



Annual Review of 2017

godmanchesterbaptist.org

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

Sometimes the unexpected happens. For most of the year, I would say my personal highlight of GBC life in 2017 was Andy Stone's teaching ministry at The Mix. He unpacked the truths of God's covenant relationship with us with care, depth and sensitivity as the Spirit worked amongst us. But, just as the year drew to a close, something unexpected happened. Lizzie, our Youth intern, organised one of the Godmanchester Living Advent Calendar events in our Worship Area which was attended by a good number from our town. At the end of the event, each person was given a tea light and used it to form the edges of a giant star of David. The house lights dimmed and we sat together in the candlelight to reflect on Jesus Christ who came to live amongst us. It was profound. As if heaven touched earth. It became my most memorable moment of the year. Unexpected. Profound. Spiritual. Christ centred. With people of faith or not gathered together hearing about and reflecting on God's great love for us.

Our great challenge is to remain both faithful to the eternal truths of the gospel and to share them in ways which are relevant and accessible to a new generation who know so little about Jesus and of the joy and peace found in a real faith in him. Our Review of 2017, says much about the amazing Christian community which is GBC. About us going **deeper in worship** and being **happier in our community together**. We may even be seeing us becoming **younger in age** especially in church leadership. Yet gospel challenge is also to be **bolder in testimony** and **clearer in society**. That evening just before Christmas, sat amongst guests of all ages and faith, I was reminded again that the church, our church, is the hope of the world. Or as William Temple put it so well: The Church is the only institution that exists primarily for the benefit of those who are not its members. May it be so for us.

So welcome to our review of 2017. If you are new to GBC, I hope you'll discover more about us in these pages. If you were part of GBC in 2017, 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

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.

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

We support World Mission across all our congregations, regularly sharing news of people overseas who are linked to GBC. There are photos and stories of trips to Zimbabwe and India 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.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Our Sunday Celebration continues to grow numerically and spiritually. We started the year with a detailed look at going deeper into God, being happier in community, younger in age, clearer in society and bolder in testimony. We finished the year learning about the key stages of life, by way of studies from Romans, about sexuality, and the seven signs in John's gospel. Our communion services focussed on our reasonable faith in an uncertain world. Many people appreciated our pan-GBC Lent series from "The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe". 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

Our monthly Healing and Communion Service remains a key time when, in the context of worship and the Lord's Supper, we pray for the health and wellbeing of others. We've continued to take one evening a month to go deeper into the presence of God by leading one another in worship and prayer.

SECTORS SERVICES

Over the course of 2017, Joe Warton led 4 Sectors Services where, through short talks and our very own GBC expert panels, we delved into the worlds of working in healthcare, and education, as well as family life, and living with long-term illness or injury. These times have yielded moments of laughter, as well as sadness, as the various panels have shared their highs and lows of living with God in these areas of life. Each Sectors Service has given us incredible insight into some of the ways our loving Lord truly is at work in every area of our lives and world.

'It was a wonderful opportunity for me to be asked to be on the panel to share how God has been with me through pain and suffering in certain times of my life' Lynn

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.

PRAYER

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

The Prayer team is a group of 19 people willing to be there for you on Sunday mornings. We love to wait on God and see him answering people's prayers. We want to be a listening ear and to take your requests to God. Sometimes people have words from the Lord to bring to our GBC family. We had so many people come forward for prayer in 2017, which has been really exciting. Many people tell us how God has answered their prayers and some we never know what the outcome was, but we know God has heard our voices. Please know that there will always be someone waiting at the front for you, if you feel prompted by God to come for prayer. Philippians 4:6 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God". We always need more people on the team, so if you think this is a ministry you'd like to be involved in, please have a word with me. *Liesl Houghton*

'During Sunday morning services I have responded to the invitation at the end to come forward for prayer. This call has been from a word of knowledge or sometimes the Holy Spirit has placed something on my heart. I feel that it is a great privilege to be able to respond to the offer and to be prayed for by others in a relaxed, loving and confidential place. As Christians we long for God to answer our prayers. Sometimes we see those prayers answered immediately, others will take a little longer depending on our personal walk with our Heavenly Father. In my personal experience I feel that God has been slowly peeling away layers in my life which may be unconfessed sin or other issues that do not glorify Him. Recently God has been blessing me immensely in my life – removing me from a bad work situation, downsizing to a new home and more recently an offer of a new job!' Paul

Deeper in Worship

As well as regular Sunday evening services and other opportunities to go deeper in worship during the year, in Holy Week we set up a Trail to the Tree interactive, devotional event. Many people were able to come and enjoy the quiet and use the displays and activities to find deeper ways to worship during that week. And many felt a special touch of God on their lives.

'On Good Friday I woke up feeling very low and tearful which is something I haven't felt for a long time. I wasn't able to get to the early morning service but remembered that Trail to the Tree was on in the church later in the day. Arriving just after midday to a warm welcome and a cup of tea and a chat I started off my journey. First I started in the beautiful garden with scriptures and readings to think about Jesus being alone in the garden. After a while I felt myself sitting in the garden with him. While moving around the different areas and taking part in the activities so



**Red Weaving
Trail to the Tree**

many thoughts were going through my mind. It was amazing to weave red material on the loom and remember the blood he had shed for me. And then to write down the things troubling me and put them in the shredder to forget about. Lots of other readings and poems and thoughts were there to ponder on. After about an hour I came to the cross. As I sat there reflecting on my journey I was thinking about how Jesus had died that horrific death and about the pain he was suffering for me. Why should I be moaning about feeling a bit down in the dumps? As I sat beside the cross in the quiet I felt I was able to leave my burdens behind me and to be so grateful for what he had done for me. On leaving the trail, the person who had welcomed me said that I seemed like a different

person and so much brighter as if a heavy weight had been lifted from me.' Janet

Happier in Community

Welcome Lunch

In March, about 70 of us sat down to a wonderful roast dinner provided by Hayley and her team. The guests were Leadership Team and 50 or so people who had joined us at GBC over recent months. We chatted and got to know each other over lunch and then John and Daniel shared some information about GBC and our values and activities. We try to host these lunches every time we have a big enough group of those new to GBC.

Ablaze 2017 – The Mix Weekend

Over 250 joined us for the Mix weekend in June with probably another 50 or more joining us for the Friday evening making, all told, twice the number from 2015! And more people than ever camped or caravanned on site. We are indeed indebted to those who prepared the programme, organised the site and did the catering, but The Mix is a collective effort from everyone. So well done everyone!



Matt, Nick & Sam

An extended programme this year included a BBQ and bonfire on Friday evening, adult sessions led extremely well by Andy Stone from Network Church, Sheffield, and separate sessions for our children and teens who had plenty of activities and teaching. We enjoyed being led in our worship throughout the weekend by some of our young people.

Saturday afternoon saw another innovation with mini seminars on discipleship topics. And we had plenty of fun and time to relax together. The final communion and feedback session on Sunday was a fantastic testimony to God's work in us over the weekend. We all came away challenged and encouraged, very thankful for the opportunity to mix together.



Rowena

'I really enjoyed the Mix; it was a great opportunity to get to know people better spending a whole weekend playing games; having discussions about our faith and exploring different bible passages in smaller groups. I'm looking forward to The Mix 2019!' Rowena

'After decades away from GBC, when I was free to come back I decided to go to everything offered – within reason. I decided to come to the Ablaze weekend each day – my camping days are long gone! Saturday was a good day for getting to know people. Sunday was a day I will never forget. Up until then I was able to call God by all of his wonderful names – except Father. Constant pain made that too difficult. I felt useless. At the Sunday afternoon communion service Andy Stone spoke about the Prodigal Son, using volunteers to act out the story. When it came to the prodigal's father running to



Betty

meet his son, the person representing the father had such a look of joy and compassion on his face that somehow it touched me deeply. Communion was beautiful and when people filled the aisles to go forward for prayer, two friends sitting either side of me offered to pray for me. I was very tearful and was asking God why I needed to bear all the pain and how could I call him my Father? As I sobbed in my friend's arms a beautiful light shone down through the roof and it was as if a bit of heavenly love was shining down to earth. It was as if God was using my friend to comfort me and I felt God say we will get through the pain together. You accept all the good things in life I give. I know it's hard having pain but

if you let me I will see you through. Then I felt him say take my hand and it was his bloodstained hand from the cross. It doesn't matter what we have done or not done. We are forgiven because of what He has done. 'In his great mercy God has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead'. I can now call God my heavenly Father and although in the winter of my life I can, with his help, make the most of each day and whatever tomorrows I have left. In Jesus we are free.

An afterthought. Thank you Father God for all the people involved at The Mix. The organisers, the helpers, the speakers, and the singing and the music of the boys in the band. And to those who provided lifts for those who needed them. So many people involved in making my Ablaze weekend so special.' *Betty*

International Meal

In October, about 100 of us from all ages and stages of life and from many different cultures spent a very happy evening together enjoying tastes of food from 14 different countries. Delicious dishes were provided by various members of our congregation and we had lots of fun eating, chatting and quizzing together. This great event for the whole church family was masterminded by the Moesbauer family. We're really grateful – and hope to do it again one day!

Bolder in Testimony

We share testimony in lots of places at GBC whether that be in services or small groups or prayer triplets or day to day conversation. It is so important to share what God is doing in our lives right now! Sharing our stories and answers to prayers can be hugely encouraging to those around us.



Paul & Gillian

'During a recent family trip to New Zealand in June /July 2017 I knew things were not right in my life. I used to be (at least I thought I was) a Christian many years ago. I managed to go to the Sunday Celebration Service at the Oxford Baptist Church on the South Island with my partner Gillian, her daughter Sara and husband Dean and his family. At the time of worship I really loved the songs that we were singing, but I felt that I was unable to participate fully. Later that day I learnt that there was an evening service of open worship and prayer and ministry, and it was as though God was inviting me along! I mentioned to the family that I would really like to attend the service in the evening and to my surprise everyone just dropped all their plans to

enable me to be there. I attended and a church member brought a picture of a deep ravine with a river flowing far below. At the bottom of the ravine there were many people bathing in the clear waters below and there was someone high up at the edge of the ravine standing, looking down. I knew that person was me! I took a leap of faith, someone prayed for me and I welcomed Jesus back into my heart.

Once we returned back to the UK I was determined to find a church to attend and GBC is definitely the place to be! One of the areas of my life where I was struggling was at work. It got to a point where I was continually put under pressure and stressed and things went from bad to worse. I prayed to God to help me through the tough times which I was experiencing as I knew that I could not continue in my strength. Through disciplinary measures the company were going to dismiss me, although I resigned at the last minute. There I was jobless, but it was as if a great weight had been lifted off my shoulders and I experienced the Lord's peace, truly ever! Our loving Father will take us out of the dark times in our life and he will fulfil his promise to bring us back into the light. Jeremiah 39:18 "For I shall surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but your life shall be as a prize to you, because you have put your trust in me," says the Lord.

In the immense amount of time which I have had on my hands, I have tried to use it wisely to become more active at GBC. We are in the process of selling our home and downsizing (still remaining in Godmanchester) and I recently attended my first interview since leaving work, and have just accepted an offer of employment. In six months God has turned my life around in ways beyond any human comprehension. I feel so blessed to be part of the church family at GBC and so grateful to so many people who have been praying. I give thanks and praise to Him continually each and every day - He is Awesome!' Paul

Clearer in Society

Writing to Christians in Ephesus, Paul said that various gifts are given 'to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up' (Ephesians 4:12).

Throughout 2017, we have continued to invest in training and equipping.

We had an excellent representative from Dementia Friends help us grow in our understanding of what dementia is, and how, as individuals and a community, we can be 'dementia friendly'.

Those involved in ministering to 'mature' folk attended a really helpful Seniors Conference in Cambridge.

Lots of people have attended Safeguarding training to ensure we sustain an environment where young people and vulnerable adults can flourish.

Daniel ran two insightful seminars for parents on 'Supporting your child in an online world'.

'They were two fantastic sessions, which allowed us the opportunity to reflect on how technology is affecting young people today and our response as parents... If Daniel runs another session in the future, I would thoroughly recommend it.' Richard

We also threw the kitchen sink at Bible reading, with a Saturday morning seminar on 'The Big Story of the Bible', as well as a triple-header on 'Reading the Bible with Head, Heart, and Hooves', where we were learning to read and apply the Bible holistically.

'What I found really helpful about the course was learning about the culture, traditions and lifestyles in the Bible, and why things were done in a certain way 2,000 years ago, and yet most of what we read is still so applicable today in our modern, Western culture. The course strengthened the fact Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, and is relevant in every area of our lives.' Helen

We hosted an evening for Tania Bright, from For Refugees, to speak about the Community Sponsorship for Refugees initiative and from that initial meeting we now have an active and enthusiastic group exploring the possibility of housing a Syrian refugee family in Godmanchester.

SMALL GROUPS

Small groups are absolutely fundamental to GBC having a strong sense of community. It is where people 'love, learn, do and decide' together – whether that is in a prayer triplet, a team working together to support many of our services, activities and events, or a home group.

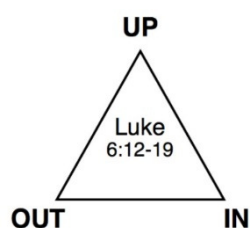
Our seventeen small groups meet for caring, sharing, praying, studying, worshipping and reaching out. Small groups are the key to our pastoral care for one another and this year we strengthened how we do that. They are a great place to form good accountable supportive relationships.

Members of one of our small groups have written the following about what belonging to their group means to them, 'I have found going to a house group gives me an opportunity to talk and think about my daily Christian life, and then to be able to pray for others in a meaningful way.' 'What I enjoy about being a part of my home group is the sense of belonging which allows me to relax and enjoy the study more.' 'I have found since being part of my Home Group it has given me a much stronger understanding of the Scriptures and that my faith has also grown.' 'Being part of a Home Group gives you a chance to share your faith with your friends within your group and in relaxing surroundings.' 'I really value the friendship and prayerful support of fellow Christians. I learn a lot from the others in the group.'

'Thursday Fellowship is one of GBC's small groups, but rather different in that each time we invite a different member of our congregation to give a short talk. We meet in the afternoon and cater mostly for older women. We sing, share and pray together, and keep in touch with each other between meetings. From time to time we go out to lunch and have recently started having a cream tea when a member reaches 80! It is a friendship group, where we seek to grow in our walk with and knowledge of the Lord.'

Rachel Thurley

Hazel Bray and Sarah Noble write about their Missional Community, 'What an exciting year for Connect



Missional Community! Over 2017, we grew to involve ten different families developing a culture of extended family by continuing to follow the **IN, UP, and OUT** pattern of a missional community.

We have enjoyed regular and consistent family times together which have helped to deepen our relationships with one another (**IN**). These have involved lots of fun, food and laughter featuring:

- Once a month family get-togethers (including all 20 children!)
- Once a month adults only evenings
- Regular men's nights

'We really enjoy not only the breakfasts, fire pits and puddings or evening meals but also the comfort of knowing we are always with a great group of friends where we can discuss any concerns within our busy family lives, and help each other through prayer.' *Craig and Alison*

During our midweek sessions, we have spent time praying for each other as well as following different bible studies in order to help develop our relationships with God (**UP**) including:

- 5 love languages for children
- Beautiful mess – thriving spiritually through the challenge of motherhood
- Fruitfulness on the frontline



'It has been a real privilege to think through common parenting struggles and dilemmas together as a group, to feel that you are not alone as well as encourage and support others. Fruitfulness on the Frontline gave us the opportunity to consider how we put our faith into action. It's good to challenge each other and share how we would want to handle difficult situations in the future where we felt we had fallen short in the past.' *Sarah*

Sarah & Hazel

Together, we have been sharing God's love within the wider community of St Anne's Primary School (**OUT**). We have been involved in the following:

- Starting a half termly prayer meeting for the St Anne's community at the school.
- Giving welcome gift bags to Reception parents on the first day of school.
- Distributing chocolates at the school gate as part of 40 acts of generosity 2017.

Our 2017 journey as a missional community is summed up superbly by *Samuel* (age 6): *'I feel good that I know God is by my side, and there are, like, lots of families, and it helps me to believe in God.'*

If you would like to join a Small Group in 2018, please contact Ruth Blakey.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

When this ministry was set up in 2013, the Bible verse that underpinned it was Isaiah 58:11

'The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.'



Delia

In 2017 God's provision, refreshing, strengthening and blessings looked like this:

A World Day of Prayer ecumenical service written by the women of the Philippines; a pamper morning; a talk by Nicky Rattigan on 'Healthy Relationships'; a Retreat day with speaker Rev. Rebecca Gilbert from Harlton Church on the theme of 'the fruit of the Spirit'; coffee & meals together and another fun Christmas Challenge Quiz!

As always none of this would have been made a reality without the unfailing support of Stephanie Brown, Carol Collett, Helen Healy, Pat Jones and Brenda Wood. Thank you team! Also thank you to all of the wonderful women of GBC, friends and family who have come, and we look forward to what God has in store for us all in 2018. *Delia Steer*

MEN'S MINISTRY



Mark

In February 2017 a group of us attended a weekend away with another group called Cutting Edge. Eric Delve delivered part 2 of Echoes in Eternity, which continued the theme from the weekend away in 2016. Continuing his use of scripture alongside clips from popular films, Eric spoke on the themes of men being Soldiers, Athletes, Farmers and Fathers. It was an excellent weekend with one of the group accepting Jesus as his Saviour!

Meanwhile, GBC men have also continued to support Churches Together Men's breakfasts in the Barley Mow, one of which had Keith Doe giving a moving personal testimony 'A Life in Debt'.

Look out for details of more events in 2018! *Mark Moughton*

WORLD MISSION

We held a World Mission Sunday in April welcoming Azar Ajaj from The Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary who spoke about the history, challenges and hopes of contemporary Arab Christians in Israel.

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.

Mission Direct in Zimbabwe

'My trip has shown me just how blessed we are in the west and also that many people are still serving God and bringing joy even in the midst of great misery and hardship. It's clichéd I know but seeing the joy of the kids at Chris

Maphosa's big meeting showed me that even in hopelessness God brings hope.' *James*



'Teamwork, teamwork and celebrate: for all things are a blessing from God.' *Ruth & Ian*

'We got involved with a small family project to help a young lady called Peace who has Cerebral Palsy. Although extremely loved by her family she had been tied to a tree like a goat. To keep her 'safe'. They were delighted with the safe space that we helped to create; full of bright and interesting toys and sensory objects. She became a bit of a local celebrity. The small children who had

been frightened of her all wanted to visit (she is very sociable, even though she is unable to speak) When it was finished her mum burst into song!' Pam

'The trip has made me realize how privileged we are in this country' Dylan

'We did it together.... and can't wait to go back' Jono and Jude

*'God has spoken to my heart and He has told me what to do,
He's filled me with His spirit and His love for others too,
He filled me with the courage that I need to do His will,
I'll make a sacrifice for Him, as He did upon the hill.
Leaving all the comforts that I knew so far away,
I stepped inside an aeroplane, I grew so much that day,
home was far behind me, in a town of many men,
I knew that I would never be the man that I was then.
All of God's creation was on view as I soared high,
the sun was so much closer as I soared across the sky,
being closer to Him was a great, life changing thing,
I realised much more that day, the treasures life can bring.
We landed in a land unknown and passion chose to rise
and, all at once, another life was there before my eyes,
the path that God had led me to would turn my life around,
I thank and bless Him all the more, for the life that I have found.'*

Colin

Mission Direct in Lalitpur, Uttar Pradesh, India.



'I really loved every minute of the trip. For so many reasons, it was a privilege and joy to step into a different world for a couple of weeks. And I want to go back!' Charlie

'A trip like this can be life changing. I would encourage everyone to consider going. You won't regret it.' Dorne

'Our recent Mission Direct trip to India proved to be a real challenge to my senses:

- From the SIGHT of the extremely mediocre laundry facilities at the hospital to the extreme magnificence of the Taj Mahal;*
- From the SOUND of the constant horns of all vehicles from tuk-tuks to thirty-ton lorries to the peace of the hospital compound;*
- From the SMELL of the amazing array of spices to the agricultural aroma of the rural villages;*
- From the TASTE of curry three times a day to the very sweet tea that was offered without question wherever we visited;*
- From the TOUCH of the wood plank beds (on which I slept very well) to holding the hand of the husband of a lady receiving palliative care following cancer surgery.*

But through it all came the sense that our God is involved and at work in the lives of people the world over.' John

'My trip to India was an overload of information which my brain has had to process including different foods, sights and smells, modes of travel, relationships, accommodation, changing countryside, faiths and cultures. Practising medicine and nursing care is not different but some of the rarer diseases are more common. Listening to one another and our Christian beliefs are no different between cultures. However, on my return it has become clear to me we are a country of people who moan about the smallest things and are discontented with everything. It is often said that people in third world countries are happier but more than that they are content which we find very difficult to believe. I have been left with more questions than answers from this trip, but this means more exploration which I will

certainly enjoy. It also means I have learnt to be more content with who I am and what I have in my life (not necessarily possessions!)' *Stephanie*

SENIORS MINISTRY

John mentioned in his introduction to this review that one of our focuses in 2017 was about becoming younger in age. We want to make sure that in all of our ministries we are encouraging and mentoring those younger than us to step up into leadership roles. It doesn't mean that we have found a way to reverse time! Our seniors ministry is growing – partly because lots of us who have been at GBC for a while are joining that category! But also because lots of older friends in our community are finding a warm welcome at various activities and services at GBC. We thank God for these new friendships. As well as our Songs of Praise congregation, more and more people are enjoying our Tuesday activities at GBC.

TUESDAY TREAT



Ken, Pam & Janet

There has been a real buzz at the Church Centre on Tuesday mornings since Tuesday Treat replaced the Lunch Club in January 2017. If you call in between 10.30 and 12.30 we can guarantee you a warm welcome, a great cup of tea or coffee and a range of snacks, all served to your table. These usually include tea cakes, croissants, crumpets, sausage rolls and delicious homemade cake. Enjoy a bit of time out sitting in a comfy armchair and meeting friends old and new. Stay as long as you like. Join in with our occasional special events. In December we turned the Small Hall into a cinema and enjoyed watching the Christmas film, 'It's a Wonderful Life' together. The following week we shared a

marvellous Christmas Lunch together. There's no fixed charge to come to Tuesday Treat. We ask you to pay what you think is reasonable and what you can afford. We hope you will pop in and we look forward to seeing you, everyone is welcome.



Janet

'Sometimes we like to cling to familiar things – a bit like slipping on a pair of old shoes that are comfortable. So when we have to wear new shoes we wonder, "will they suit me? Or, will they pinch?" So we reject them. When our brilliant Lunch Club had to finish, it was a bit like losing a dear friend. When Tuesday Treat was suggested instead, again we wondered if, like new shoes, this could replace the old. However, the new coffee morning has been a resounding success, thanks to the kind volunteers who shop and cook for it. It has become a meeting place where we can move about and chat to different people as

well as enjoy the delicious treats on offer. So although this event has replaced the old, there was no need to worry. This church doesn't sit on its laurels – it moves on in a new and exciting way and I feel lucky to be part of it.' *Janet*

'This is a lovely chance to say how much I and many others "thank you" for the pleasure we get from Tuesday Treat each week. The company is varied and interesting; the kitchen staff are magic and the cakes etc provide a lovely treat for which we are all very grateful. And we know should we need a private chat someone is always there.'

Sheila

TUESDAYS@10

After the success of the previous year's Tuesdays@10, the same format was repeated in 2017 with a weekly programme for Seniors over five weeks during the Summer holiday period while the Tuesday Treat coffee morning took a break. The worship area underwent a transformation with arm chairs and settees set up round coffee tables ready to welcome the 40 or so who came on each occasion. Apart from taking part in the main activity each week, there was plenty of time to sit and chat, drink tea or coffee, have a go at a table quiz or read a magazine. Activities included playing table games, trying your hand with some simple crafts and listening to a musical entertainer. A highlight for many this year was the visit to Ben Sansum's house in Church Place to relive life in the 40's, then come back to the church and carry on reminiscing about life in those days. Some brought their own treasures from the past to pass round and talk about. An innovation this year was a do-it-yourself musical morning with contributions from young and old and an opportunity to join in singing some of the old favourites. Towards the end of the

morning there would be a time of gentle exercise or a game together finishing with a Thought for the Day followed by a light lunch set up in the Small Hall. Thanks to the many who helped in a variety of ways to make these occasions run so smoothly and successfully.

Philip & Jenny Thompson

SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

Many of those who attend Tuesday Treat, Tuesdays@10 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 2017.

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.



Bridge Building

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Our phenomenal team of volunteers enable approximately 45 children and young people to learn about Jesus, grow in their faith, and express themselves creatively every Sunday. All this is done in an age-appropriate style and setting, through Crèche, Little Stars, Kids' Kingdom, and Furnace. We are so blessed at GBC to have so many young people as part of our church family.

GENERATION RISING, ON A SUNDAY EVENING (15s+)

One of the great things about Generation Rising is that it isn't just *for youth*, but much of it is run *by youth*. Much like with sharks' teeth: as the old ones head off to uni or start working, the younger ones step up and take more responsibility. So in September, the majority of the youth band moved on, and already others have taken up the mantle. But unlike sharks' teeth, the old ones don't drift to the bottom of the ocean floor; we keep in regular contact with them and send them care packages (which could only be described as a private dentist's dream!) Throughout the year we covered some big topics, including connecting with God devotionally, sharing your faith, the early church, and being a Christian in a broken world. In all this, it's not just been Daniel and the GR team doing the talking; several young people have found their feet in speaking at the front and we even had the pleasure of some GBC adults coming in to be grilled on what their faith looks like out in the world.

'It was really fulfilling being able to talk about something I felt had been placed on my heart to share' Mark

RESIDENTIALS

As is our annual tradition, we took a big group (55 in total) to the Soul Survivor festival, made slightly easier this year by virtue of the fact that it was held in Peterborough. It was a fantastic time with the usual mix of worship, teaching, and camping. There was even an outside silent disco and UV party. Many of the young people encountered God in fresh and powerful ways.

Then in October, 7 young people went on a 4 day residential at Letton Hall. They had loads of fun playing wide games in the dark, go-karting, and hanging out by the campfire. Each day we had Bible teaching from Jason Royce and a time of worship to respond to what God was saying.

'Letton Hall was a great experience because the speaker talked about how we are all special in God's eyes and that we are all different. Letton Hall helped me to make the decision for Jesus at the Soul Survivor Celebration shortly after.' GBC young person

MACEDONIA VISIT

Having hosted a group from GBC in 2016, 8 Macedonians made the return trip in the summer of 2017. During their two-week stay, they got involved in some of our community work, ministered to us, explored the local area and punted on the River Cam. They topped it all off by joining us at Soul Survivor, where they had the awesome experience of worshipping alongside 10,000 other young Christians.

SCHOOLS WORK

During 2017 we have continued to have contact with all the primary schools in Godmanchester: Godmanchester Bridge Academy, St Anne's School and Godmanchester Community Academy. We have done a variety of things with the schools including assemblies, collective worship, lessons including It's Your Move for year 6, visits to the church and prayer spaces. We continue to lead the Christian Union at Hinchbrook School and do assemblies once a term.

The Summer Holiday Club in August was very successful again with lots of children and families getting involved.

MESSY CHURCH

The growth and development of Messy Church over 2017 was incredible. Our dedicated team, whose ages range from 10 to... well, older than 10, consistently provide excellent craft activities, music, teaching, and refreshments for the many families who come – many of whom are not part of any other GBC congregation. It's a style of church where adults and their little ones can creatively engage together in activities that all connect to a biblical theme, with the various strands being brought together in an interactive talk at the end. Topics included the Holy Temple, the parable of the 10 bridesmaids, peace and comfort, and at Christmas we looked at Joseph.

'I enjoy working out fun and different ways to share the stories with everyone - especially when it involves food!'
Abigail

LITTLEFOOT CLUB

'Just a quick thank you! I came along to my first session at Littlefoot last week and I was blown away with how wonderful it is. It's amazing to be welcomed so warmly. I'm new to the town and feel very lucky to have a brilliant community on my door step. Thanks again Em and baby Heidi x'

It's been a very busy year for Littlefoot. We work hard to be a friendly, accepting community where everyone belongs and finds their place. We ask Mums that whether they are newish or have been coming for years, they help us with this by chatting to someone new whenever they can. Everyone on the team is a volunteer and we thank each one for helping us. Everyone with a yellow badge is DBS checked and has a volunteer contract. We stay on for lunch each half term to plan and to pray for Littlefoot. With between 120-170 bodies attending, we always welcome more help, especially folk who are happy just to mooch and chat. As part of Godmanchester Baptist Church, our trustees are the church Leadership Team. As such, we work hard to make sure all of the correct policies and procedures are in place, from safeguarding to fire regulations to data protection to our use of social media. All of this information is available on the church web site. Our numbers are very high and we are wondering what to do about it. We are



reluctant to start a waiting list or limit numbers but we may need to do something soon. Starting another session is not an option so please do pray for wisdom for us about this. Good News: we have been awarded a grant of £750 from the CCC Strengthening Communities Fund. This is to help us develop a Sensory Room. The grant will be used to purchase a sensory projector and some floor mats. With the Children's Centre building closing shortly, we are looking forward to welcoming Tina Kean, Children's Centre Worker as she will be joining us every other week. Tina will be available to provide advice and help and to work alongside us in providing a great early years' experience for young families. Finally, we have recently put together a library of parenting books for parents and carers to borrow. Please do pass any good ones on to us if they are sitting on your shelf gathering dust. *The Littlefoot Team*

EXPLORERS AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY AFTERNOONS

Partway through the year we trialled a new project for children: Instead of running Explorers on a Thursday evening, which we have been doing for many years, we held 4 Children's Activity Afternoons. These involved fun, food and film – and the feedback from parents has been really positive.

FRIDAY NIGHT PROJECT

FNP has continued to draw large numbers of youth from around Huntingdonshire, providing a safe and positive place for teenagers to hang out. On one evening, we were visited by the Police Crime Commissioner, and the High Sheriff. On the other nights, activities including table tennis, pool, ball games, card games, Wii, Playstation, and craft activities mean there was always something for everyone. We are very grateful to the team of leaders, many of whom are young, for creating such an enjoyable atmosphere for those who come.

YOUTH INTERN



Lizzie

Lizzie Moesbauer has already been 'mentioned in dispatches' in John's introduction as the organiser of the Living Advent Calendar event at GBC – which became John's most memorable moment of the year. Lizzie's first few months as our Youth intern have seen her engaged in ministry with all ages and stages represented at GBC and in our community. On a Sunday she might be teaching 3 year olds in Little Stars, or 11-14 year olds in Furnace, or she may be doing a talk at our Generation Rising Youth Congregation for 15+. This was the most scary thing she has done so far in this role! On a Monday she will be with teenagers again helping at Curious, the Christian Union at Hinchingsbrooke School. By Tuesday she will be

enjoying the company of 70, 80 and (some) 90 year olds at Tuesday Treat. She loves hearing their stories. And they love her! Wednesday is a planning day. Thursday sees Lizzie on the team at Brampton Church Youth Club and Friday is FNP at GBC where Lizzie's people skills and craft talents are made good use of! While giving her talk at Generation Rising was her most challenging time so far, it's good to know that last month the seminar Lizzie led at Letton Hall was the best thing! It went really well and she had really good feedback. It is a joy to have Lizzie with us – but she is about half way through her year already! Please pray for guidance for her as she considers what God's plans for her for the future might be.

COMMUNITY

FOODBANK



It is very easy to see Godmanchester FoodBank in terms of numbers: weight of food donated and distributed, adult clients, children, vouchers, referral agencies and how many tins of baked beans there are in the store. Behind the numbers is a plethora of different reasons why so many people in our local area are in acute and challenging circumstances. Low income, job losses, benefit issues for those in and out of work, illness,

debt, rent and housing issues all feature as part of a picture that can put severe strain on people and their relationships.

Working with our partner agencies who refer people to us, the FoodBank can put food into households where there is simply not enough money to manage after rent and fuel are taken out of people's income. The volunteer team is growing in numbers, experience and expertise, and responds to client needs with compassion, care and real concern, without judgement and always with a welcoming smile and the offer of a cuppa. We look to give people 'a hand up, not a hand out' as one of our volunteers describes what we do.

The numbers do matter though. In 2017 GFB fulfilled almost 1000 vouchers, helping over 2,400 adults and children, distributing over 31,000 kg of food and on top of that another 4,000 kg that went into 160 Christmas Hampers. This can only happen because of the great generosity and willingness to care that is expressed by church congregations, schools, local businesses and individuals through their donations to the FoodBank. We can only give our deepest thanks to everyone who donates to the FoodBank.

Things have changed at the FoodBank in 2017. The teams at the foodbank centres in Sawtry and Yaxley have taken the big step of becoming independent foodbanks, outside the Trussell Trust, focussing their help on people in their localities. Godmanchester FoodBank still shares food from surpluses and gives some administrative support as appropriate, whilst they set up and manage their own operations. There has been one other change in the Godmanchester structure, much closer to home. Jude Lechmere ended her time as Project Manager in early 2017 and Joe George took over the role. Jude inspired me to become more closely involved with the Godmanchester FoodBank and I am sure that anyone who has been involved with the FoodBank, will join me in saying "Thank you Jude, for your drive, determination and vision".

Peter Levitt (FoodBank Administrator)

HUNTINGDON AREA MONEY ADVICE



Have you any money worries or know someone who has? Then HAMA is a Huntingdon and Godmanchester Churches initiative which can help. It is a fully regulated free confidential debt advice charity. We see anyone regardless of gender, religion etc.

Our trustees come from many churches but our three advisers, Roger Hickling, Keith Doe and John Leigh-Brown are based in GBC.

How do we help? People in debt are often scared; will they lose their home, their family or their possessions? They may have lost them already. Will they be able to buy food and other necessities?

They are often in denial, "I can't cope so I will stick my head in the sand." It is not unusual for folks to turn up with loads of unopened letters, bills and bank statements.

We help by recognising that the people coming, however scarred by sin and the world, are created in the image of God but more than that are loved by Him. So we must not judge them, but treat them with love and respect to help restore their dignity.

Of course we offer practical advice. Our advisers talk to them, reassure them and guide them practically through managing their problems. We contact their creditors to stop the threatening letters and get a temporary hold on their debts/interest so that a plan can be worked out. We help with budgeting and pointing out areas of overspend so that the person can try to adjust their life style to live within their means and pay off a little of what they owe. It is wonderful if we see people leave with their dignity and hope restored, their life turned around and surely they will have seen the love of Christ in action.

We pray for those who do go through the process that they will maintain their debt management plan, stick to their budgets and get their life back on track. We also pray for those who contact us but then do not turn up or find the process too daunting.

Everyone needs Jesus in their life and those in debt are no exception. Please pray for everyone who makes contact that they will see the love of Christ flow out of our advisers and everyone associated with HAMA. Pray they may come to accept Christ as their Saviour and that the advisers may get the opportunity to pray with those whom they see, where it is appropriate. Whilst we do what we do for the love of God and to show Christ to those in need, no one is turned away because of their gender, religion or for any other reason.

If you would like our quarterly newsletter or would like to make contact for yourself or someone else then please call or e-mail me at centremanager@huntsmoneyadvice.co.uk.

Rob Allott

THE CLUB

'It's a very accepting group: no-one is judgemental', 'I look forward to meeting up and listening to other people's opinion on a wide range of subjects', 'I enjoy coming'. These are the comments from a few of the people who regularly attend the group which meets on a Monday afternoon from 2.15pm to 3.30pm. We share our joys and frustrations of life over a cup of coffee or tea with homemade cakes and biscuits plus a few grapes thrown in! The group is for people who have experienced mental health struggles and there is a regular group of us who welcome

other people who come on an occasional basis for support and a listening ear. One of the great strengths of the group is that we often have a good laugh together. *Jane Fasham*

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**
- **Visits to each home on the Romans Edge estate, welcoming our new neighbours to Godmanchester and giving out welcome leaflets and Christmas cards.**

AND FINALLY

Ruth Blakey, our administrator, sums things up.

It's an enormous privilege to write this review because in collating all of the information about how God has been at work in the lives of so many people at GBC and in our community during 2017 I am reminded again how truly wonderful and humbling it is that God uses his people as part of his plan to demonstrate his saving love to his hurting world.

We long for everyone to feel included and to find a place here at GBC 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!

GBC is a big and busy place so we've included some photos here to help those who are newer to GBC recognise people!

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

We would like to record our thanks here to Laurel Fennell whose ministry as our Parish Nurse came to an end in 2017, and also, as mentioned earlier in this Review, to Jude Lechmere who finished her role as Project Manager for the FoodBank.

We also want to thank our caretaking and cleaning team of Tony Davis, Rachel Fennell and Maureen Game, who do a great job of keeping the Church Centre in good order for the hundreds of people using the place each week.



John



Daniel



Ruth



**Hazel
Bray**



**John
Brown**



**David
Fennell**



**Joe
George**



**Tony
Goodwin**



**Jo
Hitchins**



**Brett
Mickelburgh**



**Delia
Steer**



**John
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