

Great Harwood Christian Fellowship Annual Report 2025

(Covering Financial Year April 2024 – March 2025)

Charity Registration Number: 1174952

Date of Annual General Meeting : Thursday 15th May 2025

Aim and Purposes

The aim and purposes of the Church are:

The advancement of the Christian faith in accordance with the Basis of Faith primarily but not exclusively within Great Harwood and the surrounding neighbourhood; and such other charitable purposes as shall, in the opinion of the charity trustees, put into practice the Christian faith in accordance with the Basis of Faith, including but not limited to: the prevention and relief of need, hardship and sickness; the advancement of education; and the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age infirmity or disability, financial hardship or social circumstances with the object of improving their conditions of life;

Provided that the advancement of such purposes must be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the Doctrinal Distinctives and Ethical Statements as may be adopted and amended by the Church from time to time in accordance with the provisions of the Church Handbook.

Objectives and Activities

GHCF promotes the Christian faith by providing a weekly programme of events which are open to everyone and provided free of charge. In particular, we try and support people in their Christian faith by providing:

Times of Worship and Prayer where the gospel message is clearly shared and believers are built up and strengthened in their faith.

Pastoral care for those who need support.

Information about Missionary and Outreach work – sharing the Christian gospel with others, both at home and overseas.

Mercy ministries – helping to provide for those in need.

In order to provide these services, it is important that we maintain our property on commercial Road, Great Harwood in accordance with all appropriate guidelines.

Great Harwood Christian Fellowship Pastor's Report May 2025

1. Introduction

The Lord has been gracious to us again this past year. As I reflect on another year of ministry, it is with thankfulness in my heart that I say—God is building His church here in Great Harwood. Christ is the Head of His church, and we are His body, and it has been a joy to watch His providence unfold among us in new faces, deeper fellowship, and a growing desire to glorify Him in word and deed.

Our mission has not changed. We remain committed to biblical truth, the centrality of the gospel, and the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4:12), under the authority of Christ, governed by His Word, and empowered by His Spirit.

2. New Members

It is always an occasion of great joy when the Lord adds to our number. As Acts 2:47 reminds us, it is the Lord who adds to the church daily those who are being saved. This past year, we rejoice in welcoming the following individuals into membership:

Alison Conboy

Let us remember that membership is not simply about being part of a congregation, but a public commitment to the body of Christ in a particular place. We are all accountable to one another under the headship of Christ therefore we also have responsibilities as members of GHCF. I would just as a friendly reminder state what our responsibilities are as members as taken from the GHCF Church Handbook:

- a. Regular attendance at Sunday worship. (Acts 20:7, Heb. 10:25)
- b. Regular personal prayer and Bible study. (2 Tim 3:15-17, Phil. 4:6)
- c. Regular attendance, when possible, at the main weekday meeting of the church for prayer,
Bible study and fellowship. (Acts 1:14, 2:42)
- d. Sharing in the life, work and witness of the local church. (Rom. 1:16, 1 Cor. 15:58)
- e. Regular giving to the local church and the Lord's work in general. (1 Cor. 16:2, 2 Cor. 9:6-7)
- f. The showing of Christian love and concern, both for the members of the church family and
for the community at large. (John 13:35, 1 Thess. 3:12)
- g. An endeavour to live a life consistent with the faith we profess. (Rom. 6:1-2, Eph. 4:1)
- h. Regular attendance at The Breaking of Bread (The Lord's Supper) - the pattern of
frequency being a matter for the individual member to decide. (Acts 2:42, 20:7)

3. Ministry Reflections

3.1. Sunday Afternoon Church Services

As a church committed to the authority of Scripture and the edification of the saints, we desire that every decision we make as elders be rooted in pastoral care and biblical wisdom. One such decision made this year was the adjustment of our Sunday evening service to a Sunday afternoon

gathering at 15:30, concluding at approximately 16:30. This change was prayerfully undertaken with the goal of encouraging broader participation from the entire congregation, including families with young children and our older brothers and sisters.

It is our prayerful vision that whole families would attend the Lord's Day afternoon service. With the earlier time, parents can more easily manage the bedtime routines of their young children, and elderly saints are spared the hardship of traveling home after dark during the colder months.

This decision is not merely pragmatic. It is rooted in our understanding of the Fourth Commandment:

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." (Exodus 20:8, LSB)

"For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore Yahweh blessed the sabbath day and made it holy." (Exodus 20:11, LSB)

The Lord's Day, the Christian Sabbath, is a full day set apart for worship, rest, and spiritual refreshment in the presence of God and with His people. As the sun rises and sets, our hearts should be occupied with Christ. Public worship, morning and afternoon, is not optional for the people of God—it is a joy and a duty.

While our Sunday morning services continue to be well attended (65–80 in attendance), it grieves us as elders that our afternoon service attendance remains at 25–30. This disparity raises a concern—not simply about numbers, but about our corporate understanding and obedience to the Lord's will concerning His day.

The Word of God speaks clearly about the importance of gathering with the saints:

“And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:24–25, LSB)

The Lord’s Day is not just a personal devotional time—it is a corporate appointment with the living God. When the church gathers, Christ walks among His lampstands (Revelation 2:1). He speaks through His Word, nourishes us by His grace, and builds up His body through the fellowship of the saints.

“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.” (Acts 2:42, LSB)

“Now on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began speaking to them...” (Acts 20:7, LSB)

The pattern of Scripture is clear—the people of God gather on the Lord’s Day, not out of legalistic obligation but as a response to His redeeming grace and covenant mercies. To neglect these gatherings is not a small matter, but a spiritual danger. Fellowship is not a casual option; it is a vital means of grace.

Beloved, let us not treat the Lord’s Day as partly His and partly ours. Let us reclaim the entire day for worship, rest, fellowship, and ministry—beginning with the public gathering of the saints. Let us encourage one another by our presence and participation, showing love to Christ and to His body.

May the Lord grant us renewed conviction and joyful obedience as we gather not only in the morning but also in the afternoon to honour the risen King, whose day this is.

3.2. Tuesday Evening Prayer

The Tuesday evening prayer meeting remains, by God's grace, the lifeblood of our church. Though numbers have varied from week to week, a faithful core continues to gather, and we give thanks to the Lord for their perseverance in the ministry of intercession.

In 2025, we extended the prayer meeting from one hour to an hour and a half. This was not merely a scheduling change—it was a reflection of our growing conviction that the ministry of prayer must not be hurried. We seek to give space for thanksgiving, confession, intercession, and even silence before the Lord, as we wait upon Him together.

Yet, while this extension is encouraging, we note with some heaviness of heart that only 20 to 25 of our members consistently attend. This is not a matter of scolding, but of pastoral concern. As elders, we must ask: Why is the engine room of the church—the very gathering where we lay hold of God together in prayer—so lightly attended?

Prayer is not a peripheral activity in the life of the believer or the church; it is central. It is how we commune with God, how we align our wills with His, how we intercede for the lost, uphold one another, and advance the work of the gospel.

“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”
—Ephesians 6:18, LSB

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”
—Philippians 4:6, LSB

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”
—Colossians 4:2, LSB

The Scriptures do not merely encourage prayer; they command it—and not just personal prayer, but corporate prayer. The early church, filled with the Holy Spirit, was marked by its devotion to communal prayer:

“These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

—Acts 1:14, LSB

“And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.”

—Acts 2:42, LSB

The apostles understood that prayer was the means by which the church laid hold of heaven, stormed the gates of hell, and nurtured the life of the Spirit within the body.

Corporate prayer also shapes our hearts in humility, dependence, and unity. We learn to weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice, and bear one another’s burdens as we plead before the throne of grace together.

As our Lord Jesus Himself said:

“Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

—Matthew 18:19–20, LSB

Let us not neglect such a holy privilege and spiritual weapon. When we pray together, we are engaging in the very heartbeat of gospel work. We stand in the gap for our families, for our town, for the church, and for the lost. To pray corporately is to join hands in the spiritual trenches, to wage war on our knees.

As Charles Spurgeon wisely observed:

“The condition of the church may be very accurately gauged by its prayer meetings.”

So, I urge you, brothers and sisters: Do not treat lightly the Tuesday prayer meeting. If you are able, make every effort to be there. Come not merely to receive but to give—to give your voice, your heart, your supplication, and your encouragement to the body of Christ.

Let us be a praying church—not only in name but in practice. Let us call upon the name of the Lord together, that He might rend the heavens and come down (Isaiah 64:1), that revival might begin not out there in the world, but in here, among us.

3.3. Wednesday “Equipping the Saints”

Since its inception, the Equipping the Saints class on Wednesday afternoons has been a valuable time for theological sharpening and spiritual edification. Over the past year, we have explored great doctrines of the faith—most notably the Doctrine of God and the Person and Work of Christ. In recent months, we also began working through the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession, a rich theological heritage that serves as a faithful summary of biblical truth.

However, just before Easter 2025, I (Francois) made the decision to pause the Wednesday sessions for the summer. This was not due to lack of interest or fruit, but out of a desire to prayerfully reflect on how best to move forward in a way that will further equip and strengthen the body for spiritual maturity and discernment.

In this time of reflection, I have returned to a deep and thorough study on the interpretation of Scripture—what is often called hermeneutics. And I have become increasingly convinced that this is something every believer should be equipped in—not just pastors or teachers. It is the

Word of God that brings life, light, and transformation. As our Lord prayed:

“Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth.”
—John 17:17, LSB

The Scriptures are the primary means by which God has revealed Himself to mankind. The apostle Paul writes:

“All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be equipped, having been thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
—2 Timothy 3:16–17, LSB

It is through the Word that we come to know the character of God, the work of Christ, the call of the gospel, and the will of our Father in heaven. Therefore, it follows that the better we learn to rightly divide the Word, the better we will know our God, walk in obedience, and avoid error.

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”
—2 Timothy 2:15, LSB

With this in mind, I am prayerfully considering not resuming the Equipping the Saints class in its previous form, but instead launching a new, in-depth series on biblical interpretation that will provisionally take place on a Thursday evening from 7pm to 8.30pm. This will not be an abstract or purely theoretical study, but a hands-on, practical course, where we learn to handle the Word of truth by working through short passages of Scripture together each week where we put into practice what we have learnt not just that week but also in the previous weeks.

The goal is to equip the saints to read, understand, and interpret Scripture with greater clarity, confidence, and reverence—so that they

may grow in grace and be more firmly rooted in truth. It is my desire to help brothers and sisters to see the glory of Christ in every page of Scripture, and to understand how the whole counsel of God hangs together in perfect unity.

Before launching this course, I will of course gauge the interest within the fellowship. It is my prayer that many will see the value in such a study and make every effort to attend, but it will have to be committed to. In light of that there will be a small monetary fee which will serve as a pledge of commitment to attend the course. If the Lord leads, this could become a pivotal season in the life of our church—a time of deepening roots, strengthened convictions, and greater joy in the Word.

Let us be a people who do not merely hear the Word, but who rightly understand it, believe it, and obey it—for therein lies the blessing:

“But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of freedom, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this man will be blessed in what he does.”

—James 1:25, LSB

3.4 12-Week Discipleship Course - Following Christ in Truth and Life

As a church, we recognise the pressing need for true biblical discipleship within the body of Christ. It is a tragic reality that many churches today neglect this crucial aspect of Christian growth, and even fewer teach discipleship as Christ Himself and the apostles modelled and commanded.

Discipleship is not an optional extra in the Christian life—it is the very heartbeat of what it means to follow Jesus. Our Lord’s final commission to His disciples was a call to disciple-making:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

—Matthew 28:19-20, LSB

Notice that Jesus did not command us to make converts alone, but disciples—men and women who are taught, trained, and equipped to obey all that Christ has commanded. This is a lifelong commitment to learning, growing, and imitating Christ.

The apostles clearly understood this. They did not merely preach the gospel but also invested deeply in the spiritual formation of those they led. The apostle Paul modelled this well:

“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”

—1 Corinthians 11:1, LSB

“The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

—2 Timothy 2:2, LSB

Paul’s relationship with Timothy, Titus, Epaphroditus, and others was not merely pastoral, but discipleship in its truest sense. He walked alongside them, trained them in doctrine, rebuked them when necessary, encouraged them in their labours, and passed on the pattern of sound teaching they would need to lead and equip others.

True discipleship is not merely about gaining head knowledge; it is about transformed lives, renewed hearts, and Christ-like character. It is about walking as He walked, loving as He loved, and serving as He served.

“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

—John 13:35, LSB

“Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

—Luke 14:27, LSB

A Call to True Discipleship

For this reason, we are launching a 12-Week Discipleship Course at GHCF. This course is designed to ground believers in the fundamentals of the faith, deepen their walk with Christ, and equip them to disciple others. It is not merely a Bible study, but an intentional, scripture-focused journey into what it truly means to be a disciple.

I prefer to be called a disciple of Jesus Christ rather than a Christian. The term Christian has become so broad today that it has often lost its biblical depth. But to be a disciple of Christ is to embrace the call to follow, learn from, and live like our Master. It is to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him (Matthew 16:24). It is to submit every thought, word, and action to His Lordship.

As a church, we have a duty to teach this kind of discipleship. It is not enough to fill pews or grow numbers. We are called to make disciples—true, humble, faithful followers of Christ.

Please join me in praying that this course will bear fruit in the lives of our people, that we might be a church of disciples who are deeply rooted in Christ and faithful to His mission.

3.5 Sunday School

First, on behalf of the Great Harwood Christian Fellowship, I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to everyone who serves in our Sunday School ministry. Your faithful and sacrificial service does not go

unnoticed, and we recognise that each of you is giving up your place in the main Sunday morning worship service to invest in the next generation. This is a precious and weighty calling, and we are deeply grateful for your commitment to the spiritual growth of our children. This year, we have begun using the Answers in Genesis (AiG) curriculum in our Sunday School. This is an intentional decision, grounded in our conviction that our children need a solid, biblical foundation that will equip them to stand firm in the faith in an increasingly hostile and secular culture.

The AiG curriculum is not just a biblical history lesson, though it faithfully teaches the historical narratives of Scripture. It also includes a strong apologetics element, training children to defend their faith against the many challenges they will encounter. It seeks to prepare young hearts and minds to give a reason for the hope that is in them, as Scripture commands:

“...sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

—1 Peter 3:15, LSB

As a church, we recognise that the primary responsibility for the spiritual instruction of children lies with their parents (Deut 6:6-7; Eph 6:4).

However, the church has a vital role in supporting and supplementing this discipleship. Our Sunday School is not a substitute for the daily teaching that should take place in the home, but it is a critical part of their spiritual formation and biblical grounding.

We live in a time when the truth of God’s Word is under constant attack. Our children are facing a worldview battlefield like never before. Therefore, it is imperative that we equip them with a firm grasp of biblical truth, a deep love for Christ, and the confidence to stand for Him in a godless generation.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

—Proverbs 22:6, LSB

So, let us pray for our Sunday School teachers, that they may teach with wisdom, patience, and passion. Let us also pray for the children themselves, that the seeds of truth being planted in their hearts may bear much fruit in the years to come.

Thank you once again to all who serve in this vital ministry. May the Lord strengthen your hands and encourage your hearts as you labour for the next generation of Christ's church.

3.6 Epic Youth - Equipping the Next Generation for Christ

This year, we have had the joy and privilege of establishing Epic Youth here at Great Harwood Christian Fellowship. This ministry represents an important step in our commitment to discipling the next generation, and we want to express our heartfelt thanks to the dedicated team of leaders who faithfully give up their time on Friday evenings and Sunday mornings to invest in the lives of these young people.

Epic Youth meets on Friday evenings, providing a safe, fun, and Christ-centred environment where teens can fellowship, learn, and grow together. In addition to their regular activities, the group has also adopted the Answers in Genesis (AiG) curriculum, tailored for their age group. This curriculum is designed not only to teach the historical truths of Scripture but also to equip these young believers to defend their faith in a culture that increasingly rejects the gospel.

"I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth."

—3 John 1:4, LSB

As a church, we recognise the seriousness of this task. These young people are preparing to enter a world that, as our Lord Himself warned, hates Him and His gospel (John 15:18-20). It is our responsibility to ensure that they are rooted and grounded in the truth, able to stand firm in the day of trial, and to shine as lights in a dark world.

"Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who

believe.”

—1 Timothy 4:12, LSB

We also thank those leaders who meet with the youth after the Sunday morning service to discuss and apply the teaching they have just heard. This is a critical time for spiritual growth, and we are grateful for the intentional investment these leaders are making in the lives of our young people.

Praying for Growth and Fruitfulness

We ask for your prayers as Epic Youth continues to grow. In particular, we pray that the Lord will send young men to join this group, that they might grow in Christ, be shaped by His Word, and become bold witnesses for the gospel.

“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”

—1 Corinthians 15:58, LSB

Thank you again to all who serve in this ministry. May the Lord bless your labours and may we see lasting fruit for His kingdom in the lives of these precious young people.

3.7 GHCF Annual Conference

On 21st September 2024 GHCF had its first annual conference. Our speaker was Dr. Samuel Renihan. He spoke for 4 sessions and the church was richly blessed. We also had some brothers and sisters from Trinity Grace Church (TGC) in Ramsbottom join us.

GHCF have partnered with TGC for our Annual conference on 20th September 2025 and we have successfully booked Samuel's Father Dr. James Renihan.

4. Deacons

The office of Deacon is a noble calling, rooted in the Scriptures and vital to the health and function of the local church. As a body of believers at Great Harwood Christian Fellowship (GHCF), we are deeply grateful for the deacons whom the Lord has raised up in our midst—faithful men and women who serve the church with humility, consistency, and a heart for Christ.

The qualifications for this office are clearly outlined in Scripture:

“Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not fond of dishonest gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.”

—1 Timothy 3:8-10, LSB

The role of deacon is one of practical service, modeled on the early church’s appointment of deacons to meet the physical needs of the congregation, allowing the apostles to focus on the ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6:1-7). This foundational pattern continues today.

Deacons support the elders by managing the practical and logistical aspects of church life, thus freeing the elders to shepherd the flock and devote themselves to the ministry of the Word.

Deacons serve the church in many ways.

We are especially grateful for the faithfulness of those who serve as deacons in GHCF. They are the practical arm of the eldership, and their service is a beautiful demonstration of Christ-like humility and sacrifice. They labour, often behind the scenes, with little recognition but great love for the body of Christ. For this, we give thanks.

As a church, we pray that the Lord, in His wisdom and grace, will continue to raise up men and women who aspire to this high calling. May they prove themselves faithful, serving the church with glad hearts and steady hands, and may their lives adorn the gospel they profess.

“For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

—1 Timothy 3:13, LSB

Please join me in praying for our deacons, that they might continue to serve with joy, humility, and strength, and that the Lord would be pleased to call others to this precious work in the days to come.

5. The Eldership of GHCF - Shepherds Under the Chief Shepherd

At Great Harwood Christian Fellowship (GHCF), we understand that the eldership of the church is not merely an administrative body, but a group of shepherds called by God to lead, feed, protect, and care for the flock of Christ. This is a high calling and a weighty responsibility, for elders are under-shepherds of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ (1 Peter 5:4).

Please join us in praying for the elders of this church, that they may be humble, sensitive, and responsive to God's leading. We desire only to follow where God leads, for we know that to move forward without His presence is to labour in vain.

We echo the heart of Moses, who prayed:

"If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here. For how then can it be known that I have found favour in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?"

—Exodus 33:15-16, LSB

May the elders of GHCF be men who, like Moses, refuse to move without the presence and blessing of God.

The Biblical Responsibilities of Elders

The New Testament is clear about the character and responsibilities of those called to shepherd the flock:

"For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of dissipation or rebellious. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of dishonest gain, but

hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, righteous, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to reprove those who contradict.”

—Titus 1:5-9, LSB

“Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but willingly, according to God; and not for dishonest gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

—1 Peter 5:1-4, LSB

Elders are called to shepherd the flock, to guard against false teaching, to pray for the sick, to equip the saints for ministry, and to model godly living for the church to follow.

A Call to Prayer

Please pray for the elders of GHCF, that they may lead well, with wisdom, humility, and faithfulness. Pray that they may cling to Christ, hold fast to His Word, and guide this church in a way that honours the Chief Shepherd, to whom they will one day give an account.

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

—Hebrews 13:17, LSB

May the Lord strengthen our elders for this great work, and may we, as a church, encourage them as they lead us, for God’s glory and the good of His people.

6. Vision & Plans for the Future

5.1. A Visible Church, a Praying Church, a Serving Church

As the pastor of Great Harwood Christian Fellowship (GHCF), I am convinced that God has sovereignly planted this congregation in Great Harwood and the surrounding area for such a time as this (Esther 4:14). We are not here by accident, but by divine appointment. Our God has a purpose for this church, and it is our calling to fulfil that purpose with faithfulness, conviction, and courage.

A Visible Church

We live in a time when the world desperately needs to see the light of Christ. In a culture that often rejects truth, we are called to stand as a beacon of hope and holiness. The Lord Jesus said:

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.”

—Matthew 5:14-15, LSB

To be a visible church is to shine the light of Christ through our words, deeds, and corporate witness. It means we do not shrink back in fear, but boldly proclaim the truth of the gospel, even when it is unpopular or costly. It means we are known in our community as those who love Christ, love His Word, and love our neighbours.

Our visibility is not just a matter of location or presence, but of testimony. May our lives and our church reflect the glory of our risen King.

A Praying Church

No church can be truly visible without first being a praying church. If we are to be light in this dark world, we must first draw near to the Source of that light. Prayer is not merely an activity; it is the lifeblood of the church. It is how we lay hold of the promises of God, seek His will, and intercede for the lost.

“And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.”

—Acts 2:42, LSB

“Pray without ceasing.”

—1 Thessalonians 5:17, LSB

A praying church is a dependent church, a humble church, a hopeful church. It is a church that wages spiritual warfare on its knees, calling upon the Lord of hosts to do what only He can do. Without prayer, we labour in vain. With prayer, we stand armoured and ready for the work of the kingdom.

Brothers and sisters, let us not grow weary in our corporate prayer meetings. Let us come together week by week, lifting up our voices to the throne of grace, confident that God hears and answers.

A Serving Church

Our visibility and our prayers must lead to action. We are called to serve one another and our community with the love of Christ. True faith works itself out in love (Gal 5:6), and we are to be a people zealous for good works (Titus 2:14).

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

—Mark 10:45, LSB

“As each one has received a gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

—1 Peter 4:10, LSB

A serving church is a church that reflects the heart of Christ. It reaches out to the lonely, the broken, the lost, and the needy. It opens its doors and extends its hands, knowing that every act of love is a seed planted for the kingdom.

Our Mission Field - Great Harwood and Beyond

Our mission field is right here, in Great Harwood and the surrounding area. We are not called to isolate ourselves, but to engage with our community. We must know the people around us, understand their needs, build relationships, and share the hope of Christ. Our work is not merely

to fill seats on a Sunday, but to make disciples of all nations, beginning at our doorstep.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

—Matthew 28:19-20, LSB

Christ - The Head of the Church

In all of this, we never forget that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church (Col 1:18). He is our King, our Shepherd, our Saviour, and our Lord. We serve not to make a name for ourselves, but to glorify His name. We labour not for earthly reward, but for the joy set before us in Christ. Let us then be faithful to His commission, seeking not the approval of men, but the honour of our God. He alone is worthy of all praise, all glory, and all honour.

May GHCF be a visible, praying, and serving church for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom. May our light shine brightly, our prayers rise fervently, and our hands work diligently until He returns.

7. Community Outreach

Thanks to Rachel’s work and the collaboration of many, we have a clearer understanding of the social needs in Great Harwood. From family breakdown to youth isolation and elderly loneliness, the needs are many. We have done several Cinnamon Network projects that meet genuine needs and open doors for gospel witness.

We have found that our “Home Grown” projects have done very well. Here is a list of outreach projects that GHCF ran and is still running in 2024/2025 :

- Going Bananas – 25 Registered with approx 18 attending regularly. GB has also extended their time from an hour to an hour and a half

recently which shows the impact it is having in the lives of children and in many cases their parents.

- Soul Food Street Ministry – Rob has stood back from fronthing Soul Food after many years of serving Christ and His church in this manner. We are trult thankful not just for Rob but all those who now and in the past have joined in this ministry to reach Great Harwood – our mission field.
- Creative English - Cinnamon
- Who let the dads out – Finished in December 2024 - Cinnamon

8. Land Request Update - Seeking the Lord's Will

Over the past three years, we have made numerous efforts to secure the land adjacent to the church for ministry purposes, sending approximately **Fifty** emails to the previous council and meeting with two Labour councillors to discuss the possibility of either gifting or leasing the land to the church at a peppercorn rent. While these discussions have included some positive conversations, they have yet to produce any firm commitments.

After much prayer and reflection, the Elders have prayerfully decided that if we do not receive a definitive response from the council by September 2025, we will formally withdraw our request for the land. As we consider this matter, we are reminded that the Lord is sovereign over all things, including the provision of land and buildings for His church. We do not want to move forward unless we are confident that this is His will for us.

“Commit your works to Yahweh, and your plans will be established.”

—Proverbs 16:3, LSB

We humbly ask the congregation to join us in prayer, that the Lord's will might be made clear and that we would have wisdom and discernment as we seek to faithfully steward the resources He has given us. May we rest in the knowledge that He is faithful and that His plans are always for our good and for His glory.

9. Conclusion

As we look back over 2024 and forward into the rest of 2025, we rest in the sovereignty of God and seek His glory above all. Let us not grow weary in doing good (Gal 6:9), and let us strive together for the faith of the gospel (Phil 1:27).

May GHCF continue to be a local Embassy of the Kingdom of God—visible, prayerful, and servant-hearted. And may everything we do, whether in teaching, prayer, service or outreach, be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Col 3:17).

Public Benefit Statement

When planning our activities for the year, the Trustees have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

We aim to enable people to live out their faith as part of our community through worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.

Provision of pastoral care and Missionary and Outreach work.

Structure, governance and management

Great Harwood Christian Fellowship is an Independent Church and a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The Fellowship adopts the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith. Its governing document (Constitution) and its Church Handbook for members, were approved at an Annual General Meeting of the membership on 9th May 2017.

The Deacons meet on a monthly basis to discuss finance, administration and building maintenance matters relating to the running of the Fellowship. The Elders meet with the Pastor on a monthly basis to discuss the Spiritual life of the Fellowship: direction of worship, teaching, Bible Study meetings, Outreach etc. The full board of Trustees (Elders and Deacons) meet together on 4 occasions during the year, as required by our constitution document.

Policy Documents

In addition to the Constitution Document, Great Harwood Christian Fellowship has the following policies in place to ensure the health, safety and protection of church members:

Fire, Health and Safety Management

Data Protection

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Serious Incident reporting

Internal Risk Management

Social Media

Financial Reserves

The church undertakes regular reviews of each of these policies and carries out audits and training as required by named individuals.

Administrative Information

The principal address of the charity is 9 Earl Street, Great Harwood, Blackburn, BB6 7JJ

The Trustees are as follows:

Francois Van Staden – Pastor

Neil Collier – Elder

Justin Willis - Elder

Gil Ratcliffe, Deacon, Treasurer

Shirley Collier – Deacon, Secretary

Jennifer Blackmore – Deacon

Michael McCormick - Deacon

Policy on Reserves

The Fellowship holds a sum of money in a Reserve Account for use in exceptional circumstances. The current level of these funds (at 31st March 2024 is £14,930) The funds are not restricted or specifically designated for certain uses. The Trustees authorise any use of these funds when requested by the Treasurer.

	<u>Receipts and Payments 2024-25</u>	<u>2023-24</u>
Cash in bank 31.3.24	£451	£832
Cash in Reserve account 31.3.24	£14,930	£17,985
(A)	£15,381	£18,817

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>2023-24</u>
Donations	£1,608	£3,384
Bookstall	£0	£151
Church service offertories	£9,464	£10,679
Offerings via Bank	£30,600	£29,448
Other Income	£10,175	£9,446
Reserve Account interest	£233	£235
Tithe income	£4,452	£4,459
(B)	£56,531	£57,802
<u>Payments</u>		<u>2023-24</u>
Bookstall	£0	£190
Church maintenance	£3,376	£8,593
Church running costs	£12,007	£14,628
Donations to Missions/Tithes	£4,420	£4,329
Other payments	£718	£706
Wages and expenses	£28,705	£28,525
Worship, SS, Mission resources	£4,410	£4,267
(C)	£53,637	£61,238
(A plus B minus C =)	£18,275	£15,381 *
<u>Restricted Funds</u>		<u>2024-25</u>
Hardship Fund 31.3.24		£304
Income		£0
Total		£304
Payments		£0
Remaining 31.3.25		£304
WLTDO Grant 31.3.24		£1,086
Income		£0
Total		£1,086

Payments		<u>£1,086</u>
Remaining 31.3.25		<u>£0</u>
<hr/>		
Creative English Grant 31.3.24		£0
Income		<u>£2,365</u>
Total		<u>£2,365</u>
Payments		<u>£2,365</u>
Remaining 31.3.25		<u>£0</u>
<hr/>		
Cash in bank 31.3.25	£534	+ £304
Cash in Reserve account 31.3.25	<u>£17,741</u>	(Hardship)
Total	<u>£18,275</u>	*

Great Harwood Christian Fellowship
Tithes 2024-25

Outreach UK	£500.00
Platform 67	£600.00
Samaritan's Purse	£500.00
SASRA	£200.00
Scriptural Knowledge	£360.00
Slavic Gospel Association	£600.00
Uma Sharma (Nepal church)	£709.95
United Beach Missions	<u>£950.00</u>
	<u>£4,419.95</u>



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Receipts and payments accounts				CC16a
For the period from	01/04/2024	To	31/03/2025	

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
All Other Donations	1,608	-	-	1,608	3,384
Bookstall Income	-	-	-	-	151
Church Service Offerories	9,464	-	-	9,464	10,679
Creative English Grant Income - Restricted Funds	-	2,365	-	2,365	-
Donations via SO & FP	30,600	-	-	30,600	29,448
Other Income	10,175	-	-	10,175	9,446
Reserve Account Interest	233	-	-	233	235
Tithe Income	4,452	-	-	4,452	4,459
Hardship Fund	-	-	-	-	400
WLTDO Grant	-	-	-	-	1,200
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	56,531	2,365	-	58,896	59,402
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	56,531	2,365	-	58,896	59,402
A3 Payments					
Bookstall Expenditure	-	-	-	-	190
Church Maintenance	3,376	-	-	3,376	958
Church running expenses	12,007	-	-	12,007	22,263
Mission donation & Tithes	4,420	-	-	4,420	4,329
Other payments	718	-	-	718	706
Wages & Expenses	28,705	-	-	28,705	28,525
Worship, Sunday School & Mission Resources	4,410	-	-	4,410	4,267
Hardship fund	-	-	-	-	408
WLTDO Grant	-	1,086	-	1,086	114
Creative English Grant Expenditure - Restricted	-	2,365	-	2,365	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	53,637	3,451	-	57,088	61,760
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	53,637	3,451	-	57,088	61,760
Net of receipts/(payments)	2,895	- 1,086	-	1,809	- 2,358
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	15,380	1,390	-	16,771	19,129
Cash funds this year end	18,275	304	-	18,580	16,771

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Reserve Account	17,741	304	-
	Bank Current Account	534	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	18,275	304	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

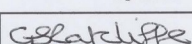
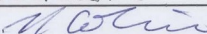
	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Gil Ratcliffe	25.4.25
	Neil Collier	25/4/25

28 April 2025

Independent Examiner's report to the Great Harwood Christian Fellowship for the year ended 31 March 2025

This report on the accounts of the Great Harwood Christian Fellowship for the year ended 31 March 2025 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006

Respective responsibilities of the Great Harwood Christian Fellowship and the examiner

As members of the Great Harwood Christian Fellowship you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and section 43(2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

Basis of this report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by Great Harwood Christian Fellowship and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts

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Independent examiner's statement

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

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
- (2) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act; and
 - to prepare financial statements, which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have not been met; or
- (3) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

P.P. 

Laura Bolton
Simple Accounting NW Ltd