

MINISTER'S REPORT 2020



The minister Revd David Judkins with the Leadership Team (Elders and Deacons) thank God for His help, presence & guidance among what has been the most challenging year that many of us can remember in our lifetime. As our Constitution states, the principle purpose of the Church is the advancement of the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination. In a time where the main church building has been closed to worship services for much of the year, the 'church' has not been closed and Christian faith has certainly been advancing,

Vision

Over the course of the pandemic, we have sought to remain faithful to the vision that God has given us as a church family, to 'make disciples, transforming lives... and increasing the spiritual temperature of the area'. The overall aim of GBC is to live out and make disciples of Jesus Christ i.e. to make those sort of people whose walk with Jesus is fundamental to who they are, and increasingly *shapes* how they live in the various aspects of life. No part of life is left untouched by the call to follow and learn from Jesus Christ. The number of people actively involved in the fulfilment of our vision and service in the church family & town is too great to mention each one by name but all are thoroughly appreciated.

This year, we have been forced reimagine different ways of living this out, and have increasingly been drawn to seeing smaller groups (lifegroups & others) as significant vessels for fulfilling this vision. During the year, the MI6 (Missional Intentional) group continued to thrive & grow, with another MI6 group being launched. Alison Dyer has continued to be employed on a part-time basis to grow and develop these groups had has been instrumental in equipping, challenging & encouraging many to step out in faith and try new things, to gain confidence in Christ and in themselves and to be more intentional in mission. We have also had input from various conferences, including the Fresh Streams conference & reaching the Unchurched network from the Catalyst family.

Over 30 people have also been trained on disciple-making principles via the 'Discipleship Squared' (D²) course. Several mission-focused groups were also started the year, in particular through a men's group and a ladies group that have both also provided an opportunity to grow in community and deeper relationships. We have appreciated the input & support from Big Life ministries, particularly the help & support from Peter Dunn (Big Life Europe) and Abi Francis in India with our young people.

We had the privilege of baptising three new people into faith in Jesus Christ. Several others had been planned but have been postponed due to the Covid restrictions.

A real encouragement has been to see the willingness of many people to develop new habits and seek to regularly share in conversation and in deed the love and good news of Jesus Christ: so several prayer initiatives have been carried out, many people have developed prayer-walking habits, reaching out to their neighbourhoods and praying blessings on schools, businesses and communities. Cards have been written and distributed, gifts handed out, services (shopping, cleaning, trips to the GP) have been organised and many conversations with neighbours, friends, relations, and colleagues have all been shared as a testimony to God's goodness and a way of staying accountable one to another.

Worship & Gathering

Along with all the other businesses, organisations, clubs & charities, we have had to significantly adapt the way that we have functioned as a church. As the national lockdown was announced in March, we resorted to recording audio messages, including daily devotionals for a season, prepared and recorded by different people. Sunday celebrations moved online using a 'podcast' format, with pre-recorded music, readings, testimonies & sermons. It was encouraging to see people accessing those from beyond our immediate church family, and some even who do not as yet profess to follow Jesus.

As the lockdown eased, the podcast format continued, but some groups chose to meet outside: the Family Life Group in particular enjoyed some fun & uplifting, socially-distanced gatherings in Wyndham Park which greatly helped a sense of belonging and togetherness, particularly for those that had only recently joined the life of the church.

We then trialled a period of gathering with COVID restrictions in the church building, with others attending on Zoom and Youtube. This continued to help face-to-face interaction. We even held a 'hybrid-AGM' with some in the building & others on Zoom: it was a real testimony to the spirit of adaptability & experimentation that has been present during the Covid pandemic, but brought its own challenges! Then as case numbers in particular with hospitalisations & deaths on the rise, the church continued to meet primarily on Zoom, with when & where permitted 1-to-1 conversations & exercise taking place. Huge thanks must go to the Chris Dove and the team for their willingness to adapt and support the church from a technical perspective. Thanks to Josh John for all his help on the website and other who have volunteered in different capacities.

For all of us, this year has come with significant mental health challenges, bereavements, a loss of old habits & in particular the ability to physically greet and hug. And yet, it has been a year when many have also experienced spiritual growth, found new ways of connecting with others, and discovered a stronger sense of community, both in the church and in their local area. The worship life has continued albeit in different formats, either on Zoom or with music provided by groups being recorded in the church building or using the Ising worship applications. The 'Let's Sing' initiative has also been a welcome opportunity to spend some time connecting with God and each other through music. We would like to thank Ken Dyer and the musicians who have served in different ways, and adapted to difficult situations.

The prayer life of the church has had also adapt & evolve with patterns of the past not being able to be followed through. However, there have been significant prayer initiatives (24hr prayer days, prayer stations in the building, weekly lunchtime prayers, daily prayers through Lent, etc...), online prayer breakfasts, etc.. Prayer continues to be at the centre of our life with God and the breath that sustains our relationship with Him.

The Prophetic group has also continued, albeit online, with a desire to grow in our ability to listen to God, to train up as many as possible in this area, and to continue to seek God's guidance for the life of the church; we are grateful to Malcolm & Jenny Hewitson, & Moira Palmer for their help in this area.

Children & Young People

Along with the momentous changes in education, our children & youth outreach has been significantly impacted by the pandemic. Several activities, such as Parents & Toddlers, Sunday groups, etc.. have had to be placed on hold. Nonetheless, we are extremely grateful to our dedicated team of children & youth leaders who have responded by handing out packs to our children, facilitated meetings outside, on Zoom or in the building under COVID-restrictions when appropriate. More than anything, the regular text messages, whatsapp groups, zoom and occasional 1-on-1 walks have all been instrumental in maintaining contact with our children & young people. It has also been exciting to see new initiatives begin, such as the Muddy Church-inspired 'Wondering & Wandering' initiatives in Dysart Park providing new ways of connecting with God in the wonder of nature, and opportunities to grow spiritually, especially for those who do not yet have a relationship with God. A youth-centred Training 4 Trainers disciple-making program has also been initiated on Sunday mornings, attended faithfully by a core group of young people.

We have also began conversations and planning with a view to helping recruit additional ministry support in this vital area of church life. But the GBC leadership would like to show all their gratitude & thanks to Karen Marlor, Abimbola Durodola, those who have given up of their time, energy, amidst challenging circumstances, to pour into the lives of our children & young people. A special commendation goes out to parents and carers who have been balancing work, home-schooling while seeking to grow and develop faith in a family context.

Pastoral Care

During the course of the pandemic, it was been heartening to see how many people have responded to the needs around us: from 'adopting' friends & family, choosing to regularly support by phone those who are the most in need, from transitioning Lifegroups to online encounters, it has been incredible to witness the motivation, creativity & perseverance of lifegroup leaders, of the pastoral team, and individual church members to ensure that none are left behind and that we grow in our love for each other, as Jesus has instructed us. We haven't always got it right, but it hasn't been due to a lack of intention or motivation. Thanks to those who have visited, provided meals for new families, those moving or struggling, all the cards, etc.. that have been handed out. Thank-you to Peter & Gae Ellis for their faithful administration of the effective & inspirational whatsapp Prayer Chain that has been a crucial link during this year.

Sadly during the year, we have lost three dear members: Margaret Bend, Barbara Perkins, & Marcus Pettman. The COVID restrictions have made it difficult for their family members & friends to grieve, but we were able nonetheless to give thanks for their lives and their service, and continue to lift up and to honour those who are left behind. Many of us will also have experienced bereavement and loss, and so our Remembrance service was particularly poignant in this challenging context.

Lifegroups have continued in various forms (some by telephone, some by occasional 1-on-1 visits, some on Whatsapp or Zoom), and we are grateful to all the leaders and co-leaders for their help & creativity. These groups provide that 'first-line' for pastoral support, and also for mission and have been a vital life-line when wider gatherings have been challenging.

Grantham & Surrounding Area Community involvement

With the pandemic unfolding, much of our community involvement evolved significantly. One highlight of the year was the birth of the Renew Wellbeing Café. Louise Lamb had has this on her heart for a number of years, so it was encouraging to see this come to fruition with a

dedicated team of people serving those who are struggling with their mental health. They have been restricted by covid regulations but have already provided significant relief and help to several people; we look forward to seeing this work grow, though of course mourn the need for such an organisation!

Another highlight of the year has been to see how the Grantham Poverty Concern (The Passage) have adapted to serve the ever-increasing needs of the community. Moving to a weekly food parcel distribution model, they moved from reaching out to 27 people in need to week 1, now supporting in excess of 35 families and over 60 children. 250 food parcels are being distributed, with over 8650 food parcels given out since the beginning of the pandemic. The GPC leadership via Chris Thomas and volunteers and Grantham Baptist Church leaders wish to place on record our thanks and gratitude to all those within GBC who have supported this initiative through prayer, support and the use of GBC building as a central hub. Special support particularly over Christmas (through the meal and Christmas message leaflets) as well as special gifts over Mothering Sunday and Easter has meant that the people receiving the food parcels have also had an opportunity to receive God's love and the good news of Jesus shared in word and action. We have been privileged to see incredible demonstrations of God's generosity and answers to prayer, as well as building links with others in the community. We pray this work continues, though the long-term desire is to see the need disappear!

The church, through its members, has also been active in supporting other community groups, such as the GRACE initiative, operating via a Facegroup community out of the St John the Evangelist building, that reaches thousands of individuals in Grantham and the Grantham Foodbank initiative. Both of these have made significant contributions to the wellbeing of thousands of individuals and families in our town and surrounding villages.

Our connection with other churches in area has been tested and challenged due to the covid circumstances. Nonetheless, several key initiatives were developed and maintained, such as twice-a-week ministers' prayer gatherings held for several months, and Churches Together services that were recorded and shared over Christmas & Easter. We remain committed to Churches Together in Grantham and to seeing God's Kingdom grow across our town & in surrounding villages. David Judkins continued to meet online with several ministers from the East Midlands Baptist Association (EMBA) cluster on a monthly basis.

Oversight - In his capacity as team leader, David has continued to oversee the continuing development of the church family known as Grantham Baptist Church including growing and shaping the vision, and associated activities. Over the last year the emphasis has been on

building families and building church. The vision can be summarised as “Making Disciples... Transforming Lives...Changing the Spiritual Temperature of the Area”. Mr Ken Matthews reduced his hours serving on the team in September, and stepped down altogether from church leadership in December 2020. We would like to place on record our appreciation and thanks for Ken’s heart, service and ministry, and both Ken & Sue continue to serve the church in different contexts (young people, pastoral care), while investing in the Life Bridging Works charity. Ken has also seized this opportunity to serve other churches in discipleship, growth & development, mentoring, and investing in groups that make disciples who will make other disciples. Ian Whittle joined the team as new trustee.

The Finance and treasury team have continued to serve in extremely difficult circumstances and we are grateful to God for all of those who have continued to give sacrificially in time and finances to the life of the church, and the many and varied ways in which God has been gracious and faithful in providing for needs. Thank-you especially to Abimbola Durodola and her team for their significant time investment and commitment to helping us steward God’s finances. We praise God that we have continued to meet our financial commitments (see attached). In particular, we are grateful to God for His guidance and provision in the selling of our manse, and we look forward to guidance as we seek to purchase another property over the coming months.

The year’s financial statement is posted below.

On the administration front, Louise Lamb transitioned from her role as Office Administrator to focus on her studies, and Chris Thomas was recruited in this role to replace her. We are grateful to Louise for her faithful & effective service in this area, and give thanks to Angela Sanders and others who help in volunteering in this area that is vital to the effective functioning of the church, particularly in distributing CDs, letters & correspondence to those who do not have access to the technical tools that the majority use.

Training - Louise Lamb is continuing in her second year at Moorlands (Applied Theology) and, is continuing her service in the life of the church on the pastoral team, heading up the Renew Wellbeing initiative, running a Sanctuary Mental Health course, and leading a Bible discovery group with a new believer

Aaron Thompson began studying at Moorlands in September 2020 (Applied Theology Degree). He is serving in the church, as a placement student with responsibility for overseeing pastoral care, and, as covid restrictions lift, helping to encourage and grow our work among seniors.

Chris Thomas, who, as well as being our Caretaker, took over as our new Office Administrator, completed a training module within the Urban Expression Crucible course.

Ken Dyer continued his training with the Catalyst network training forum in Milton Keynes which is validated by Moorlands Bible College.

Overseas Mission Links - The church has continued to grow its links with other Christian organisations that serve overseas such as, Wycliffe Bible Translation (through the sponsoring of Mary Pearce), serving the Churches in Moldova (through sponsoring Mark McCormick and in particular their Winter Food Distribution & Good news sharing program). We have also began an exciting new partnership via BMS Worldmission with Benjamin Francis in India, supporting significant church-planting movements and food distribution, medical help & relief to those on the margins of society. Due to travel restrictions, we have been unable to put in place short-term visits & missions, but hope that may continue as things open up.

Safeguarding – the church continues its commitment to a robust safeguarding policy applied to all areas of church life and especially protecting children’s work and vulnerable adults. Any incidents or concerns that have arisen, headed with support from Chris Edwards, and Annice Whittle.

The Future - As team leader, I want to say a HUGE thank you to the members of GBC for your on-going support and involvement in the life of the church and stepping up to the challenge of BEING and MAKING disciples through a global pandemic. There are too many to name here, but your devotion to Christ and the church family, and making Him known has been an inspiration. Thank-you for your patience and support when things go wrong and we grow through experimentation! Thank-you for positive & constructive feedback and much grace. I would also like to show huge appreciation to the other members of the Deacons and Elders, and our administrative support for their hard and selfless work on behalf of our church family.

We look forward to all that God has in store for us over the coming year, particularly with regards to the advancement of the Christian faith in making new disciples, baptisms, beginning new Bible Discovery groups. We believe the Holy Spirit can lead us in new ways and pour out his empowering gifts on us all. We pray that the Lord may also lead us through wisdom & guidance in seeing new ministry support in the area of supervising our Children & Young people’s work and new areas of reaching out into our community, as well as raising up new opportunities for service and leadership within the life of the church through mentoring and equipping.

GRANTHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

Wharf Road, Grantham NG31 6BA

Registered Charity No. 1133324

Income and Expenditure

01/01/2020 - 31/12/2020

	2020 Budget £	2020 Actual £	difference £	
Income				
Offerings (weekly & monthly)	82,184	77,955	4,229	
Donations and other income	0	25,308	(25,308)	Includes £6.9k donation for DJ, a legacy gift of £11k from the estate of Steve De Visme, donation of £3.5k from within the fellowship and a refund of an overcharge on pensions of £3.6k
Income tax recovered on gifts	15,000	10,684	4,316	
Contributions for use of premises	2,400	1,904	496	Non use of premises due to lockdown
Transfers (from Dep.a/c)	25,000	10,000	15,000	No requirement for additional transfer in Q3 or Q4
Total Income	<u>124,584</u>	<u>125,851</u>		
Expenditure				
Ministry	62,884	75,184	(12,300)	Increase cost due to housing for DJ
Mission	20,800	16,906	3,894	Payment to Ashleigh Gibs not made
Maintenance	29,100	13,282	15,818	Reduced costs due to pandemic
Administration	11,800	10,081	1,719	
Transfers (to Dep. a/c)	0	1,000		
Donations to other causes	0	6,870		Payment of housing gift to DJ
Total expenditure	<u>124,584</u>	<u>123,323</u>		
Surplus/(deficit) income over expenditure		<u><u>2,528</u></u>		
Balances at Bank as at 31/12/2020				
Current Account		7,839		
Savings Accounts		38,001		
Total funds		<u><u>45,840</u></u>		

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Grantham Baptist Church

Registered Charity no: 1133324

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Grantham Baptist Church for the year ended 31st December 2020.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Name: Mrs Nicola L Whittaker

Date: 7th July 2021

