



Godmanchester Baptist Church



Annual Review of 2012

godmanchesterbaptist.org

Welcome to our Annual Review of 2012 which outlines our activities during the year and brings much encouragement as we recognise God's many blessings over the last year.

We began the year with the difficult challenge of adjusting our budget and staffing to better reflect the resources we have available and the ministry and mission to which we have been called. The final decisions took us well out of our comfort zone. We had to trust God.

What then happened was quite remarkable. Within days, we began to partner with the Medway Christian Fellowship to share Adrian's ministry. As a result they were able to see significant new areas of mission opening up on the Oxmoor estate, whilst we have been able to continue and develop our work with seniors and D-Caf.

At GBC, 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. So we reviewed the way we care for people to ensure we do it as well as we can. In our worship we have experienced the presence of God touching our lives in new ways. When we took almost 200 people away for the church weekend, we demonstrated that a diverse eclectic mix of people can form a vibrant worshipping community! This, in the words used at *The Mix*, is our ministry within the circle of believers.

Growing the Edge is a challenge to build strong links into our community by the whole church. As we worked at understanding what this might mean, an important theme emerged from teaching on the acts of kindness we see in the Bible. Later, during our prayer week, a strong sense of wanting to be a blessing to our community developed, based on many of us reading *Grace Outpouring*. We had already seen 300 people come to our Community Fun evening, when, encouraged by the BU President, Chris Duffett, we trusted God again and, on the Sunday morning immediately before Christmas, over 100 of us took to the streets of Godmanchester and Huntingdon to be a blessing to our neighbours and those out shopping. It was a remarkable morning. This, in the words used at *The Mix*, is our ministry in the public square.

The Mix



"I had a great time at the church weekend, spending lots of time with my friends from church and making new friends too."

Lucy

"GBC is a second family where everyone is supportive and caring."

Luke



"I was impressed with how everyone pulled together. It was a lot of work but it was definitely worth it. It was a great opportunity to get together with friends, have quality time but also a good opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. It was brilliant. The food was good and the activities were good."

The Heaton family



Congregations

Almost everyone at GBC finds a home in one of our four congregations:
Sunday morning Celebration, Songs of Praise, D-Caf, and Generation Rising.

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 ran an Alpha Course in 2012 for those wanting to find out more about the Christian faith.



During 2012, many new people have begun to be part of our church family. Six people testified to their faith in believers' baptism, 11 people became church members, and we shared seven dedications of children.

"To belong to GBC means family, trust, love and a sense of belonging to something greater and bigger than we could imagine." Kenny and Wendy

"Joining GBC is one of the best things I have done. It has given me a whole new family and a different outlook at life itself and I pray we, the church, and I have many happy years."

Phil



Prayer surrounds everything we do, but from time to time we set aside special times for concentrated prayer. Of special note were the early morning prayer times in Holy Week and times of corporate prayer seeking wisdom about the way forward with developing our buildings. 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 on The Gospels (Your Kingdom Come), Genesis, Random Acts of Kindness, and Ephesians (God's New Community).

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. Creche, 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. We have also celebrated Easter, Harvest and Christmas together.

GENERATION RISING

Our Generation Rising Youth congregation is still very new and often it feels as if we are getting used to it like you would a new baby! We are trying to learn how it acts and reacts and how best to make it work! We meet every Sunday evening and explore a variety of topics using a number of different teaching styles. Each week we finish with home made cake.

D-CAF

Our D-Caf congregation have had another exciting year in 2012. We have continued to meet every Wednesday evening, beginning by sharing a meal and celebrating life's milestones such as births, weddings and birthdays. We then move on to our multi-media discussion based teaching time and our series themes have been: Who am I? – looking at how God sees us, and Meeting Jesus – knowing that we encounter Jesus in everyday life.

Other highlights of the year have included our fundraising weekend in Wales during which a group of us climbed Snowdon. It was a great weekend and it was good to see the sense of pride in the young people that came with us. Our other highlight was our annual trip to Soul Survivor where many lives were changed. Some became Christians and others moved on in their walk with God.



“To belong to D-Caf means a lot to me because I feel cared for and accepted. I also like the atmosphere and mixing with others.”

Nina

“Soul Survivor and D-Caf give me the strength to build confidence and be happy within myself while being around people who care, support and like me for me.”

Katie

We were glad to receive some grant funding from a number of agencies, one of which was Young Lives where the young people had to present their own bid and rationale for their application. They also had to be actively involved in the development of the project. They did so well and Young Lives were so impressed that they have asked them to become panel members for future bids.

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.

World Mission

We held a World Mission Sunday in June focusing on the work of Open Doors, and we have shared financially and prayerfully throughout the year in the work of

Anglo-Indian Concern in Chennai, India;

Rehoboth Children's Homes in the Philippines;

Kathryn Thompson working at Rehoboth to provide educational support;

Mission Direct working around the world; and

Cambodia Action

In addition, during 2012 some members of our congregation have been on short-term assignments with the above projects in India, The Philippines, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Moldova and Cambodia.

Szentendre

In September eleven of us made a first successful twinning trip to Szentendre Baptist Church where we discovered much more in common than we expected. We were amazed to find a church there much like ours – facing the same challenges of a growing congregation in a beautiful town.

We attended a British themed evening for over a hundred young adults. In addition to sightseeing in Szentendre and Budapest, and worshipping at the church on the Sunday morning, the team spent time with their church leaders describing some of our church life.

The trip has strengthened the connections between the churches and there are plans for a return visit to Godmanchester in 2013.



Seniors Ministry

2012 has seen encouraging growth in our work with Seniors. There is a growing sense of community and belonging as we celebrate life's milestones and share sad times. Holiday at Home has been a highlight of the year for many and it has also been a real joy to see many come along to Songs of Praise and to call GBC 'our church'.

LUNCH CLUB

Organised by Godmanchester Churches and taking place at GBC every Tuesday, with an average attendance of 40+. This year we have engaged people in fund raising and picking charities close to their hearts for funds to go to. We have also enjoyed our day trip to Oxborough Hall near Norwich and our annual visit to the pantomime.

HOLIDAY AT HOME

This was our second year running Holiday at Home – a Holiday Club for Seniors. Following the success of this new initiative in 2011, it seemed we had a tough act to follow. There was much excitement and anticipation among our older folk. They were not disappointed! There was plenty of fun, food, fellowship and freebies each day.



"Holiday at Home had a great atmosphere and it enabled us to participate in the activities and to make friends." Rosemary

The theme for the week was The Olympics and the church was decorated accordingly. Morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea – served on best china – were enjoyed by all. Activities for the morning and afternoon sessions included speakers from Wood

Green Animal Centre and RAF Duxford, a slide show – Around the World in 80 slides, Music Hall, Bingo and a Movie afternoon – Chariots of Fire. Following our Bible Thought for the Day, everyone took home a free gift to remind them of that day's thought. The week was a time of fun, laughter and special times and lots of good memories were made.



"I had a great time at Holiday at Home" Sally

"I really enjoyed the companionship at Holiday at Home" Gladys

SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

We continue to lead services each month in various sheltered accommodation complexes in Godmanchester and St Ives – as well as leading carol singing evenings at Christmas.

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 allows me to help out and learn leadership." *Kieran*

Wednesday mornings **Littlefoot Club** for babies and toddlers and their parents and carers.

Thursday evenings **Explorers Children's Club** for those in years 3-6.

Friday evenings **Friday Night Project** for those in year 7+.

In the summer we had two big events:

50 people went to **Soul Survivor** which was a great experience for all those who went. Awful weather in the lead up to this event meant that we arrived to deep mud which was stressful when setting up camp, but we then had dry weather for the week we were there!



The following week was **Holiday Club** – where we used different sporting activities to learn about Jesus and his disciples. Lots of children had a great time and lots of our young people served on the team. Thank you!

"I really enjoyed the craft activities at Holiday Club and I

made a mobile for my room." *James*

In the summer at the end of the Children's Holiday Club, we held a **Family Fun Day**. This was a free event with a Rodeo Bull, a Bouncy Castle, Jewellery making and a BBQ – all on site at GBC and enjoyed by 300 people from our community – mostly contacts through Holiday Club, Friday Night Project and Littlefoot Club.

We have continued with **Messy Church** this year and at our Christmas Messy Church in December we had 80 people attending – mostly new contacts through Littlefoot Club and friends.

The work in **Schools** has grown this year with assemblies and Christian Union at Hinchingsbrooke and LOGOS lunchtime club and assemblies at St Anne's Primary School continuing. Involvement at Godmanchester Community Primary School is growing which is very encouraging.



The **Girls Only Project**, begun towards the end of 2011, has become well established during 2012. We thank God that 16 teenage girls have been mentored on a regular basis over this year. It's exciting to see young women engaging with God and on a life time journey of faith. Thank you, also, to their mentors for praying for and supporting them.

A new initiative for 2012 was **Friday Night**

Sing.

"Friday Night Sing is entertaining and enjoyable and the Carol Service was good." Kieran

We continued to support parents by offering **Parenting Sessions** – coffee, cake and shared wisdom – for parents of children and young people at various ages and stages.

Community



The foodbank has grown enormously during 2012. Since the summer of 2011, anyone from Huntingdon, Godmanchester, St Ives, St Neots and the surrounding villages have been able to contact us and arrange to pick up a selection of tinned and packet food to keep them going through a time of crisis. They are referred to us by a growing number of agencies, or they have heard about the Food Bank by word of mouth.

In 2011 we provided 30 food parcels. During 2012, we provided around 400 packages to local people in crisis. In addition, we were delighted to be able to provide a Christmas Hamper of 'basics' with a few treats thrown in to fifty local families.

There has been an amazingly positive response from our community to the request to meet the needs of those who need a helping hand and many 'locals' have got involved by collecting food or funds. Huntingdon Waitrose have also supported us with funding, providing boxes for storage and hampers and by allowing us to collect food from customers on two weekends in December.



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**
- **Mayor's Carols**
- **Hospital Services at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital**
- **Cornerstone pregnancy advice service and Cornerstone PHSE lessons in secondary schools**
- **Support 4 Carers**

In the wider community, two people from GBC are regularly involved in the ministry of the **Cambridge Street Pastors**.

"I was surprised when God led me to become a Street Pastor. I always wanted to work with teenagers but God said I should train for a year then go out and do what Jesus did that was to go out into our cities and help the young people who get into difficulties when they have too much to drink. Our main aim is to make sure everybody gets home safely. We pick up glass bottles and broken glass so that they don't get cut or use them in a fight. We give out flip flops if anyone is not wearing any shoes. We give out water and first aid if they are very drunk. And we listen to them when they want to talk. Sometimes they will ask who we are and why do we do this work especially as it is voluntary. We can then tell them about the love of God and that he sent his only Son to be among us. They are so surprised that we do not get paid for this work and we are able to explain that it is God's love that is the reason for us doing it."

Cheryl

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