

Christchurch

Baptist

...BECAUSE PEOPLE MATTER TO GOD

**Trustees'
Annual Report and
Accounts 2024**

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Statutory Information

Registered Address

20 Tewin Road
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL7 1BW

Website: www.christchurchwgc.org.uk

Charity Trustees

Andrew Hemmens – Senior Pastor
Simon Cragg – Pastor
Harold Snow – Treasurer (resigned April, 2024)
Ibi Olutoye – Treasurer
Paul Tosswill – Administration
Laura Black (resigned April, 2024)
Tim Ottewell
David Horton
Matthew Rowe
Nicola Redmond
Amy Hollis
Steve Hughes

Property Trustee

Christchurch Baptist Welwyn Garden City CIO (charity number 1154616) is the sole holding Trustee of the following two properties, following a Deed of Variation signed in August, 2017:

1. Christchurch Baptist Church, 110 Parkway, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6HN registered at the Land Registry under Title Number HD495407 (held on trust for the benefit of the Church on trusts set out in a deed of Declaration of Trust dated 10 November 1937);
2. 15 Gresley Close, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 7QA registered at the Land Registry under Title Number HD290414 (held on trust on the Holborn Trusts which are the Baptist Model Trusts referred to in the Baptist and Congregational Trusts Act 1951 (“the Manse Trusts”))

Previously, The Baptist Union Corporation Limited had been the sole Trustee of both properties.

Christchurch Baptist Welwyn Garden City CIO is, similarly, the sole holding Trustee of the church building at 20 Tewin Road, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 1BW registered at the Land Registry under Title Number HD200837.

Bank

CAF Bank
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill, West Malling
Kent ME19 4JQ

The Trustees present their Annual Report and financial statements for the year to 31st December, 2024

Charitable Objects

Christchurch Baptist Welwyn Garden City CIO ("Christchurch") is governed by a Constitution which states:

"The principal purpose of the Church is the advancement of the Christian faith through evangelism and discipleship. The Church may also advance education and carry out other charitable purposes in the United Kingdom and/or other parts of the world."

The church has two public buildings in Welwyn Garden City, one at 110 Parkway and one at 20 Tewin Road.

Organisational Structure

Members of the church are accepted into membership in accordance with the Constitution. Christchurch is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with Managing Trustees ("Trustees" or "Leadership Team") appointed by church members in accordance with the Constitution originally approved in 2013 and subsequently amended in October, 2022 and November, 2023.

Decision making is also in accordance with the Constitution. The Leadership Team are empowered to make decisions on how the church is run; however, certain decisions can only be made by the membership of the church at a church meeting (as detailed in the Constitution). These may be matters brought to the church by the Leadership Team for discussion and, as appropriate, acceptance, or matters raised in a church meeting by members for further consideration by the Leadership Team.

Recruitment and Appointment of New Trustees

Appointment of Trustees, the Treasurer and the Administration Trustee are set out in the Constitution of Christchurch. The Pastors are automatically Trustees for the duration of their tenure. Other Trustees are appointed from the membership of the church for a period of up to three years, after which they may stand down or be re-elected. Recommendations for new/re-elected Trustees are brought to the church members' meeting by the existing Trustees. They are normally appointed at the AGM via secret ballot and must receive an 80% majority of the quorum then present.

Trustees Responsibilities

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare accounts which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of Christchurch and of its income and expenditure for the financial year. In doing so, the Trustees are required to:

- a) select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- b) make judgements and estimates which are reasonable and prudent;

- c) prepare the accounts on a going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that Christchurch will continue in operation;
- d) follow applicable accounting standards and the Charities SORP, disclosing and explaining any departures in the financial statements.

The Trustees are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees are also required to be aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and to take it into account in their decision-making on behalf of the church.

The Trustees confirm that the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and that they comply with the above requirements and the charity's governing document (the Constitution). They have considered carefully whether it remains reasonable to presume that Christchurch will continue in operation and their conclusion is that it will and that it is appropriate to prepare the accounts on a going concern basis.

Training of Trustees

All new Trustees are encouraged to read the Baptist Union documents on becoming a Trustee. Safeguarding training is also provided for Trustees.

Objectives and Activities

The church's activities seek to meet our principal purpose by sharing the love of Jesus in practical ways as well as providing ways of explaining our faith to others – all activities seek to show the love of Jesus and bring people into a closer relationship with Him. The church provides a variety of activities both to its membership and to the wider community.

The church structures its activities under five key headings – worship, outreach, relationships, discipleship and serving. This is reflected in the organisation of the Leadership Team with four Trustees taking responsibility for these five areas, in addition to others dealing with administration, property and finance.

Objectives 2024

For 2024 we identified three strategic priorities with the following objectives:

- Building the Body
 - Provide opportunities throughout the year for people to connect with others in the church e.g. through life groups, interest activities and larger events.
 - Encourage people to engage with the Bible - exploring the breadth of the Bible story through an overview and the depth of it through particular books.
 - Re-introduce four, Sunday evening Communion & Healing services, alternating with evenings of Worship & Prayer.

- Looking forward
 - To help Christchurch review who we are as a church and begin the process of thinking what God is calling us to be and do as we approach the 100th anniversary since Christchurch began.
 - Identify the big picture of what we are aiming for and some of the steps to get there.
 - Increase the diversity of the Christchurch membership and leadership.
 - To install Solar Panels at both our sites.
- Sharing Christ
 - Run an Alpha course and a Youth Alpha.
 - Explore new ways of sharing the message of Christ via social media.

How did we do?

- Building the Body
 - **June connect** - For the first time, we suspended mid-week Life Groups during the whole of June so people could get to meet new people through interest groups and activities. There were 16 different groups, including table tennis, 'stitch & knit', country dancing, 5k runs, 'walk & talk', chess, bird walks, coffee & chat. More than 130 different people were involved in the groups and the strong consensus was to run them again. We also trialled 'Pastries & Prayer' on the last Sunday of December for both sites in the place of the Sunday service.
 - Linking with the verse for the year, we had a teaching series summarising the whole Bible story and we covered Paul's letter to the Romans throughout the autumn term.
 - Sunday evening Communion & Healing services were re-introduced in addition to evenings of Worship & Prayer.
- Looking forward
 - In church meetings people groups and individuals contributed to a review of the distinctive features of Christchurch and we started to look at what God is calling us to be and do as we approach our 100th anniversary.
 - There is still work to do sharpening our focus on the key elements of our Vision 100 as we enter 2025.
 - We are delighted that appointments to the Trustees, the staff team and the membership increased the diversity of Christchurch. We still have some way to go involving people from more diverse backgrounds in church membership.
 - We were able to install solar panels at the Peartree site but were denied planning permission for the main church roof at Parkway.
- Sharing Christ
 - A fruitful Alpha & Youth Alpha course ran and a need for a further Alpha in January 2025 was identified.
 - We held a community day at the Parkway site, with approximately 300 guests coming through in the 3 hours of the event, many of whom were locals within walking distance of the church. The mayor, local councillors and the new MP were able to attend.

- We also welcomed primary school children from two different schools to explore the Easter story in our Easter Escape rooms!
- The Central Baptist Association awarded a three-year grant so that Mark Moberly could increase his role as a Prison Chaplain from January 2025.
- There is still work to be done in looking at our use of social media to share the message of Christ.

Public benefit

The Leadership Team has given consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and in particular to the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. They have ensured the church provides a variety of activities both to its membership and to the local community. The aim is to show the love of Jesus Christ in both word and deed and to bring people into a closer relationship with Him as living Lord through worship, prayer, teaching, pastoral care, mission and social outreach work.

As part of our desire to ensure that our activities are accessible to all, any charges are kept to a nominal level and, where fees are charged to cover the costs of events, courses or trips, bursaries are made available for those who would otherwise be unable to participate.

Summary Review of the Year

'Greater connection' would be a good phrase to sum up 2024 for Christchurch.

Through various initiatives we have seen regulars make greater connection with others through different initiatives such as the pop-up Life Group at the start of the year, the June Connect activities and the different opportunities to meet informally such as the coffee, croissants and prayer gatherings.

Our verse for the year was:

*Your Word is a lamp for my feet,
A light for my path.*
Psalm 119:105, NIV-UK

As a church, we gained greater connection with the big story of the Bible through our sermon series and also some of the theological depths contained within Paul's letter to the Romans.

Our connection with the local community was also refreshed, especially with the September Community Day at our Parkway site.

Visits from some of our mission partners provided longer time to connect fully with those we support and for whom we pray overseas.

And a significant number of new members indicated a sense of greater connection as they asked to become church members. Many of these have been around Christchurch for a few years.

Reading this annual report may well leave you breathless at times. Although many of the contributors to the different ministries of Christchurch indicate when teams need refreshing with new volunteers, it does not mask the fact that we are a church where so many people *do* serve God willingly and wholeheartedly, often in more than one ministry area. We are so

grateful for this; Christchurch wouldn't be the church it is without the ministry of those who call it home.

So read on, give thanks to God, pray for each area of the church's life and be open to ways you might get involved and deepen your own connection with God and with others.

Review of Ministries

Worship

Worship is central to everything we do at Christchurch, both in our pattern of Sunday worship and in the way we live the rest of our lives when we are not in a church building!

Sunday gatherings aim to be accessible for both visitors and regular worshippers. We seek to create an environment where people can explore what it means to know God personally and to draw more closely to Him.

The online streaming of services has meant that those who have been too poorly or unable to attend a Sunday gathering onsite can do so online. We have also been able to reach people who have wanted to explore the worship style of Christchurch before visiting us personally.

We are grateful to have several different bands that play at each site, with a predominantly contemporary style of sung worship. We continue to offer a number of all age services in support of the youth and children's teams, additional communion services with the opportunity to receive prayer for healing and other evenings of Worship & Prayer.

We share in communion together on the first Sunday of each month. We also have a monthly 'Church Family News' where we hear news of anniversaries, birthdays, special achievements – and have invited people to send in videos or photos to share such things across the whole church.

The worship 'core' team brought all those involved in sung worship together for a fruitful training afternoon in the autumn and continue to uphold the values by which we operate and encourage one another towards good practice in leading the congregations in worship.

Worship Bands volunteer hours: **1,040**
AV volunteer hours: **416**

Prayer Ministry

Prayer continues to be a key part of our church life. We have a team, comprising 20 individuals, who offer prayer to the Church Family at both sites after every service. In addition, the team offers prayer in response to email and pastoral requests. We were blessed to be able to offer this ministry to a steady flow of people at every service.

Prayer Ministry volunteer hours: **200**

BSL

Our BSL ministry is led by a committed BSL user and member of the church. At the end of 2024 we had nine regular Deaf attendees. During the year one attendee, who was also an asylum seeker, left as they were rehoused out of the area. BSL ministry now impacts Children's Work and, since September, also Youth Work. The morning service at Peartree is usually accessible for BSL users. In addition to our main signer, this ministry benefits from

the support of wider members of the church. Our Children and Families work embraces some Deaf awareness in Children's Work and a Deaf Awareness slot has been included within a Youth meeting. Our Welcome team at Peartree have learnt some basic signs for 'Good morning' and 'Welcome'. Our ministers and wider preaching team habitually send preparation notes for BSL interpreters and check for subtitles on film clips when used as part of a sermon. The tech team also routinely support BSL, ensuring there is appropriate lighting for interpreters, installing an extra camera and supporting in other ways to facilitate delivery of this ministry.

We ended 2024 with one hearing person (BSL level 6) providing interpreting for some Sunday morning services and also one of the newer Deaf attendees (a qualified BSL translator and interpreter) providing interpreting via speech to text technology for some services. It is wonderful to have Deaf BSL users increasingly involved in this ministry.

We continue to book some paid interpreters for weeks when, otherwise, there might be no interpreter available. A Christian lady from another church who has BSL skills started to help in Children's Work towards the end of the year to support the Deaf children in Children's groups on Sunday mornings.

A monthly BSL group continues to meet on the first Thursday of the month. Whilst this is a small group, it helps to support those who did the level one course (Sept 2022-April 2023) and would like to maintain their BSL skills and others who are interested in BSL. This group provides a safe place in which to practise these skills.

In July, a group of four from the church attended a Signs of God workshop at Gold Hill Baptist Church. Signs of God is a charity which aims to support and promote the use of BSL in Christian Settings.

BSL ministry continues to be a ministry in development. There are opportunities to develop greater Deaf Awareness within the congregations at Christchurch (with a Deaf Awareness training planned for 2025), provide BSL access to other church events (e.g. church meetings, men's/women's fellowships, start a BSL life group etc.) and increase the number of people who know some basic signing and who feel comfortable using this with Deaf attendees (including facilitating access to BSL training) etc. For our committed, hearing interpreter it involves attending further BSL classes, being connected to the local Deaf Community (via Deaf Club) and accessing Deaf Christian networks e.g. Enfield Sign Church and Signs of God organisation.

Volunteer hours for BSL: **290**

Prayer requests:

- For more people with BSL level 2 and above who would be willing to be involved in some level of interpreting e.g. maybe starting with interpreting a single song in a service, and/or who would be willing to use their BSL skills to make Deaf attendees feel welcome;
- For people with the commitment required to get to know those in the Deaf community and continue to further develop their BSL skills;
- For Deaf led opportunities to bless the church and beyond

Outreach

Whilst outreach covers most of what we do in terms of church activities, there are a few focused areas in which we help people take steps in their Christian journey. These events are mostly either targeted at those individuals outside the church or those on the fringes, but they are open to everyone and it is always a delight to engage people at different stages of their faith journey through discussion.

The Alpha Course

Alpha is a course centred around food and community, designed to help people explore Christianity while connecting with others. Each session begins with it a warm welcome and a shared meal (we enjoyed delicious puddings every week!), followed by a thought-provoking video on various aspects of the Christian faith. The evening concludes with open discussion. This year, we hosted a course at Christchurch Peartree and are running another at Parkway in January.

Our first course ran for 12 weeks in September-December 2024 with 7 guests attending, with a Day 'Away' at Life Church, Cuffley.

We had a brilliant hospitality team, who baked and served puddings/desserts and created the right atmosphere for guests in which to feel welcome.

Total volunteer hours for Alpha: **204**

Prayer Requests:

- For those who have participated in the course this year, pray that they may continue to grow in their faith and deepen their relationship with Christ;
- That the right individuals will step forward to lead a follow-up group after Alpha - people gifted in fostering community, active listening and guiding others in their spiritual journey;
- For our ongoing course at Parkway, asking for God's guidance and blessing.

Body & Soul Café

The Body & Soul Café is open between 11.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. at our Parkway site on Wednesdays and Thursdays during term time. We serve coffee, cake and "home cooked" meals; soup (during the winter), main course (including jacket potato and vegetarian options) and pudding.

We provide meals for about 30-40 people per day, mostly to senior citizens, though we welcome customers of any age and often serve parents/carers with the toddlers they care for. It is a real joy to see customers from all generations mixing together. Many of our customers live on their own and so Body & Soul provides a place for them meet up with their friends and share a meal together. A number of our customers or their partners have a physical disability or dementia and they find that Body & Soul is a welcoming and supportive place for them. The families of our more elderly customers are very grateful for the part Body & Soul plays in the lives of their loved ones and we have been privileged to be invited to the funerals of some of our dear customers during the year. Most of our customers are from the wider community (around 90%) and the rest are from within the church. A number of customers also attend Songs of Praise, Harvesters and Reach Out.

Body & Soul provides financial support to the Tumaini Children's Home near Jinja in Uganda, making donations totalling £5,000 during 2024. We also contributed £3,000 to general church funds in recognition of fuel used in cooking and heating.

During 2024, the Body & Soul team had a total of 33 volunteers comprising church members and friends of the church. By the end of the year, the team totalled 30 regular volunteers spread across three categories: the two Christchurch congregations and friends of the church. The "friends" category of volunteers is growing which provides us with an exciting opportunity to share our faith within the team as well as with our customers.

Around 90 volunteer hours per week (during term time) are spent preparing for and running our sessions. Menus are planned, food is bought and the grocery delivery received, cakes and soup are made, accounts are kept and, on Wednesdays and Thursdays, you will find the team preparing vegetables, cooking, taking orders, serving, washing up, setting up, tidying up etc. There are many different ways to serve and help at Body & Soul!

We are thankful to God for the resources we have that enable us to run this ministry and we are grateful for past team members and others in the church who step in when staffing levels are low due to members of the regular team being on holiday or unwell.

We would like to ask the church to pray that "Body & Soul" will be a place where God's love and life-changing power is present and clear to our customers and also to all within the volunteer team. We also ask you to join us in praying that the money we send to Tumaini blesses the staff and children there.

Total volunteer hours for Body and Soul: **3,510**

Prayer Requests:

- Thanks and praise to God for the resources available to us that allow us to run this crucial ministry;
- That Body & Soul will be a place where God's love and life-changing power is present and clear to our customers and also to all within the volunteer team;
- That the money raised for Tumaini blesses the staff and children there.

Christchurch Community Space ("CCS", formerly known as The Lounge)

Christchurch Community Space, CCS, (formerly The Lounge) is a drop-in that runs every Tuesday afternoon from 1.30 p.m. – 3 p.m. in the Peartree café area. The aim is to provide a space where members of the local community can meet up socially and come for informal support and advice with everyday medical, housing, household, parenting and relationship issues. It is also an access and information point for other services. As part of the ministry our Parish nurse holds 1:1 appointments when requested.

This year we consistently had the same group of regulars. Our regulars come every week and express their gratitude at having somewhere to meet together and to get support from the team. We also had a number of people who attended regularly for a few weeks and a few more who came once or twice. Over the year we have seen 32 different adults accompanied by 3 children and 1 Assistance Dog.

This year, as well as changing our name, we also set up a prayer area just inside the main church hall by the glass doors. The area is for the team to use for prayers before the session and is open to session users to pray by themselves or meet for prayer with a team member. One week we even had someone just walk in off the street and ask if there was somewhere to pray and we directed that individual to the prayer area.

In 2024, CCS was run by a team of 6 volunteers including our Parish Nurse. There is a committed team who work well together but it comprises only ladies and would very much benefit from at least one man as at least half of our users are men.

In 2024 the team worked from 1-3.30 p.m. once a week, 48 weeks of the year.

Total volunteer hours for Christchurch Community Space: **720**

Prayer requests:

- For more people to use the prayer space;
- For God to increase the number and variety of people who attend CCS;
- For our profile to be raised both within the church and in the community;
- For a male member of Christchurch to show interest in joining the team.

Overseas Mission

Christchurch continued to support overseas mission activities during 2024 through our established personal links with our mission partners. Our mission partners are:

- Abby Murphy – Latin Link, Ecuador
- Pastor Nicholas Ongamo – Tumaini Children's home, Uganda
- Paul and Ruth Turner – Latin Link, Peru
- Paul and Clare Woodington – MAF, Papua New Guinea and Australia
- Beni and Irma Xhako – Selah Worship Ministry, Albania

The Christchurch Overseas Mission Team consists of eight members of Christchurch who act as contact points for our mission partners. The team keeps in touch with our different mission partners, bringing needs and prayer requests to the wider church.

Abby Murphy was on home leave from Ecuador at the start of the year and it was good to have her around Christchurch for about a month. We also had brief visits from Paul Turner and Beni, Irma and Sibora Xhako during the year.

After Joy Ransom retired in 2023 it has taken a while to find a suitable mission partner through BMS in Asia but we are close to formalising a link with a couple of individuals working in Nepal.

Beni and Irma Xhako successfully ran a new residential worship school in Tirana, Albania from January to June 2024 and although the number of participants was lower than had been hoped for, there were good testimonies from those who attended. Please pray for the worship training school as it runs again from January to June 2025.

It has been a difficult year for Pastor Nicholas and the Tumaini Children's Home and School. There have been droughts and hence food shortages and very high prices for food which led to the school closing for the last part of the year. However, it will reopen in early 2025. They have managed to plant some crops on some land owned by the home, so please pray for a good harvest and that 2025 will be a better year for the children and those looking after them.

Paul and Clare Woodington continue to settle into their new home in Australia. Paul is developing flight management software for MAF to be deployed in different locations around the world, and Clare is involved with ministries at the local church and helping in the local library.

Total volunteer hours for Overseas Mission coordination: **48**

Prayer requests:

- For God's presence and leading at the worship training school in Albania as it runs again from January to June 2025;
- For a good harvest for those at Tumaini Children's Home and School and that 2025 will be a better year for the children and those looking after them;
- For the Woodingtons as they settle into their new home.

Money Matters

Money Matters continues to offer support to both those who attend Christchurch or are referred to it via Christchurch Community Space (see separate report above). It is specifically tailored to the needs of the individuals. There has been a steady number of clients seeking help as well as some who have required an extended period of support.

This ministry is run by one volunteer who organises the appointments to coincide with Christchurch Community Space from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., on Tuesday afternoons, although appointments have been arranged by mutual agreement outside of these times. The 'clients' have generally been single people but there are couples who have had support. This support has been varied in its nature and complexity. The ministry also benefits from the prayer support of the Christchurch Community Space leaders and their timely advice.

The ministry is always under review and any future additions to the volunteer team will be made in consultation with the ministers and dependent on the needs of the ministry and its future direction.

Total volunteer hours for Money Matters: **55**

Prayer Requests:

- That God continues to be glorified and His wisdom is demonstrated in all that is said and done.
- Pray for wisdom in any new direction that He desires the ministry to grow or people to reach.
- That the ministry can be accessed by all who need it and that there is no sense of stigmatising if they do.

Reloved

This ministry continued through 2024 at Parkway Crawlers. Rails of clothes for children aged from 9 months up to 5 years are taken into the group twice a term. I have recently added books, small puzzles and card games have also been introduced as part of the offering and have proved popular. Donations of clothing, books and puzzles from the mums attending the group have also been received and the diversity of items accepted and given is under constant review.

All donations are carefully sorted and redistributed to local charities if they are not considered suitable for Reloved. Clothing and other items continue to be stored and made available at our Peartree site if needs arise within the church or through associated ministries. We also store a small selection of smaller baby clothes and blankets for distribution as and when needed.

Just before Christmas the ministry was introduced at Peartree Tots. It proved very popular so this will continue in 2025.

Total volunteer hours for Reloved: **36**

Prayer Requests:

- For God's guidance in discerning how and in what direction the ministry might expand;
- For a small increase in committed volunteers;
- To build relationships with the people who attend the groups we serve.

Relationships

The building of effective relationships is fundamental to Christchurch's fellowship. We aim to enjoy functional, loving relationships within the community of worshippers as well as with the wider community with which we interact through our various ministries and activities.

Attendance at Sunday services at Peartree has varied between 195 (this was at a Baptism service in October) and 80, excluding children. At Parkway the congregation on a Sunday has ranged from 51 to 104 adults across the year.

We continue to provide a livestream of our services from our Peartree site each week. The total number of subscribers to the YouTube channel now numbers 340, an increase of 51 on the figure from 2023. Each Sunday service can receive anything between 70 and 186 views online, with some of these viewers joining live whilst the service is being streamed, and others accessing the video at a later opportunity.

At the end of 2024 our Membership totalled 196, compared with 179 from the end of 2023. The total number of associates at the end of 2024 was 17, an increase of 1 from 2023.

This year we held six baptisms, three dedications, one marriage and one funeral/thanksgiving service.

Welcome & Hospitality

We have a wonderful group of dedicated volunteers who act as the Welcome Teams at Peartree (14 adults and 4 children) and Parkway (17 adults) each Sunday morning. Welcome teams are typically made up of two to three adults at Peartree (with occasional extra help from our younger volunteers), and three adults at Parkway, each giving around one hour, weekly.

We are grateful to the additional volunteers who joined the Peartree Welcome Team towards the end of 2024. They will help us to ensure that there is a weekly team of at least three adults every Sunday at Peartree, as we look ahead to 2025.

Total volunteer hours for Welcome: **260**

Hospitality teams, on Sundays, organise and clear up the self-service coffee points at both sites. There are 10 volunteers at Peartree and seven at Parkway. They operate in teams of two, each person providing 1.5 hours of volunteer time weekly.

Total volunteer hours for Hospitality: **312**

Prayer Requests for Welcome & Hospitality:

- More volunteers are still needed to help with hospitality at Parkway;
- Thanks for the teams of committed team members;
- That the nature of our welcome and hospitality would be filled with God's spirit and light, encouraging people to return and grow in God's grace.

Prayer Chain

The prayer chain is a way of rapidly communicating by email, to those who have asked to receive such emails, prayer requests of particular interest to Christchurch. Prayer requests may be submitted by email, phone or word of mouth and are usually transmitted within a couple of hours. During 2024, 120 prayer requests went out.

This ministry serves both those who make requests, those who pray, and those who are prayed for – a countless number of people, most of whom are part of the wider community. There are 165 subscribers (165 email addresses, many of which serve a couple rather than an individual), most of whom are currently at Christchurch and some of whom are previous members. On average, each prayer request is opened by about 70% of the recipients.

Three volunteers ran the prayer chain in 2024.

Total volunteer hours for Prayer Chain: **30**

Prayer Requests:

- For subscribers to be faithful in praying about the requests that we receive.

- For those who would like to be part of this prayer movement to sign up to receive emails from the Prayer Chain.
- For those of the wider community who know they are being prayed for to be drawn closer to Christ.

Meals 4 Mums

This is a simple, but much valued, ministry that primarily seeks to offer new Mums and families within Christchurch support for two weeks following the birth of a new child. Volunteers provide home-cooked meals and deliver them, ready-to-eat to the doorsteps of recipients. The value of this special blessing can only be truly understood once you have been on the receiving end, although the volunteers have also shared the immense joy and encouragement they receive from the families. This ministry has also had the privilege of supporting families that felt blessed by this provision when a health issue impacted their family dynamics.

Over 2024, 13 volunteers provided meals over the year.

Total volunteer hours for Meals for Mums: **39**

Prayer Requests:

- For our Father God's provision in every area of this ministry, for the expectant Mums and their families, for the volunteers and their families, for the food and lands that it comes from;
- For the love of our good Lord Jesus to be seen through this ministry and those involved, for it not to be a burden but blessings, given and received;
- For our Father God's will to be done and this ministry to go forward on the path He has prepared for it.

Discipleship & Serving

Life Groups

Life Groups are a core part of our goal to grow as disciples of Christ. Our verse for the year, "Your word is a lamp to our feet" felt particularly relevant as the groups met to study, pray and reflect on the word of God.

Life groups meet regularly in homes, church buildings and online. The groups offer a chance to develop relationships, study the bible, encourage each other, pray and grow in faith. There is time for the groups to dig deeper into themes from Sunday sermons and to support each other in understanding scripture and faith, whilst also having time to celebrate the joys and trials that we experience as we do life together.

Christchurch has a range of established Life Groups which have continued this year. We saw one online life group come to an end, but our hope and efforts have been to establish some new Life Groups to welcome new members. We give thanks for the faithful service of leaders and hosts who are standing down and pray for their next season.

At the start of the year, we had a 'Pop Up' Life Group which followed our sermon series and a number of the people who attended this group shared an interest in joining a permanent group. In the autumn, we gathered interest for new groups and sought leaders and, towards the end of the year, we were able to form three weekly life groups and one that gathers monthly in person. This brings us to 14 groups, each different in size and shape, meeting at different times and in different places. Praise God!

Total volunteer hours for Life Groups: **1,631**

Prayer Requests:

- Gratitude for the new groups which have formed and those who have come forward to lead these groups. We pray that they can establish good relationships and grow together as they study, pray and travel through life together;
- For all of our group members to grow in their faith and dependence on God, and to continue to work out the purposes and plans that God has for each of us;
- For new leaders to emerge as some existing leaders come to an end of their serving in their current groups. We pray for God's guidance as we continue to seek to find groups that fit the needs of all in our congregation.

Mentoring

The Christian mentoring programme within Christchurch continued through the year and a further six people were mentored bringing the total mentored since the scheme started to 30. The programme is based on a one-one relationship between the mentor and mentee. It is a dynamic, intentional, voluntary relationship of trust which seeks to enable the grace of God in the mentee's life and develop their potential in the service of God's kingdom purposes. Discussions typically, over a period of several months, cover a broad range of issues with the mentor helping to provide perspective, wisdom, encouragement, support, challenge, accountability and prayer to the mentee whilst on their journey.

Total volunteer hours for Mentoring: **120**

Prayer requests for Mentoring:

- For individuals within the fellowship to respond to the opportunity to be mentored in their walk with God;
- For God to use the mentors in a way that enables the development of a practical and applied faith in the life of their mentees;
- That Christchurch will see the fruit in the lives of mentees as they uncover ways in which to maximise their potential in the service of God's kingdom purposes.

Men's Breakfast

Men are invited, monthly, to attend a breakfast together at our Parkway site with a theme or study series for discussion.

Attendance is consistently above 15 and more than 20 have gathered on several occasions. A speaker is invited to present on a topic of interest to men following which smaller group discussion takes place.

Mostly, we provide our own speakers from within the Christchurch fellowship, although our first talk in 2024 was from Ian Matthews of New Zion Fellowship. This was followed by an

update on the missionaries we support as a church. Subsequently, we benefitted from a talk by one of these missionaries. In addition, we heard from an Egyptian Christian and, on another occasion, enjoyed a full report on our Youth.

Time is given to prayer and discussion, as relevant. During the second half of the year we followed a book-based course, "*Wellbeing*" by Dave Smith. This provided insights into how Christians can make the best out of life for themselves and those around them, using the tough experiences of Elijah as examples.

We continue to invite men who are associated with the Church but not full members.

Total volunteer hours for Men's Breakfast: **120**

Prayer requests for Men's Breakfast:

- That we live out that which we learned though the *Wellbeing* series, which continues in 2025;
- That the ministry touches the lives of men who are not involved elsewhere;
- That attendance reflects the continued growth of Christchurch.

Sistersoul

Sistersoul is the women's ministry in Christchurch. It exists to encourage women (from our fellowship, as well as friends and others from our wider community), in all areas of life: their faith, family, relationships, workplaces and, in all such areas, to give them the courage to share what they know of Jesus in their lives with others. The events serve as "time out" from the hustle of life to invest in personal relationships with God and with friends. Fun is an important part of everything we do.

In 2024, we enjoyed two breakfasts, two craft events (one at Easter and one at Christmas) and a ministry day in November. In addition, we started an online group as part of the June Connect series, meeting for six weeks to encourage one another.

We had a return visit by a speaker from a local Elim Church to bless us with God's word. This was excellent, the speaker bringing great words for those gathered.

Over 60 ladies attended each event. The breakfasts are always full and bustling. The craft events were enjoyed by all, hence, we went for two!

Currently, the ministry has a team of seven volunteers. All the team have busy lives and finding time to ensure that the ministry continues to flourish is a challenge. Two of the team are stepping down this season. There is a ministry day booked for May with Amy Summerfield.

Total volunteer hours for Sistersoul: **180**

Prayer Requests:

- For some new volunteers to join the team, recognising the challenges of a busy family and work lives when trying to lead this much needed ministry;
- For the capacity of the whole team in making things happen to allow Sistersoul to flourish;

- For the ministry day in May 2025 with Amy Summerfield.

Other Ministries & Activities

A large number of activities are run for the benefit of the local community by volunteers in the church as we seek to share God's love.

Seniors' Ministries

- **Harvesters**, our fortnightly, tea-time and activity fellowship;
- **Reach Out**, our twice-weekly, chair-based exercise classes;
- **iPicture This**, our monthly art appreciation workshop.

A high percentage of senior citizens continued to attend more than one activity. Our core ministries for senior citizens remain self-financing through the activity fees paid by participants. No budget was allocated from our wider church funds. The financial management required to support the ministries was provided by one volunteer who contributed 80 volunteer hours over the year. Activities included pastoral and prayer support for the Seniors' community, which, on occasions, extended to family members along with some practical support on an *ad hoc* basis. We also endeavoured to maintain contact with those who were no longer able to attend activities and, where appropriate, the families of those who had become housebound or had moved into residential care.

Harvesters is a group that meets at Parkway on the 2nd and 4th Monday each month between 2.30pm – 4.00pm, term time only. The afternoon begins with welcoming followed by a guest speaker or activity. From 3.15 p.m. refreshments are served. Twice a year, in December and July, we have a party with a full afternoon tea.

At the start of 2024 we had 44 regular attendees on the register and the group represented a mixture of church attendees and those with no affiliation to a local church. Sadly, we have lost a couple of regulars who have either passed away or moved into residential care during the year.

The leader of this ministry has had to stand down at the end of 2024 following a change in personal circumstances and a new leader is actively being sought as we move into 2025. We are seeking God's leading in this.

A committed team of 15 volunteers has been in place throughout the year covering roles required whilst the ministry is running as well as others who bake cakes and other goodies for consumption. Another volunteer writes birthday cards for all those attending throughout the year.

Total volunteer hours for Harvesters: **880**

Prayer requests for Harvesters:

- For continued Divine protection and good health for all our senior folk and that they would experience a growing awareness of the love of the Lord for them collectively and individually;

- For wisdom and guidance as we take time to offer care and assistance to our seniors as, for many of them, life has become a daily struggle;
- For someone with a passion for seniors ministry to lead the Harvesters team going forward.

Our **Reach Out** ministry continues to be popular, providing its weekly, Strength, Flexibility and Mobility Exercise Classes at both the Parkway and Peartree sites. The class instruction was delivered by a qualified Later Life exercise instructor. A team of six Christchurch volunteers (plus three extras who served as back-up) welcomed and registered participants across both sites, assisting in the classes and hosting refreshments. The two classes served a community of 57, of whom two were from Christchurch and 56 were from the wider community. Up to 50 attended each week on average, across both sites.

We run a waiting list for both classes, both of which generally operate at capacity.

Fellowship over refreshments continued to be a key focus for those attending and an important opportunity for relationship building and pastoral care. Many class members, especially at Peartree, now arrive to connect with others before the class over a quick cup of tea or coffee.

The two leaders of our Reach Out ministry stepped down at the year end. Temporary leadership arrangements are in place. Permanent teams to run the classes are still being sought.

Total volunteer hours for Reach Out: **840**

Prayer Requests for Reach Out:

- For the continued health and well-being of all Reach Out attendees;
- For opportunities to share the Christian faith through actions as well as words and conversations;
- For the perseverance of class members as, over time, they face the growing challenges of ever increasing age;
- For a new team of ministry leaders to be established.

More broadly within our Seniors' community, we have continued to offer pastoral and practical care and prayer support. This was focussed on the following:

- Regular telephone calls;
- Doorstep visits;
- Emotional support to bereaved families and to those going into care. Eight members of our Seniors' community died during 2024 and three went into care. In 4 cases, bereaved families turned to Christchurch for the provision of funeral services.

We continued to access the Pastoral Gifts Fund that was established at the end of 2019 following a generous gift from a third-party benefactor. This fund covered the cost throughout the year of flowers delivered to the sick and to bereaved families, birthday cards and gifts delivered to relieve isolation etc.

iPicture This is an art discussion group. We meet once monthly on the second Friday from 10 a.m. until midday in the main church hall at Parkway. We are a social group that looks at art in a relaxed way. We look, chat, and share ideas. Through the sessions we get to know each other better and find new things to talk about prompted by the art we are looking at. Everyone is welcome and no knowledge of art is required. We are led by an Art Educator who is also a member of Christchurch.

The ministry serves the seniors community. We produce leaflets advertising the group and details are on the Christchurch website. We have a great mix of people attending. Some from Christchurch and other local churches but, also, an increasing number from the wider community.

We decided to move from the café area in Peartree to the main hall in Parkway in Spring 2024. This has given us more space and the screen and projector at Parkway give a clearer image of the artworks being discussed. We continue to grow in numbers with a regular attendance of between 20-25 people. We have been so blessed to have Catherine lead this group and for her love, knowledge and enthusiasm for art and her passion for sharing this with the Seniors' community.

Total volunteer hours for iPicture This: **258**

Prayer Requests for iPicture This:

- That we will continue to grow and that people will feel welcomed and comfortable to share their thoughts and opinions;
- Praise the Lord for our speaker and our volunteers;
- That we will take every opportunity to share our faith with this lovely group of people and that the spirit might inspire curiosity among those who do not have a faith.

Total Seniors' activities volunteer hours per annum: **2,058 hours** (including additional hours dedicated to pastoral matters, practical support, managing finances and banking etc.).

Songs of Praise

Songs of Praise takes place from 3 to 4 p.m. on the second Sunday of each month at the Parkway site. It is an opportunity to sing traditional hymns and songs familiar to the guests. The songs are chosen by them from a printed Song Book and there is an opportunity to say why they have selected a particular hymn. People sit in groups at tables, with tea and home-made cakes. Not many of those attending come to other Sunday services in Christchurch, though most have connections with other church activities (Harvesters, Body and Soul and Christchurch Community Space etc.). Several regulars are connected with other churches in the town. Everyone is welcome and we are keen to appeal to as wide an age range as possible, although current attendees are mostly older, remembering hymns from their younger days in school and Sunday School.

Since the ministry resumed after the pandemic in May 2022, numbers have fluctuated between 20 and 40 guests, with higher numbers for the annual Christmas Special. We are indebted to those who bake and provide the delicious selection of cakes together with the faithful regular volunteers who welcome, serve refreshments and chat with the attendees. The event would not happen without our rota of singers and regular keyboard player. Two of our singers have recently stood down and new singers willing to join the rota will be welcome.

At least six volunteers are involved in the music, the PA and AV on each occasion, with a further six handling the refreshments and welcoming – a total of 20 hours each month.

Total volunteer hours for Songs of Praise (over 11 months): **220**

Prayer Requests for Songs of Praise:

- For a wider reach across the town;
- For a freshness in approach over time.

Church Services at St. Andrew's Care Home

Church services at St. Andrew's Care Home (Great North Road, Welwyn Garden City) are provided by Christchurch at the request of the care home and are scheduled once a month. It is a simple 25-minute service of prayers and hymns with a very short talk. There is social engagement with the residents both before and after each service and staff tell us that this is important for the residents. On average each service in 2024 was attended by about 7 residents and 3 members of staff. We also sang carols at Christmas, with 21 residents and about 8 staff joining in.

During 2024 there were nine Friday services, plus carol singing. These events were supported by 18 volunteers taking turns from month to month to lead the short services in groups of around three.

More volunteers who would be prepared to lead or take part in the church service at 11 a.m. every fourth Friday of the month would be welcome, especially as two of our regular volunteers have stepped down at the end of 2024. In particular, musicians are needed – when there is a musician leading the service the residents and staff are drawn into the room.

Total volunteer hours for St. Andrew's Care Home: **82**

Prayer Requests for St. Andrew's Care Home:

- That the residents and staff at St. Andrew's will be blessed by this outreach, and be drawn nearer to Christ;
- For continuing good communication and rapport between Christchurch and St. Andrew's Care Home
- For more people to staff the rota of these church services, either as service leader or singer or musician.

Children and Families

It has been an exciting year for our Children and Families ministry at Christchurch. All that we do is underpinned by our core values of Fun – Friendship – Family Together – and Faith Building. Throughout the year we have continued to grow and develop our weekly and monthly events plus we held some special events.

Kids' Camp

One highlight included our first Kids' Camp where we had an overnight stay at the church for children in school years 4-6. Children had the opportunity to say "yes" to Jesus and they all did! During the weekend we had 16 children attend and they completed challenges, enjoyed getting messy, ate food, and explored our theme of Lost and Found through the story of the

Prodigal Son. The Kids' Camp was a huge success and we are incredibly grateful for the four volunteers who gave up their beds, sleep and weekend to host this amazing event.

Easter Escape Experience

In addition, this year, we held an Easter Escape Experience. The Easter Escape was an opportunity for children and families to walk through the events of Holy Week exploring what happened by journeying through eight stations from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday through a multi-sensory experience and the need to crack some codes so they could "escape" into the next room. We invited a local primary school to visit one day and then also opened up the Easter Escape to families within the church, when we also served take-away pizza. In total 138 people took part in our Easter Escape.

Sunday Mornings

We run two groups on a Sunday morning at both sites. Seedlings (for children aged 2 up to, and including, reception) and Saplings & Rooted (for children in school years 1-6). We kicked off the year by joining with others in the church for a combined teaching series and since then we have delved into other themes including Judges and Kings, Awesome Easter, and Stories that Jesus Told, to name but a few. Throughout the year we have also been focusing on prayer and giving children many opportunities to chat to God in different creative ways.

Over the year we saw a large number of children attending our Sunday morning groups. We have a fantastic, committed group of volunteers supporting this work at both sites. During the year, there have been a total of 37 volunteers for our Sunday morning children's team. Each week, we need four volunteers at Parkway and seven to eight volunteers at Peartree.

We have a need for additional team members at Parkway in our Saplings & Rooted team to assist and in our Seedlings group at Peartree, including those who could lead the session.

Total volunteer hours for Sunday mornings: **1,170**

Prayer Requests for Children and Families:

- For our children at Christchurch to know that they are loved by God in their daily lives.
- Give thanks to God for our amazing children's team, who serve our children and their families every week and that they would continue to encounter God's blessings as they faithfully serve.
- For our parents and carers, who are raising their children, that God would strengthen them and give them all that they need as they live out their faith.

Toddler Groups

During the year, we ran two baby and toddler groups during term time.

Our first group, **Parkway Crawlers**, meets on a Tuesday morning for children aged three and under, along with their carers. On average we have 34 children attending, predominantly from the community.

Over the year, the team reduced from four to two volunteers who supported the Children and Families Ministry Leader. On average, volunteers spend 2 hours per week depending on their role which includes buying and preparing snacks, setting up toys and activities, tidying up, leading story and song time, and chatting to adults.

At the end of 2024, the decision was made to pause this group due to team size.

Total volunteer hours for Parkway Crawlers: **234**

Our other toddler group, **Peartree Tots** is aimed at babies and pre-school children. We meet on a Thursday morning during term time. On average we have had 35 children each week and the families attending mainly come from the community.

At the beginning of the year, we had a team of four volunteers but numbers have now increased to eight members, all of whom work alongside the Children and Families Ministry Leader. They cover refreshments, spend time in conversation with parents and carers, provide a warm welcome upon arrival and lead story and song time.

Total volunteer hours for Peartree Tots: **585**

Prayer Requests for both our Toddler Groups:

- In order for Parkway Crawlers to reopen we need a team of volunteers and would be looking for at least an additional 3 people to allow us to open safely and to have opportunities for conversations with the adults attending;
- For the team to share the love of God with both the adults and children attending through their actions and words.

Fun 4 Families

Fun 4 Families is a monthly, Saturday morning group for families with their children that is held at our Peartree site. We offer a place where families can have fun together through craft and activities, enjoy eating food. Fun 4 Families attracts many families from the community.

Our team consists of one core leader who is supported by an additional five volunteers in a range of ways. Responsibilities include setting up, coming alongside families, leading crafts and activities, and serving refreshments. On average, each volunteer gives around three hours of their time plus an additional four-five hours of planning time per month from the core leader.

Total volunteer hours for Fun 4 Families: **276**

Prayer Requests for Fun 4 Families:

- Further opportunities to come alongside families who attend the group;

- For the team to share the love of God with the families attending;
- For continued opportunities to encourage families to come to church.

One-Off Family Events

A **Pancake Party** was an opportunity to gather families together at the start of Lent. The party included games, craft, a reflection and the eating of lots of pancakes. We had 55 people come which included families from both church and the community.

Three volunteers helped with preparing and running the pancake party.

Our **Light Party** was an alternative celebration to Halloween, run for primary school children. The party included games, crafts, a disco dome and party food followed by a short talk. We had a fantastic time together with 53 children attending from both Christchurch and the community. Nine volunteers helped with preparing and running the event.

We held a **Family Feast @ Advent** which was based at our Parkway site for an afternoon of crafts, prayer activities and food. This event was attended by 30 who all worship at Christchurch.

Our annual **Children's Pop-Up Nativity** was held at our Parkway site on Christmas Eve. During the nativity the story of Jesus' birth was retold and children and adults had the opportunity to join in by acting as different characters and calling out cheers and baa-ing like a sheep. There were 11 children narrating the Christmas story along with our very own King Herod appearance! The service was attended by both families from the church and the community and included BSL for our deaf families. In addition to our narrators, who spoke and rehearsed their lines, we had 5 volunteers helping with music, visuals, BSL signing and welcoming.

Total volunteer hours for One-Off Events: **51**

Total volunteer hours for all Children & Families Ministries: **2,533**

Youth Ministry

The Youth Ministry at Christchurch serves young people in Years 7–13, helping them deepen their faith by growing strong roots in God and His Word. We also strive to reach out to young people in our community with God's love and equip our youth to do the same.

Our Youth Ministry is built around four key elements:

- The Mix – Friday evenings for Years 7–10
- Sunday Mornings at Parkway 9.30am
- Sunday Mornings at Peartree 10.30am
- After8s – Sunday evening group for Year 10 and above

In 2024, there were several **Baptisms and Special Events**. Five young people were baptised. Each shared a unique testimony of how God is working in their lives. We continue to pray for them as they grow in their faith and discipleship.

Alongside our regular activities, we hosted a **Youth Camp** in March at the Frontier Centre in Northampton, with 32 young people attending and a guest speaker leading sessions. Later in the year, we partnered with Young Life for **BASH Camp**, where around 20 Christchurch youth joined 80 others from the surrounding area.

We also had a number of young people attend **Purbeck Camp** in the summer.

At the end of May, Esther Ekeocha visited Christchurch to explore the role of Youth Ministry Leader, a position she officially took up in September 2024.

The Mix

This is a youth ministry that meets on Friday evenings during term time at Peartree. We provide a safe place where young people can have fun, interact with others, hear God's word and gain some counsel from the Christian leaders on the team. The ministry starts at 7 p.m. with a group meal for which the youth must book in. This gives an opportunity for attendees to eat and talk together. The main evening activities run from 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m., based around a varied programme of themed events, challenge evenings and off-site activities. The number of non-themed club evenings have increased, allowing more time to get alongside the young people. The evenings wrap up with a "Food for Thought" session in which a Christian message is given and a snack treat provided.

There is a nominal charge of 50 pence for attendance.

Aimed at school years 7 to 10, we provide a space where church youth from both sites can invite their non-church friends. We have a mix of church (14) and non-church (11) youngsters, including some from other churches.

There were several themed events held, on site, during the year:

- Talent Night;
- Deal or No Deal;
- First Aid;
- Christmas Party;
- Summer BBQ and Water Games.

The Mix is blessed with eight regular helpers, two of whom look after the kitchen. Up to 11 others have supported our activities when required, including two Young Leaders.

The team give a minimum of 20 hours per week volunteer time and a further 20 hours are committed per term in preparation for special event evenings.

Total volunteer hours for The Mix: **840**

Prayer Requests for The Mix:

- For good conversations with the youth;
- That the right young people would be able to come;
- That the evenings would be fun and safe;
- That God's presence would be with us during each evening.

Sunday Mornings

On Sunday mornings, young people gather for around 50 minutes during the service at both Parkway and Peartree. Sessions include games, Bible exploration, and discussion-based activities, using the Youth for Christ Lumen resource.

Attendance has been strong:

- 8–15 young people at Parkway;
- 15–20 at Peartree (mostly school years 7–11, i.e. ages 11–16)

We are blessed with a committed team of volunteers: four at Parkway and four at Peartree. Two volunteers lead each week. Volunteer groups have changed during the year and we said farewell to four across both sites during the year. We are actively looking for more volunteers, especially as the groups grow and may soon require three leaders each Sunday.

Total volunteer hours for Sunday Youth work: **360**

Prayer Requests for Sunday Mornings:

- A stronger sense of community among the young people;
- Wisdom and insight for leaders as they facilitate discussions;
- More young people to take steps forward in their faith, especially with Youth Camp coming up in March.

After 8s

After 8s is our Sunday evening youth group for school years 10–13. Each session lasts two hours, with the first hour dedicated to relaxing, catching up, and playing games and the second focused on Bible study and discussion.

Attendance has been steady at 12–18 young people most weeks.

The group is led by our recently appointed Youth Ministry Leader supported by four additional adult volunteers.

Key Highlights:

- Young Alpha Course – many attendees invited friends and discussions were engaging and meaningful.
- Upcoming in 2025 – we plan to run The Practising the Way course.

Total volunteer hours for After 8s: **250**

Prayer Requests for After 8s:

- Wisdom for young people facing big life decisions and exam pressures;

- A smooth transition as one of our ministers steps down from his role and another helper takes on leadership in the group;
- A greater sense of equipping young people to serve within the church, youth group, and their wider communities.

Total volunteer hours across all Youth activities and ministries: **1,894**

Parish Nursing

The Parish Nursing service is available to any who attend the church and its activities, offering support to individuals with health issues, or those caring for others in their family or community. Anyone attending the church is welcome to discuss issues completely confidentially.

The service is provided on a voluntary basis each Tuesday, with additional work covered as availability allows, averaging one day/week. It is affiliated to Parish Nursing Ministries UK, who ensure the service meets professional standards. It provides holistic health and spiritual care, complementing both the work of local health services and that which the church provides through the ministers, pastoral team and membership. For those with more complex needs this can include making referrals to/liasing with other professionals, for example GPs, community services and hospitals with some specific support at times of crisis.

This year 114 individuals have been supported with physical and/or mental health issues, ranging from support for expectant and new parents to assisting those requiring care in later years and at the end of life. Over 420 contacts were made during the year.

A third of those seen are not linked with Christchurch on a Sunday. About half have short-term health needs and half longer-term conditions; additionally, nearly a half are living with mental health issues. There has been signposting and liaison on over 110 occasions.

A new initiative has been started at Peartree with the Peartree Patient Participation Group, running evening sessions about living with a variety of long-term conditions.

Parish Nursing is an integral part of Christchurch Community Space, a weekly drop-in service for the local community, which has continued to function 50 weeks a year. Many of those who attend have significant health issues, so Parish Nursing support/signposting helps contribute to a holistic service for this group.

Total volunteer hours for Parish Nursing: **500**

Conclusion & Summary

2024 saw continued growth in Christchurch's fellowship at both its Parkway and Peartree sites. This was reflected in the number of attendees at church services as well as the number of committed members which rose from 186 to 200 over the year.

We are a fellowship that is committed to worship, supported by consistent biblical teaching and one that seeks to reach out into our local community, building relationships not only with those who attend church on Sundays but also with those who come to our varied ministries throughout each week. We are eager to share the love of Christ with those whom we serve and aim to encourage everyone we encounter as they explore and pursue their own, individual faith journeys.

Our diverse ministries have allowed 206 volunteers to express their faith through action, together providing more than 16,426 hours of volunteering. However, there are, undoubtedly, many Trustee and volunteer hours unaccounted for in this summary.

Finally, it is my privilege, on behalf of the church, to thank all our staff for their vision and dedication to the wide range of communities that make up Christchurch and our Trustees for the many hours of selfless service given to our fellowship. We are, as always, ever thankful to God for His faithfulness to us as He continues to keep us, challenge us, lead us and enable us as a community in Christ.

Paul Tosswill
Administration Trustee
Date: 31st March, 2025

Finance overview 2024

Background

Although this has been an election year, with a change in government and therefore political influences on the economy, we have managed to maintain a stability around our figures. Notable savings in premises expenditures, including reduced electricity prices. Additionally, lower interest rates in the second half of the year made borrowing cheaper, benefiting households and businesses. Invariably, these factors have positively impacted our income and expenses in the year.

The church has fully discharged the remaining interest-free loans, indicating a stronger financial position. We remain cautious given the probable impact of new tax policies and regulatory changes and strive to maintain an annual surplus that safeguards our reserves for long-term sustainability.

Income

Total income for the year was up 7% to £481k (2023 £450k). Unrestricted income was up 5% to £415k (2023 £397k). Unrestricted giving was up 5% to £315k (2023 £299k). We continue to benefit from a significant Gift Aid claim with many regular givers using the scheme, but others use other tax effective giving schemes.

Room hire was up 19% to £33k (2023 £28k) whilst £7.0k, income from car park rental was just below the £7.3k recorded in 2023.

Expenditure

Our expenditure is categorised under headings that relate to our principal areas of activity – note 6 to the accounts provides a breakdown of spend in each area.

Total expenditure remained at £381k (2023 £381k). Unrestricted expenditure was lower by just 1% at £346k (2023 £351k). Our overall grant giving was down by 6%, mainly due to one-off mission trip grants in 2023. Similarly, unrestricted grants were down by 2%. On our largest areas of expenditure, support costs for our staff, these were up 5% at £164k, reflecting the increase in pay rates. The costs of our premises were down 8% at £125k (2023 £136k) driven by savings in electricity tariffs (including a small impact realised from solar energy so far), reduced maintenance, and consumables expenditure.

Commitment and Funding

The church raises most of the funds needed to carry out its work from within the congregation and no appeal was made to the public for funds. The activities we provide to serve the community are free of charge or subject to a nominal entry fee as we seek to ensure that everyone can access the activities and services.

We involve the church members in key decisions including decisions about future strategy and approval of the annual budget.

Funds

Designated and Restricted income and expenditure are consolidated into the church accounts with detail shown in the relevant notes.

Designated funds are monies that have been allocated for a particular use but remain available for the church to use for other purposes if desired. The designated funds include all the individual organisations that are part of the church but run their own petty cash and/or bank accounts. The contributions to and payments from the Winter Family Fund are included as designated funds.

Restricted funds are set up when money is given to the church for a specific purpose. The main restricted funds held this year were for Solar panels for our church buildings (the Solar Fund), and a donation for a part-time Youth leader. All other income is treated as **Unrestricted funds** and can be used for any aspect of the church's work.

Pension Liabilities

The shortfall in the scheme has been eliminated as the scheme signed an agreement with the insurance company Just Group ("Just") to secure DB Plan members' pension benefits. Just is now responsible for the administration and payment of the DB Plan members' pensions.

The Trustee ceased the collection of the £1/month Deficit Reduction Contributions at the end of October 2024. DB Plan employers, such as the Church, no longer have any further responsibility towards the DB Plan.

Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure totalling £35k for the year, included Solar Panels costing £25k. We repaid £15k of interest free loans, and £20k were converted to gifts.

Risks

The Trustees are aware of the key financial risks facing the church and believe that these remain unchanged in nature. The key risks faced by the church are the loss of major givers and inflation of expenses, particularly with new tax policies and regulatory changes by the new government. These risks are managed and mitigated by regular involvement of the church members in discussions and decisions about the future vision and direction of the church and by careful expense management. Individual's circumstances can change rapidly so the short-term focus remains on managing the cash flow due to the commitment to regular expenses.

Reserves

The Trustees aim to use the resources available to the church wisely and given the strong track record of giving and the engagement of the whole church in strategic decisions, the Trustees believe that free Unrestricted reserves of between £30k and £80k would be sufficient to cover any potential short-term fluctuations in income.

The majority of the church's net assets are comprised of buildings, which are used to serve our communities.

Ibi Olutoye

Finance Trustee / Treasurer

Date: 31st March, 2025

Vision & Future Plans

Verse for the year 2025

*You are the light of the world.
A city built on a hill cannot be hidden.*
Matthew 5:14

2025 Objectives

For 2025 we have identified three strategic priorities with the following objectives:

- **Building the Body**
 - To say farewell and thoroughly bless Simon, Sam and the Cragg family as they move to Cambridge.
 - To run 'Spring Connect', building on last year's successful 'June Connect' which gave opportunities for people to build relationships within the fellowship.
 - To replenish volunteers in core ministries where there have been recent changes.
 - To hold Deaf Awareness sessions and provide the opportunity for people to learn BSL Level 1.
- **Looking forward**
 - To appoint a new pastor for Christchurch to join the team.
 - To formalise and launch *Vision 100*, specifying what we believe God is calling us to be and do as we prepare to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Christchurch in 2028.
 - To gain planning permission to install solar panels at our Parkway site.
- **Sharing Christ**
 - To continue to offer Alpha courses and help people continue in their faith journey.
 - To ensure our community outreach activities remain healthy ways of serving and welcoming many people.

In the autumn of 2024, we learned the news that Rev Simon Cragg was being called to lead and pastor a church in Cambridge after more than ten and a half years as an integral part of the Christchurch team. Although sad for us, the church also recognised God's hand and guidance in Simon's life and we embrace the adventure of seeking the minister God has in mind to join the team at Christchurch.

The surprising element in our verse for the year is that Jesus – who is the light of the world – tells his closest followers that they are too; and that includes us today!

That is both a challenge and an encouragement to those who make up Christchurch: how can we be a beacon of light and bring God's hope to Welwyn Garden City? It will certainly involve being led by Jesus, living a life that reflects Jesus' character and seeking by our words, actions and many ministries to lead people towards Jesus.

Annual Report for
Christchurch Baptist Welwyn Garden City CIO
Charity registration number: 1154616

We look to God in trust, for he is our light, our provider, and our guide to the end. To him be glory, in Christ Jesus.

Revd. Andrew Hemmens
Senior Minister

Date: 31st March, 2025

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Christchurch Baptist Welwyn Garden City CIO

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Christchurch Baptist Welwyn Garden City CIO ('the charity') for the year ended 31st December 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and related notes.

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's Trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Trustees of the charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 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.

An independent examination does not involve gathering all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently does not cover all the matters that an auditor considers in giving their opinion on the financial statements. The planning and conduct of an audit go beyond the limited assurance that an independent examination can provide. Consequently, I express no opinion as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair' view and my report is limited to those specific matters set out in the independent examiner's statement.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the CIO's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of ICAEW.

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:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 financial statements to be reached.

Jane Rook FCA

Date: 9th April, 2025

George Arthur
Suite 6b Wentworth Lodge
Great North Road
Welwyn Garden City
Herts
AL8 7SR

Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 December 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Income from:									
Donations and legacies	2	369,074	0	37,342	406,416	357,224	1,235	23,888	382,347
Investments	3	1,679	0	0	1,679	239	0	0	239
Charitable activities	4	44,915	27,729	0	72,645	39,205	28,480	0	67,685
Total		415,668	27,729	37,342	480,739	396,669	29,715	23,888	450,271
Expenditure on:									
Raising Funds	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charitable activities	6	346,360	23,834	10,610	380,804	350,742	28,454	2,200	381,396
Total		346,360	23,834	10,610	380,804	350,742	28,454	2,200	381,396
Net income / (expenditure)		69,309	3,895	26,732	99,935	45,927	1,260	21,688	68,875
Gross transfers between funds	14	31,801	(6,905)	(24,896)	0	6,523	(7,773)	1,250	0
Net incoming / outgoing resources before other recognised gains / losses		101,109	(3,010)	1,836	99,935	52,450	(6,513)	22,938	68,875
Decrease/(Increase) in liability for DB pension scheme	16	30	0	0	30	12	0	0	12
Net movement in funds		101,139	(3,010)	1,836	99,965	52,462	(6,513)	22,938	68,887
Reconciliation of funds									
Total funds brought forward		1,756,151	18,478	22,938	1,797,566	1,703,689	24,990	0	1,728,679
Total funds carried forward		1,857,291	15,467	24,773	1,897,531	1,756,151	18,478	22,938	1,797,566

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Fixed Assets									
Tangible assets	7	2,143,255	0	0	2,143,255	2,143,809	0	0	2,143,809
Current assets									
Debtors	8	14,846	0	0	14,846	18,752	0	3,838	22,589
Prepayments	9	3,179	0	0	3,179	3,308	0	0	3,308
Cash at bank / in hand	10	115,338	15,842	24,773	155,954	71,157	18,478	19,100	108,734
Total current assets		133,364	15,842	24,773	173,979	93,217	18,478	22,938	134,632
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	28,521	375	0	28,896	66,019	0	0	66,019
Net current assets (liabilities)		104,842	15,467	24,773	145,083	27,198	18,478	22,938	68,613
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	12	390,807	0	0	390,807	414,825	0	0	414,825
Net assets excluding pension liability	13	1,857,291	15,467	24,773	1,897,531	1,756,181	18,478	22,938	1,797,596
DB pension scheme liability	16	0			0	30			30
Net Assets		1,857,291	15,467	24,773	1,897,531	1,756,151	18,478	22,938	1,797,566
Funds of the Charity, divided into:									
Unrestricted					1,857,291				1,756,151
Restricted	14				24,773				22,938
Designated	14				15,467				18,478
Total charity funds					1,897,531				1,797,566

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Ibi Olutoye - Treasurer

Date: 31st March, 2025

The notes on the following pages form part of these accounts

Statement of Cash Flow for the year ended 31 December 2024

	Notes	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Cash Provided by operating activities			
Net Income		99,965	68,887
Adjusted for:			
Depreciation		35,522	37,712
Change in DB pension liability		(30)	(12)
Grants received		0	(5,128)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors		7,872	(2,378)
Increase/(decrease) in non-mortgage creditors		(36,863)	(41,874)
Net cash provided by operating activities		106,465	57,206
Cash flows from investment activities			
Fixed assets purchased		(34,968)	(4,691)
Net Cash flows from investment activities		(34,968)	(4,691)
Cash provided from Financing Activities			
Mortgage repayments		(24,278)	(54,591)
Grants received		0	5,128
Net cash from Financing Activities		(24,278)	(49,463)
Changes in Cash and cash equivalents in year		47,219	3,052
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward		108,734	105,683
Cash and cash equivalents at end year		155,954	108,734

Mortgage interest paid in the year of £32,736 is included in net income

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

1. Accounting policies

a. Basis of preparation

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland', Charities Act 2011 and FRC Abstracts.

Christchurch is a registered charity, no. 1154616 and meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

The financial statements are presented in Pounds Sterling, generally rounded to the nearest pound.

The Trustees have determined that there is no material uncertainty that casts doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern; therefore, the financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

b. Donations

Donations are accounted for gross when received.

c. Legacies

Legacies are accounted for when their receipt is certain and can be properly quantified.

d. Investment income

Investment income is included in the accounts in the year in which it is receivable.

e. Fundraising and publicity costs

The Church does not make formal appeals for funds and expenditure on these items is therefore not material.

f. Grants payable

The Church makes grants to other organisations whose charitable objects complement its work. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year-end are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure.

g. Fixed assets

The Church premises are included in the balance sheet at cost. In the opinion of the Trustees, the market value of the buildings is considerably greater than the carrying value. In the opinion of the Trustees, it is not practicable to quantify the difference between these figures. Fixed assets under £1,000 are written off as expenditure in the Statement of Financial Activities, unless it is considered appropriate to capitalise the expenditure on the Balance Sheet.

h. Depreciation

Depreciation has not been charged on the Parkway Church and Manse premises because, in the opinion of the Trustees, the residual value of the asset is not less than the original cost price. Depreciation on other fixed

assets is calculated to write off cost on a straight-line basis over expected useful life at the following rates:

Freehold land	0%
Buildings	2.5% p.a. / 40 years
Integral Features	5% p.a. / 20 years
Fixtures and Fittings	20% p.a. / 5 years
Computers and equipment	33% p.a. / 3 years

Any asset which is considered to have been impaired as a result of damage, obsolescence, or no longer in use for any other reason is written down at the date on which the impairment is identified.

i. Debtors

Debtors are recognised at their settlement amount, less any provision for non-recoverability. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid. They have been discounted to the present value of the future cash receipt where such discounting is material.

j. Creditors

Creditors and provisions are recognised when there is an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are recognised at the amount the charity anticipates it will pay to settle the debt.

k. Other expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

l. Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the Trustees. Funds designated for a particular purpose by the church are also unrestricted.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

The accounts include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the church is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe their main affiliation to another body nor those that are informal gatherings of church members.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 December 2024

Income from	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	2024	£	£	£	2023
				£				£
2. Donations and legacies								
Planned giving - bank	284,969	0	0	284,969	275,331	0	0	275,331
Collections and one-off gifts	29,779	0	0	29,779	23,194	0	0	23,194
Income tax recoverable through Gift Aid	54,326	0	6,339	60,665	53,570	217	3,988	57,775
Other donations & misc income	0	0	31,003	31,003	0	1,018	19,900	20,918
Grants received	0	0	0	0	5,128	0	0	5,128
Total	369,074	0	37,342	406,416	357,224	1,235	23,888	382,347
3. Investments								
Investment income	1,679	0	0	1,679	239	0	0	239
Total	1,679	0	0	1,679	239	0	0	239
4. Charitable activities								
Church & Hall lettings	33,341	0	0	33,341	27,972	0	0	27,972
Car Park lettings	6,901	0	0	6,901	7,329	0	0	7,329
Contributions towards events and activities	4,673	0	0	4,673	3,904	0	0	3,904
Body & Soul Café	0	17,554	0	17,554	0	16,527	0	16,527
Income - individual organisations (Note 14a)	0	10,175	0	10,175	0	11,953	0	11,953
Total	44,915	27,729	0	72,645	39,205	28,480	0	67,685
Total Income	415,668	27,729	37,342	480,739	396,669	29,715	23,888	450,271

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 December 2024

Expenditure on

5. Costs of generating voluntary income

6. Charitable Activities

a. Grants payable

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Charitable Activities								
a. Grants payable								
Beni & Irma Xhako (Albania)	3,529	0	1,250	4,779	2,304	0	0	2,304
BMS World Mission	5,148	0	0	5,148	5,085	0	0	5,085
Mission Aviation Fellowship	3,912	0	0	3,912	3,723	0	0	3,723
Paul Turner (Peru)	4,056	0	0	4,056	3,865	0	0	3,865
Ugandan Orphanage / Nicholas Ongamo	2,631	5,000	0	7,631	1,532	5,500	0	7,032
<i>designated grants: Body & soul café see note 15a</i>								
Baptist Home Mission	5,772	0	0	5,772	5,628	0	0	5,628
New Zion Food Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	86	86
Recover	0	0	0	0	0	30	0	30
The Asaph Christian Trust	0	0	0	0	0	55	0	55
Urban Saints	96	0	0	96	96	0	0	96
MND Association	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	15
Abby Murphy (Ecuador)	3,273	0	0	3,273	3,117	0	0	3,117
Mark Moberly (Prison Ministry)	0	0	0	0	2,000	0	0	2,000
Isabel Hospice	0	20	0	20	0	0	0	0
St Francis Church WGC	0	20	0	20	0	0	0	0
Comic Relief	0	0	0	0	0	40	0	40
RNLI	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	10
Carers in Herts	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	16
Leprosy Mission	0	0	0	0	0	17	0	17
Latin Link / Peru Mission Trip	0	0	0	0	1,675	0	2,115	3,790
	28,416	5,040	1,250	34,706	29,025	5,683	2,200	36,908
b. Serving								
Children's work	4,118	0	0	4,118	3,511	0	0	3,511
Parish Nursing	1,434	0	0	1,434	1,250	0	0	1,250
Recognition	266	0	0	266	577	0	0	577
Church refreshments	1,704	0	0	1,704	1,880	0	0	1,880
	7,521	0	0	7,521	7,218	0	0	7,218

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 December 2024

Expenditure on (continued)

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
c. Worship								
PA & AV equipment	214	0	0	214	37	0	0	37
All age worship	11	0	0	11	51	0	0	51
Worship resources	427	0	1,860	2,287	186	0	0	186
Guest speakers	290	0	0	290	554	0	0	554
Signing	1,145	0	0	1,145	1,245	0	0	1,245
	<u>2,087</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,860</u>	<u>3,947</u>	<u>2,073</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2,073</u>
d. Relationships								
Welcome team	267	0	0	267	146	0	0	146
Pastoral	419	1,380	0	1,799	1,130	5,160	0	6,290
BOB - men's ministry	361	0	0	361	503	0	0	503
	<u>1,047</u>	<u>1,380</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2,427</u>	<u>1,779</u>	<u>5,160</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,939</u>
e. Outreach								
Alpha	133	0	0	133	202	0	0	202
Community Events - Peartree	0	0	0	0	890	0	0	890
Community Events - Parkway	760	0	0	760	0	0	0	0
Churches in Welwyn Garden City joint events	105	0	0	105	66	0	0	66
Body & Soul Café	0	7,429	0	7,429	0	7,386	0	7,386
Cost of activities - individual organisations (Note 14a)	0	9,985	0	9,985	0	10,226	0	10,226
	<u>997</u>	<u>17,414</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>18,412</u>	<u>1,158</u>	<u>17,612</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>18,770</u>
f. Discipleship								
Sister Soul - women's ministry	657	0	0	657	476	0	0	476
Youth work	6,618	0	7,500	14,118	8,812	0	0	8,812
	<u>7,275</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>7,500</u>	<u>14,775</u>	<u>9,288</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>9,288</u>

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 December 2024

Expenditure on (continued)

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
g. Support costs - Salaries & manse								
Salaries & Pensions	135,534	0	0	135,534	128,146	0	0	128,146
Manse costs	24,996	0	0	24,996	24,868	0	0	24,868
Minister's expenses	2,121	0	0	2,121	1,366	0	0	1,366
Leadership development	1,073	0	0	1,073	486	0	0	486
Training / conferences	595	0	0	595	947	0	0	947
	<u>164,320</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>164,320</u>	<u>155,814</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>155,814</u>
h. Support costs - Church premises								
Insurance	6,056	0	0	6,056	5,583	0	0	5,583
Gas	8,034	0	0	8,034	5,852	0	0	5,852
Electricity	17,373	0	0	17,373	21,391	0	0	21,391
Water	1,409	0	0	1,409	1,215	0	0	1,215
Depreciation	35,522	0	0	35,522	37,712	0	0	37,712
General Maintenance	10,568	0	0	10,568	14,437	0	0	14,437
Cleaning	10,680	0	0	10,680	9,360	0	0	9,360
Consumables	2,841	0	0	2,841	4,212	0	0	4,212
Mortgage Interest (Christchurch Peartree)	32,736	0	0	32,736	35,771	0	0	35,771
	<u>125,219</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>125,219</u>	<u>135,533</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>135,533</u>
i. Support costs - Administration								
Printing / copying	973	0	0	973	984	0	0	984
Publicity	32	0	0	32	0	0	0	0
Postage	12	0	0	12	0	0	0	0
Telephones	1,950	0	0	1,950	1,813	0	0	1,813
Subscriptions & fees	4,258	0	0	4,258	4,261	0	0	4,261
Stationery / Office equipment	452	0	0	452	236	0	0	236
Bank charges	60	0	0	60	60	0	0	60
Independent examiner	1,740	0	0	1,740	1,500	0	0	1,500
	<u>9,477</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>9,477</u>	<u>8,854</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8,854</u>
Total	346,360	23,834	10,610	380,804	350,742	28,454	2,200	381,396

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 December 2024

7. Tangible assets

	Church Property	Buildings	Integral Features	Fixtures & Fittings	Computers & Equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cost at 1 January 2024	1,426,542	861,639	0	207,600	64,016	2,559,797
Additions during the year	0	0	24,896	5,302	4,771	34,968
Disposals during the year	0	0	0	(2,226)	(11,415)	(13,641)
Cost at 31 December 2024	1,426,542	861,639	24,896	210,676	57,372	2,581,125
Accumulated Depreciation at 1 January 2024	0	173,039	0	182,817	60,133	415,989
Charge for the year	0	21,541	767	10,698	2,515	35,522
Disposals during the year	0	0	0	(2,226)	(11,415)	(13,641)
Accumulated Depreciation at 31 December 2024	0	194,580	767	191,288	51,234	437,869
Net book value at 31 December 2024	1,426,542	667,059	24,128	19,387	6,139	2,143,255
Net book value at 31 December 2023	1,426,542	688,600	0	24,784	3,883	2,143,809
<i>Additions during the year were:</i>						
Parkway					780	780
Peartree			24,896	5,302	3,991	34,188
Total	0	0	24,896	5,302	4,771	34,968

All the church properties are freehold; their carrying values break down by site as follows:

	£
Parkway Church	487,810
Manse - Gresley Close	163,732
Peartree - Tewin Rd - land value	775,000
	1,426,542

All fixed assets are used for direct charitable purposes. Some of the furniture, computers and equipment are used both for direct charitable purposes and the management and administration of the church

The Parkway church building and Gresley Close manse, shown in the balance sheet at cost, were transferred from the Baptist Union Corporation to the CIO on 3rd January 2019.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 December 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
8. Debtors								
HMRC Gift Aid receivable	12,023	0	0	12,023	14,049	0	3,838	17,886
Hall Lettings Debtors	1,261	0	0	1,261	1,579	0	0	1,579
Other Receivables	1,562	0	0	1,562	3,124	0	0	3,124
Total	14,846	0	0	14,846	18,752	0	3,838	22,589
9. Prepayments								
Other Prepayments	3,179	0	0	3,179	3,308	0	0	3,308
Total	3,179	0	0	3,179	3,308	0	0	3,308
10. Cash at bank/in hand								
CAF Bank	115,338	2,242	24,773	142,353	71,157	6,039	19,100	96,295
Individual organisations - bank balances	0	13,193	0	13,193	0	10,559	0	10,559
Individual organisations - uncleared cash banked	0	0	0	0	0	360	0	360
Individual organisations - petty cash	0	408	0	408	0	1,520	0	1,520
Total	115,338	15,842	24,773	155,954	71,157	18,478	19,100	108,734
11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year								
Mortgage on Christchurch Peatree	23,879	0	0	23,879	24,138	0	0	24,138
Interest Free Loans	0	0	0	0	35,500	0	0	35,500
Other creditors	4,642	375	0	5,017	6,381	0	0	6,381
Total	28,521	375	0	28,896	66,019	0	0	66,019
12. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year								
Mortgage on Christchurch Peatree	390,807	0	0	390,807	414,825	0	0	414,825
Total	390,807	0	0	390,807	414,825	0	0	414,825

The mortgage is secured by a charge over Christchurch Peatree, 20 Tewin Road, Welwyn Garden City

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 December 2024

13. Analysis of net assets
(exc. pension liability)

	Fixed Assets £	Current Assets £	Creditors over 1 year £	2024 £	2023 £
Restricted Funds (per note 14b)	0	24,773	0	24,773	22,938
Designated Funds (per note 14a)	0	15,467	0	15,467	18,478
Unrestricted Funds	2,143,255	104,842	(390,807)	1,857,291	1,756,181
Total Net Assets (exc. pension liability)	<u>2,143,255</u>	<u>145,083</u>	<u>(390,807)</u>	<u>1,897,531</u>	<u>1,797,596</u>

14. Funds

a. Designated funds

	Balance 1-Jan-24 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Grants made £	Tfr (to)/from Unrestricted £	Balance 31-Dec-24 £
Parkway Crawlers	630	899	(726)	0	(480)	322
Fun4Families	236	217	(155)	0	0	298
Peartree Tots	583	887	(753)	0	(425)	293
Body & Soul Café	5,887	17,554	(7,429)	(5,000)	(3,000)	8,012
Harvesters	673	1,525	(1,240)	0		957
Reach Out	72	4,892	(4,945)	(40)		(21)
Seniors Pastoral	4,133	0	(659)	0		3,474
iPicture This	225	1,755	(1,506)	0		473
Individual organisations	12,439	27,729	(17,414)	(5,040)	(3,905)	13,809
Manse Kitchen Fund	3,000	0	0	0	(3,000)	0
Winter Family Fund	3,039	0	(1,380)	0	0	1,659
Total Designated Funds	18,478	27,729	(18,794)	(5,040)	(6,905)	15,467

The individual organisations are part of Christchurch and therefore included within our accounts
balances are designated for the work of these groups
Contributions to the church from individual organisations are shown as transfers to unrestricted.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 December 2024

14. Funds

b. Restricted Funds

	Balance 1-Jan-24	Income inc gift aid	Expenditure	Transfer in / (out)	Balance 31-Dec-24
	£	£	£	£	£
HMP The Mount Baptistry	2,000	(140)	(1,860)	0	0
Solar Fund	20,938	28,670	0	(24,896)	24,711
Youth	0	7,500	(7,500)	0	0
NZ Food Bank	0	62	0	0	62
Albania Xhako support	0	1,250	(1,250)	0	0
	22,938	37,342	(10,610)	(24,896)	24,773

15. Staff costs and Trustees expenses

(included in note 6g Salaries)

	2024	2023
	£	£
Salaries	119,052	113,061
Tax & NI costs	5,030	4,213
Pension payments	11,440	10,859
Pension deficit funding	12	12
Total	135,534	128,146

The average number of employees during the year was 5

No employee received emoluments in excess of £60,000 during the year (2023 - none)

The Church pays salaries to the ministers and members of staff, who may be related parties, for which there is authority in the Church constitution.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

For the year ended 31 December 2024

16. Pension Scheme Liability

The Church is a participating employer in the Baptist Pension Scheme ("the Scheme"), which is a separate legal entity administered by the Pension Trustee (Baptist Pension Trust Limited). The assets of the Scheme are held separately from those of the Employer and the other participating employers.

The Scheme, previously known as the Baptist Ministers' Pension Fund, started in 1925, but was closed to future accrual of defined benefits on 31 December 2011. Prior to this date, the main benefit provided through the Defined Benefit (DB) Plan was a pension of one-eightieth of the final minimum pensionable income for each year of pensionable service together with additional pension in respect of premiums paid on Pensionable Income in excess of Minimum Pensionable Income.

The Trustee of the Scheme entered into an agreement with the insurance company Just Retirement Limited ("Just") in 2022 to secure DB Plan members' benefits. The DB Plan commenced closing, (known as being 'wound up') on 31 March 2024.

In November 2024 DB Plan benefits were to be transferred over to Just, and members were to be provided with welcome packs and individual policies from them. This part of the process is known as moving to 'buy-out'. Just is now responsible for the administration and payment of the DB Plan members' pensions.

The Trustee ceased the collection of the £1/month Deficit Reduction Contributions at the end of October 2024. DB Plan employers, such as the Church, no longer have any further responsibility towards the DB Plan.

From January 2012, pension provision is being made through the Defined Contribution (DC) Plan within the Scheme. The ministers and some members of staff are eligible to join the Scheme. The ministers pay 8% of their Pensionable Income and employers pay 6% of members' Pensionable Income into individual pension accounts, which are operated and managed on behalf of the Pension Trustee by Broadstone Corporate Benefits Ltd. In addition, the employer pays a further 4% of Pensionable Income to cover Death in Service Benefits, administration costs, and an associated insurance policy which provides income protection for Scheme members if they are unable to work due to long-term incapacity. This income protection policy has been insured by the Baptist Union of Great Britain with Aviva Limited. The other staff are members of the Basic Section and pay reduced contributions of 5% of Pensionable Income, and their employer pays a total of 5%, of which 4% is paid into the individual pension accounts and 1% covers administration costs and death in service benefits.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 December 2024

17 Related charities

The custodian Trustee of the Church is the Baptist Union Corporation Limited which is a charity number 249635 and which is controlled by the Baptist Union Council. The Church is also a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

The Church made donations to Baptist Union World Mission and Home Mission Schemes as set out in note 6a.

18 Related parties

The wife of one Trustee, who began serving in November 2019, is in paid employment with the church as its Administrator.

One Trustee, the Senior Minister, who is also an employee, lived in housing wholly owned by the Church.

One Trustee, the Associate Minister, who is also an employee, lived in housing rented by the Church and owned by the Associate Minister. The church pays a rent of £1,350 per month.

No sums were reimbursed to the Trustees for their work as Trustees (2023 - nil).

The following related parties were paid these amounts in service to the church:

	Salary £	Pension £	Total £
Rev A Hemmens (Senior Minister and Trustee)	38,464	4,855	43,319
Rev S Cragg (Associate Minister and Trustee)	31,907	4,198	36,105
C Rowe (Administrator and wife of Trustee)	10,636	532	11,168
Totals	81,007	9,584	90,591

The Christchurch Baptist Welwyn Garden City CIO constitution dated 17 November 2013 authorises the payment of remuneration to Trustees.

During the year, the church repaid one Trustee the final £5,000 of their interest free loan.

Donations received from Trustees amounted to £65,724 during the year (2023: £74,651).

19 Independent Examiner

A provision of £1,750 has been made in the financial statements in respect of independent examiner's fees.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Christchurch Baptist Welwyn Garden City CIO

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Christchurch Baptist Welwyn Garden City CIO ('the charity') for the year ended 31st December 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and related notes.

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's Trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Trustees of the charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 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.

An independent examination does not involve gathering all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently does not cover all the matters that an auditor considers in giving their opinion on the financial statements. The planning and conduct of an audit go beyond the limited assurance that an independent examination can provide. Consequently, I express no opinion as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair' view and my report is limited to those specific matters set out in the independent examiner's statement.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the CIO's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of ICAEW.

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:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or

- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 financial statements to be reached.

Jane Rook FCA

Date: 9th April, 2025

George Arthur

Suite 6b Wentworth Lodge

Great North Road

Welwyn Garden City

Herts

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