

CHARITY COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT CONNECTED LIFE CHURCH 2022

This was a blessed year for the church. At the beginning of 2022 the church was known as George Road Baptist Church, but in May 2022 we celebrated George Road Baptist Church being joined by Emmaus Church under the same charity number but with the new name of Connected Life Church. The Vision statement of the church makes clear the intention to be a multicultural, multi-congregation church which recognises, embraces, and celebrates racial, cultural, gender, and other forms of diversity represented in the community and the church. There is an English language worship service on Sunday morning and a Romanian language worship service on Sunday evening.

The proposal to join was brought to the two churches for approval at the March Church Members Business meetings. There was unanimous agreement, and the new name of Connected Life Church was adopted.

The church now has a Senior Pastor, an Assistant Pastor, and a Congregational Pastor with special responsibility for the Romanian congregation. Trustees for Connected Life Church have been drawn from the George Road and Emmaus fellowships. The pastors bring spiritual oversight, with support from the trustees, but all members are ministers in the church, and we aim for everybody to work together to build one another up in love.

In May we had a Celebration Day for Connected Life Church which consisted of a morning and an afternoon gathering for worship, with a shared lunch in between. The services included recorded messages of encouragement and praise to God from friends of the church who had given support and encouragement during the planning process. We also had the pleasure of visiting guests from the Romania-America Mission who have been friends of the church for several years.

The packed church for the celebration services was pleasing evidence of a return to in-person events that had been interrupted by the pandemic, although we continued to supply Zoom access to those who could not attend services and meetings in person.

We were pleased this year to be able to welcome guest preachers and speakers to the worship services. This included a visit from Viorel Luga of the Baptist Union/Association of Romania, who spoke at several churches throughout England. He brought encouragement to both the morning and evening congregations.

The parents and toddlers' group continued, as did the youth work and crèche. Care groups and prayer meetings continued as a mixture of in-person and on Zoom. Erdington Food bank, operating from the church premises, and supported by church members, continued to serve many people from the community, and the church rooms were again made available for hire by the local community. An Eritrean church fellowship meets at our premises for a weekly worship service.

As a church we have continued to support the Erdington Street Pastors team which meets regularly for prayer and to walk the High Street during the day, offering support to people and a listening ear.

We were saddened by the deaths of some much-loved church members this year, but are thankful that they are with the Lord, having completed the work he gave them to do. We also said goodbye to three couples who have relocated to local churches closer to their homes. We finished the year with 188 members in Connected Life Church.

When Ukraine was invaded in the early part of the year our Romanian and Moldovan members were deeply affected on a personal level. The church has responded with prayer and aid to local churches and workers known to us.

In May we had the privilege of hosting the Romanian Consulate for several days. This allowed hundreds of local Romanians easy access to Romanian Consulate facilities for such things as visa processing. This local provision was so successful that the Consulate would like to repeat it next year.

In August we hosted a youth ministry from Scotland known as FireStarters. Their enthusiasm and liveliness were a joy to behold. Their aim is to work in partnership with local churches to provide an environment where young people can be inspired to follow Jesus wholeheartedly. They spent a week with local churches here in Erdington, meeting with local people and also with people attending the Commonwealth Games which came to Birmingham this year. The young people experienced a deeply meaningful time of sharing their faith and their lives together.

We ended the year with Carol Services in English and Romanian giving thanks for the gift of God Himself. Our pastor's Christmas message to us was that God is both With Us and For Us, for Jesus shared fully in all our human experience of temptation, except that he never sinned. We can therefore draw near to him, to receive mercy and grace to help every day of our lives.

CONNECTED LIFE CHURCH FINANCIAL STATEMENT
1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

<u>General Account</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Receipts	£	£
Weekly Offering	79,748 *	77,434 *
Other Income (inc donations)	9,117	7,807
Gift Aid	13,082	13,744
Bank Interest for HEBA account	165	-
Transfer From Emmaus	110,461	-
Total	212,573	98,984
Payments		
Ministry	54,150	49,148
Church Equipment	166	500
Upkeep of Church Premises	12,000	12,877
Administration	3,790	11,147 **
Missionary Giving	3,196	6,670
Youth Work	604	287
Other Expenditure	2,143	-
Total	76,049	80,629
Surplus	136,524	18,356

Bank Balance as at 1st January	82,532	64,176
Bank Balance as at 31st December	229,733 ***	82,532

*Excludes special project monies.

**Includes transfer between funds.

***Includes HEBA Account/monies.

Special Project Funds

Bank Balance as at 31st December 2022	32,447	32,447
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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF CONNECTED LIFE CHURCH (Reg charity number 1139836.)

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ending 31st December 2022, which have been set before me.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- ☒ examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- ☒ to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- ☒ to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- ☒ to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- ☒ to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Paul Allen
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Date: 12 September 2023