sundays 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 eighty 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 again 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 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.

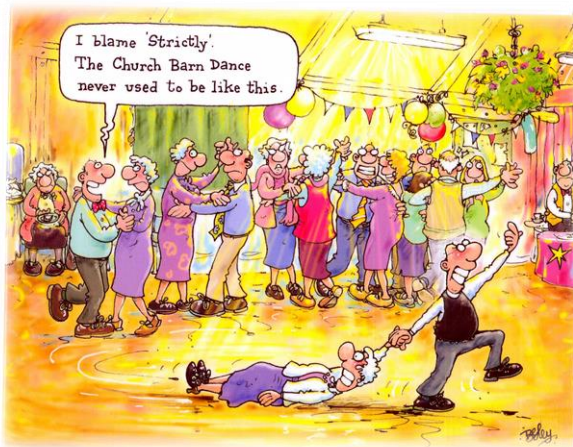
Time together

Each year we plan some events for the whole church family to enjoy together. In 2014 we had a **Big Day Out at Wicksteed Park** in June. We hired a room and invited the whole church family to come along and enjoy the variety of activities at the park and also to spend time in a relaxed setting with other people from the church without the pressures of activities or getting home to make lunch. We had a really great time despite the rain!



We also had a **Harvest Supper and Barn Dance** at GBC in September.

'Our Harvest Supper and Barn Dance was open to all in our wider community and was well attended with 120+ adults and children. And it was thrilling that many were dancing from the very start, and danced till supper of an enormous



ploughmans followed by 'buckets' so to speak of Apple Crumbles and variations thereof. We all enjoyed the evening greatly and the band, The Cyriacs, led us well in simple and complex dances with all ages joining in. Much laughter ensued as we were slow at times to get things correct! Many people from our wider Church family attended and many more friends from across the community – and it was lovely to see so many people active and enjoying something different.' Jude

Testimony

Testimony has played a significant part in our lives together at GBC during 2014. 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.

'Last February I was in a peculiar situation. In theory, after being told I might have only six months to live in November, I might not have long to go. On the other hand I had gone through 3 months of chemotherapy with

no side effects (aside from increased tiredness) and I was feeling well. We were looking forward, with trepidation, to my review meeting with my consultant at the end of the month. But before that there would be a week with scans and blood tests then a two week wait while all the results were



collated. On the Sunday before the week of tests I was given a card from Kids Kingdom (I still have it) simply saying that they had been praying for people in church who needed healing. It was a timely reminder of all the people from the youngest to the oldest, from the close at hand to those in the Philippines who were praying. When Jude and I had lost words, energy or time to pray, to know that other people were there putting our deepest needs before the Lord has been a source of peace throughout the course of the illness. It also gives us strength to go on with whatever the journey may bring knowing we have such a supportive church family around us.'

So a huge thank you to all of you! Ian and 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.

Small groups are the key to our pastoral care for one another. Our sixteen small groups meet on a weekly basis for caring, sharing, praying, studying,

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

'We are a group who meet on Friday mornings at the church, enjoying fellowship and Bible study and prayer together. We also seek to reach into the community by holding coffee mornings which we can invite friends to or supporting someone in a community event that they are involved in. We are seeking to support and encourage each other in our walk with God and provide an environment where we can use the gifts that God has given us and learn together.' Helen and the Friday Group Ladies

Women's Ministry

Women in 2014
Encouraged and
Led by God
Learning together

Women taking
Opportunities to meet in
Monthly gatherings
Enjoying fellowship and
New experiences

Reaching out to our
Everyday communities
Focusing on God at our
Retreat day, being
Equipped and
Sharing together, to build
Healthy relationships, healthy minds healthy bodies and healthy spiritual lives.



'Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17

Thank you God!

Delia and the Women's Ministry Team

Men's Ministry



'One of my highlights from 2014 was going with Mark Moughton to the Christian Vision for Men weekend. To be honest, I was dreading it - camping in a soggy field, cringy Christian men (Mark and I obviously excepted), and a high level of cheesiness. But, I'm pleased

to say, the whole experience was anything but; in fact, it wasn't at all cheesy; there were lots of 'real men', including lots of Christians from our Armed Forces, and the sun shone throughout – probably the only sunny weekend of last summer! Lots of really good testimony, beer (good thing too), and seeing for the first time the replica John's Gospels that were given out to men going off to fight in the first world war. I came back from the weekend inspired; determined with Mark that we should take a 'platoon' of GBC men to the next one (26-28 June 2015). Why should Mark and I have all the fun?! I also managed to get hold of hundreds of those replica gospels to hand out on behalf of Churches Together at the Huntingdon WW1 commemorative 'Living History' service organised by the Town Council, and then again at the Huntingdon Remembrance service. Out of my comfort zone definitely - so watch out men who have enlisted for 'The Gathering' in June 2015, don't come expecting cheese, this could be one of your highlights for the year and you may well end up being inspired in ways you never expected! Paul

The Marriage Course

Vilma & I had run the Marriage Course many times before in our previous church, so when John mentioned it, we felt that God had put us in the right place, at the right time. By transforming the small hall into a candle-

lit restaurant for the evening and serving couples with a freshly cooked meal the scene is set for a date night with partners. The course runs for seven weeks; it is designed for couples of all ages no matter how long they have been married and even if they are not, for commitment to the relationship is the key.

Starting in the Spring, the first course had nine couples taking part and the second, in the Autumn, a further five. Several couples attending were from outside of GBC. This is what those taking part have said, *'The course was truly great, thank you, and just what we needed'* and *'Even though we entered into it thinking we had a clean sheet with just a few minor wrinkles, we found that the course helped us to iron those out fairly easily'* and *'We really appreciated the time we spent on the course and the homework. So far we are managing to set aside some marriage time each week'*

Vilma & I feel blessed to be able to facilitate the course and getting to know so many lovely couples but without the team of Hayley, Jude, Ruth & Andy in the kitchen, the many helper couples serving each week and the massive amounts of prayer lifting us up it would not be possible, so thank you all. For the future, we look forward to having a newly refurbished 'restaurant' and seeing many more couples looking to enhance their relationship. If you are interested, have a word with one of the pastors or one of us.

Cliff and Vilma

World Mission

We held a World Mission Sunday in June welcoming Martin Lee from Global Connections as our speaker, and we have shared financially and prayerfully through the year in the work of

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.

Seniors Ministry

Again, the last year saw many people, both from our Church Family and the local community, taking part in events provided for older people.

HOLIDAY AT HOME



One of the highlights of the year was our annual “Holiday at Home” week in July. Those who came enjoyed a week of varied activities, from learning how to make Loom Bands with the children from Godmanchester Community School, to laughing at the film “Mr Stink”, trying to win the bingo prizes, musical items from folk within the church, and singing along to some of the “golden oldies” and hits from the 50’s and 60’s. Yes, and some of our older people still know how to jive and let their hair down! Each day finished with a light lunch and “Thought for the Day” before going home for an afternoon siesta. We will be running

a similar week in 2015 from Monday 13 July to Friday 17 July, so if you would like to come you will be more than welcome, and your friends will be welcome too. Keep those dates free!

LUNCH CLUB

Many of those who came were members of the weekly Godmanchester Churches Together Lunch Club; a group that meets regularly each Tuesday during school term time. We provide a two course lunch with tea or coffee before and after the meal. This is a happy place where folk meet up with friends and have a good natter together. It’s so popular that we now have a waiting list, and hope that later this year the new kitchen facilities and extended hall will enable us to take a few extras. We are happy to put people on the waiting list and, when circumstances allow, invite them to join with us. Lunch Club is a weekly commitment for people and not a drop in, so we do need folk who will be regular. We usually have a

summer outing and in 2014 went to the English Heritage property at Wrest Park. Our special thanks go to the faithful team of helpers who willingly serve in preparation, cooking and washing up each week.

Like all our activities these events are aimed at meeting the need for friendship and help.

Laurel Fennell, our Parish Nurse, now joins with us on most weeks and can give special support and advice for those who

may need it. Our over-riding aim is to show the amazing love of Jesus, and point people to Him.



BIBLE STUDY GROUP

A group started meeting at the church centre on a Tuesday morning after the enjoyment of following the adventures of Christian in Pilgrim's Progress earlier in the year. Up to a dozen of us meet from 11.00am until 12 noon finishing in time for those who like to go on to the Lunch Club. We have followed a Christianity Explored course and studied Paul's letter to the Philippians. There is always a lively discussion and newcomers would be welcome to join us as we explore the Bible together.

SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

Many of those who attend Holiday at Home, Lunch Club 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.

Children, Youth and Family Ministry

'What another amazing year full of God's fingerprints. We are so privileged to get involved and I am very privileged to see first-hand the things that God is doing with and through the children and young people. My role is very varied so one day I might be leading an assembly for 200-300 children or young people and on another day I might meet one to one with someone as they explore baptism or ask questions about God and themselves' Daniel

A number of young people have been baptised this year and some have been welcomed into church membership. In the Autumn term of 2014 four of our young people began gap years around the country with various Christian organisations. When all these good things happen it is often as a result of many years of faithful service by Christians in youth and children's ministries and also as the result of years of faithful prayers. We must never become tired of seeing these faith journeys unfold before our eyes.

'Being at CROPS has helped me become more confident in leading worship and in talking to people individually and in larger groups. I enjoy the monthly worship event called 'The Point' and how it brings people together from lots of different churches.' Nick



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. We are looking forward to more space in 2015 when the OIKODOM project is complete.

Monday evenings **Football Project** at Godmanchester Community School for those aged 11-20, in two age groups. During 2014 the Football Project seemed to grow hugely. We had several popular events through the year including a fantasy league which tied in to the World Cup and a really popular stall at Godmanchester Gala Day. As well as growing in numbers towards the end of the summer, September saw a new group of young people wanting to get involved and come along and play.

Tuesday afternoons **Acting Up** started with a 'bang' in October 2014 as a new youth drama group at GBC. We have been running during term time and we ended 2014 with our first big performance all about the first Christmas of the First World War, as part of the Carols by Candlelight service on Christmas Eve.



'It is all just kinda fantastic. Everyone gets involved no matter the situation, everyone pushes what they are used to in a way that is good for them. Laurence

'It is a wonderful opportunity for the children to think over real live scenarios and how they would possibly handle them and to gain confidence in speaking up and also taking ownership of the group for themselves. Personally for my children it's an opportunity for them to learn to work with other children and gain confidence in who they are and what they are capable of.' Helen

Wednesday mornings **Littlefoot Club** for babies and toddlers and their parents and carers provides a safe and happy environment for play and friendship. The place is bursting at the seams with 50 adults, 70+ children and 10 helpers. There's climbing, sliding and riding; train tracks; dressing up and other imaginative play; lots of toys and dinosaurs! There's also a craft activity for the day – changing each week. At the end there's a story and singing all together. Littlefoot has been a really good introduction for some people to join other activities in the Church such as the Marriage Course, Alpha, Journeys, Explorers and Messy Church.

Wednesday evenings **TOAST** – a new initiative in 2014 for some of the older young people who were finding the sheer numbers and energy levels at FNP a bit overwhelming! TOAST has a relaxed atmosphere where young people enjoy tea, coffee and toast! They can play games if they feel like it or just chill and chat. Once a month they go out. The Christmas progressive supper was great. If anyone ever wants to feed a group of young people – tell us and we'll come to yours!

Thursday evenings **Explorers Children's Club** for those in years 3-6. We have revamped the programme this year to include more special evenings and our numbers attending have hit 25 on many nights!

Friday evenings **Friday Night Project** for those in year 7+. FNP has had a great year with even more young people attending. Highlights include: The Christmas party with 1D-1 performing their hit song 'Beautiful'; £3,000 worth of Tuck shop consumed; Art workshop evening creating a mobile shelter; Table tennis coaching.

The Megamakers **Holiday Club** in the summer was very successful again with lots of children and families getting involved.

The work in **Schools** continues to expand with assemblies and CUrious (Christian Union) at Hinchingsbrooke and LOGOS lunchtime club and assemblies at St Anne's Primary School continuing. This year we have facilitated a day of prayer spaces at both of the Godmanchester primary schools taking a class at a time for one hour exploring what they think about God and faith through creative stations such as: drawing in sand,

looking at a world map and thinking of people in other places, and talking about what it is like to be part of God's family.

Messy Church has met more often during 2014 and we continue to grow in number and in engagement from the children and their families.



The **Girls Only Project** to mentor our teenage girls and the **Da Lads** mentoring project for the boys continue.

We went to **Soul Survivor** in Stafford for the first time in 2014 – it's a lot closer than Shepton Mallet! The Archbishop of Canterbury was there and some of our young people discussed with him what he should do for young people!

In October, we took 18 Young People in school years 7–9 (and a couple in year 10 too) away for the weekend to the **Frontier Centre**, a Christian activity centre just outside of Northampton. We spent the weekend mountain biking, kayaking and challenging ourselves on the high ropes as well as spending time getting to know God and each other too.

Community



One of the scariest statistics in data has been that from April 2013 to March 2014 we fed 898 people. This has risen to 1157 in the 9 months from April-December 2014 with 3 months of this financial year still to record.

'Thank you for this, this is so generous and it is going to help me so much, please say thank you to Foodbank'

'My freezer broke down 3 days ago. I've got so little food at home right now, until payday... this is great'

'Thank you so much. I didn't eat yesterday, and would not have eaten today. This is perfect. Thank you'

'Wow there's some really good quality stuff in here. Peaches – I love peaches'

Clients helped by the Foodbank via Inclusion

Christmas Hampers

As in previous years, the Foodbank in Godmanchester provided hampers to families who could benefit from some extra help in the run up to Christmas. Hampers are based on a regular food parcel but with added Christmas bits like mince pies, pudding, cake and some chocolate. The support we had from local companies like Andros (jam) in St Ives and Waitrose, was incredible. Tesco too had helped with the national collection in November, and this all resulted in 122 hampers going out full of good staple foods and treats – over 3,800 Kg of food, delivered by agencies we work with, including Luminus, Inclusion and Children’s Centres. We had lots of help to pack up the hampers from local individuals and families as well as Fire Crews from Huntingdon Fire Station who came on two days to help move, weigh, and load the hampers into agency cars. It was great and sad all at the same time as we helped over 400 adults and children which I am really pleased with, but sad that such help is needed. It was a complete joy to work alongside mums, grannies and granddads in sorting these hampers and a real privilege to share a lot of laughs and fun and hard work in this mammoth task. I already have several mums lined up for next year’s hampers as they enjoyed it so much as well as a request from St Peter’s Sixth Form to be involved in hamper building too. This is fabulous as it is the wider Church community, working *with* the local community, to provide *for* the community – which has been great to be involved in. *Jude*



HUNTINGDON AREA

Money Advice

Free & confidential
debt advice service

Huntingdon Area Money Advice (HAMA) has been operating since October 2013 and up to the end of 2014 has had over 80 clients. It continues to operate under the umbrella of the national Christian charity Community Money Advice (CMA). Although CMA provides our training and is there to give advice if needed, HAMA is responsible for seeing clients and developing the most appropriate strategy for each client. In many cases this involves negotiating with creditors and establishing a debt management plan; in other cases we progress an insolvency procedure for them. The strategy is customised for each client – every case is different and there is no “one-size fits all”.

‘A big thank you for all that you have done for me and to help me get out of debt.’ Client

Although the initial focus is helping a person manage his or her debts, we work with clients to help them stay in control of their finances, giving advice on budgeting and such like. We also have befrienders who are able to support clients by being a pair of listening ears, giving emotional or spiritual support, and signposting them to other groups that can give them additional help. In a number of cases this has resulted in clients establishing new friendships and connecting with church.

‘Thank you so much for everything you have done. So glad I have you to help me. If it wasn’t for you and my babies, I would have topped myself by now. I can’t say thank you enough. I am so grateful.’ Client

Client appointments are held at Huntingdonshire Community Church, the Maple Centre (using Medway Christian Fellowship’s office) as well as GBC;

we are grateful to these three churches for this very practical help. Some clients contact us in response to an advert or other information seen, some by way of recommendation from friends or family (who may themselves have been our clients), while a number are referred to us by other support agencies such as Learning Disability Partnership, Inclusion, and Children's Centre and housing association support workers.

'Your service and the way you handled a vulnerable client was above and beyond what I had expected.' *Support Worker*

'Just to let you know, I have received some really positive feedback from my Family Workers about HAMA from families that they have signposted to your service. The two in question do not engage easily, so the fact that they have attended is positive and the fact they have confirmed they have booked another appointment.'

Manager, Huntingdon Town Children's Centre

All the HAMA workers are volunteers from local churches – and sharing something of God's love through this practical way is the bedrock of our work. 2014 has not been without its challenges. We lost the services of a number of volunteers throughout the year – some because they have moved from the area, others because of health or family circumstances or for other reasons. Two who moved were Colin Weaver and Trevor Weedon. Not only were both working as advisers, but Colin was chair of the trustees and Trevor our treasurer. We are very grateful for the work they did for HAMA in these capacities as well as that of advisers. We are thankful that Geoff Collett, from GBC, agreed to replace Colin as chair of trustees. We have also had others step forward to help which has enabled us to cope with the demand for HAMA's services – *though we could always do with more, either as administrators or advisers.*

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**

We also brought summer holidays to the centre of Huntingdon with the **Beach Party** in July. We worked with other churches in Huntingdon to create a beach party on the market place for the whole community to come along to. With some plastic sheeting, 6 tonnes of sand and some buckets and spades we had a great time! There was also a BBQ and cakes, craft activities and games for people to do for free. An amazing opportunity to connect with people who wouldn't come to a church building.



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Registered Charity No 1089263