



ANNUAL TRUSTEE REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR

Ampthill Baptist Church

(Registered Charity 1198662)

For the year

January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2023

**AMPTHILL BAPTIST CHURCH
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DECEMBER 31ST, 2023**

STATUS	<p>Amphill Baptist Church is a registered charity (Charity Number 1198662). Registration was approved by the Charity Commission as Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in April 2022.</p> <p>This report is produced in accordance with the Accounting Requirements made under the Charities Act 2011 and the financial statements are produced to conform to Charities SORP FRS102 2019 recommendations.</p>	
CHURCH ADDRESS	<p>Amphill Baptist Church Dunstable Street Amphill Bedfordshire MK45 2JS</p>	
TRUSTEES	<p>Rev'd Dr Andrew Goldsmith Reverend Kenneth Argent Rev'd Maria E Abdon Shortley Mrs Marie Mead Mr Simon Herbert Mrs Lois Baker Mrs Claudia Tyson Mrs Catherine Sleight Mr Paul Spencer Mr Jack Moore (Appointed 21st March 2023) Mr Simon Miller-Cranko</p>	<p>Senior Pastor Associate Pastor Associate Pastor Church Secretary Church Treasurer Deacon Deacon Deacon Deacon Deacon Deacon</p>
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	<p>Stephen Mason BSc FCA GKP (Amphill) Limited 3 Doolittle Yard Froghall Road Amphill Bedfordshire MK45 2NW</p>	
BANK	<p>Co-operative Bank Skelmersdale</p> <p>Barclays Bank Flitwick</p>	

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CHARITABLE OBJECT

The principal purpose of the Church is the advancement of the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination. The Church may advance education and carry out other charitable purposes in Ampthill and the surrounding area, but also throughout the United Kingdom and/or other parts of the world. The Church mission statement is "Helping people meet Jesus Christ and become his fully devoted followers".

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity FRS 102.

The Church occupies premises which are held by the Baptist Union Corporation Ltd on Trusts which are entirely compatible with the above object.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

The Church means members of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by the constitution and known as AMPTHILL BAPTIST CHURCH.

Members of the Church are admitted in accordance with the Church Constitution which requires them to publicly profess faith in Jesus Christ and accept the beliefs of the Church. Members commit themselves to serving Christ in the Church and beyond, abiding by the decisions of the Church Meeting and acknowledging their responsibilities as Church Members as required by the Church Constitution. The Members' Meeting shall be held not less than four times a year and has responsibility for the overall policy of the Church. The Church meeting appoints the Minister(s) (stipendiary and non-stipendiary), Church Secretary, Church Treasurer and eight Deacons who together are the Charity Trustees. Special Church Members Meetings are called to appoint Ministers, Youth Workers and Children's Workers and to decide on matters relating to the change in the building or the land owned by the Church. The Officers and Deacons are responsible for the day to day running of the Church's work and witness, and the financial and legal aspects of the charity. New Trustees are given written advice produced by the Senior Pastor and the Baptist Union Corporation to ensure they understand their responsibilities and the legal and financial framework in which the Church operates and also details of Trusteeship and disqualification from being a Trustee as provided by the Charity Commission and are asked to sign to declare that they are a 'fit and proper person' for the post of Trustee. They are also DBS checked.

All members are encouraged to take an appropriate part in the spiritual and practical tasks involved in the furtherance of the charitable objectives. Proposals are submitted to the Church Meeting by the Trustees for approval or may be raised by members in the Church Meeting for further consideration by the Trustees. The Constitution requires decisions to be made by the Church Meeting by appropriate majorities, but the Church seeks to work by consensus whenever possible.

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Ampthill Baptist Church is a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Central Baptist Association and the Evangelical Alliance and has long-standing relationships with a number of Christian organizations that pursue similar objectives in the UK and overseas. The Church works with Baptist Home Mission in assisting other churches and may receive voluntary help itself where needed. During the year, donations have been made to help the objectives which can best be done on a larger scale than Ampthill Baptist Church could do independently.

The Church employs a Senior Pastor, an Associate Pastor (Discipleship), a Youth Worker and a Children's Worker. These together with an Associate Pastor (Seniors) form the pastoral team and provide oversight and all-round pastoral care for those in the fellowship and those connected with the Church. It is seen however as the work of every member of the church fellowship, whether employed or not, to make a difference in the Church and help it to achieve its great commission. This is done in 'being salt and light' amongst the people they interact with every day, by praying, by supporting the sick and others in need, by being involved in training and the discipling of others, in public teaching and worship, and also in administration. The financial resources of the Church are given by the congregation and their private assets and equipment are regularly used in the work of the Church. Much of this work is done privately and on a voluntary basis, without recognition, and the hours and value of that time cannot be quantified.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES IN 2023

The Church took over the activities of the previously unincorporated body, charity 1127548, on October 1st, 2023, also known as Ampthill Baptist Church. This continues the work and witness of the Church stretching back 225 years. The change in legal form is purely administrative and does not indicate an change in the mission or beliefs of the Church.

The Church is not a building, but a body of people. The Church does not seek to measure its achievements purely in terms of success of programmes and numbers, but also in less tangible areas such as fellowship and discipleship. Over the year membership saw changes with 15 new members welcomed, 2 members transferring their membership to another church, 11 members resigning due to not being involved at ABC, mostly due to living outside of the area, and 3 members were removed from the list as their membership was considered no longer relevant. This resulted in a total of 137 members at the end of the year. We mourned with those connected to the fellowship who had lost loved ones. We celebrated with those of our fellowship who got married.

The Trustees have met monthly to look at our direction, priorities, activities, finances and policies. There have been bi-monthly meetings of the Church Members when updates are given of the events happening in relation to the Church and decisions are made as needed.

Throughout the period the Church was very much alive and we continued to be Worshippers, Disciples and Missionaries.

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The following offers some details of what took place.

As worshippers we have continued to meet both in person and online. The numbers at the Sunday morning services rose steadily throughout the year and it was good to see the church building filling up again to almost pre-Covid numbers. Some of our fellowship preferred to continue to view the services online at home and this was particularly helpful for those who were physically unable to get to the church who could benefit from watching the services. The online facility also meant that those who could not view or attend the service at the regular Sunday time could watch it at their convenience. Others had 'tasted us' online and then started to attend regularly. Generally, the numbers of our online viewers continued to be encouraging. Thus, the continued online facility has enabled more to join with us in worshipping God, praising Him and hearing teaching from His word, the Bible. We want to grow as Christians, learning more about God and our Lord Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit so that our faith may be deepened and our worship may extend into all parts of our lives during the rest of the week.

To aid us in our growth as Christians we had series of sermons during the year on different themes including the books of Jonah and Esther, and Advent. These have been led by our pastors and the preaching team and were available on our website and through our YouTube channel so they could be watched again or at a time that better suited the viewers.

Our Harvest service was held in October. For that service, gifts of non-perishable foods were brought to the church and made into a display. These were later distributed to the Need Project, a local food bank. This is in addition to the monthly collections that are received from the fellowship for the Need Project.

Our younger members of the congregation had their own 'Kids' Spot' each Sunday during the services which were live or prerecorded. This was aimed at their age group and delivered by our Children's Worker and various members of the fellowship. These were a much-enjoyed part of each service and made sure that the children felt included. Those who attended on Sundays had their own time of worship and teaching in 'Lighthouse'. Due to the increasing numbers of babies present, the Creche was moved to its own safer location away from the older children.

The monthly contemporary style service, 'The Six Thirty', was held on Sunday evenings. These attracted those who were looking for an alternative to the usual Sunday morning service or were not available in the mornings, a service for those from other churches without an evening service, and also provided an opportunity for the young people to have roles in the event, some of whom gave the talks which were very much appreciated by those attending. This gave the young people a learning opportunity in speaking publicly about their faith. The service included times of teaching, prayer and testimony which helped to deepen the faith and understanding of the Christian life as well as offering support and challenge for day to day living in a Christian manner.

A service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving was held in November entitled 'Light in the darkness'. This gave those who had been bereaved a time to remember those who had died

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and give thanks for their lives. This moving service was very much appreciated by those who attended including some for whom it was their first time at a church service.

Relationships with other churches within the area continue to be good. The church is a member of Churches Together in Ampthill and Flitwick. Our Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor met with clergy from local Baptist Churches and our Senior Pastor continued to support a local Baptist Church, as a ministerial friend. Members of our congregation take services in churches in and around the county.

As disciples, we are committed to learning more about the Christian faith. We are challenged to study and learn as we endeavour to become 'fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ'. We are aware of the call to work alongside each other, building one another up and the church structure encourages membership which involves mutual responsibility.

The emailing of devotional messages continued throughout the year. Encouraging 'Verses for the Day' were sent out to the fellowship twice weekly by email and via social media. These included a Bible verse and a short reflection on the text together with an attractive image. On Wednesdays a mid-week Psalm devotion was sent out which contained an image by the Christian artist Jeremy Thomas (with his permission). All of these mailings were greatly appreciated by the many who received them and provided inspiration and encouragement in their Christian lives.

We ended the year with some 19 small groups who meet for prayer, Bible study, mutual support and discipleship. These met together with a wide range of different needs and ages. These gave the members the opportunity to meet, share, study and pray together in a smaller group situation. These include house groups and Formation groups where a small number meet to study the Bible and discuss relevant issues relating to their spiritual lives and growth, to their part in the world and to pray. The groups are under the leadership and guidance of our Associate Pastor (Discipleship) who provides guidance and led a training event. This enabled the leaders to feel supported in their role and thus able to more effectively lead their group. There are also a good number of prayer triplets where about three people met to share, support and pray for each other and wider issues. Revels, a group for young adults also met bi-weekly for teaching and support. Celebrations and After Eights, our Sunday evening discipleship youth groups, met weekly for their own time of worship and teaching. Heroes is a group for older children of Lighthouse, up to year 8, and they met mid-week and so continued in their desire for Bible study sessions. Oikos, a group of adults in their 20s and 30s, who were keen to grow together as disciples of Jesus, continued to meet together and have been a great support to each other.

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Women Unlimited, the women's ministry group, met monthly providing a variety of activity types but always ending with a thought for the day. This is well supported and much appreciated by the ladies, binding them together in Christian love and support. Their WhatsApp continued to be a great support to the ladies using it, with prayer requests shared and thankfulness when the prayers were answered, and inspiration and spiritual guidance shared. The Blokes WhatsApp continues and also allows the men of the church to share and support each other. This was in addition to the already established monthly Blokes Socials in a local pub and Blokes Breakfast in a local pub. This enabled the men to keep connected with each other for support and the opportunity to retain the friendships of those who did not usually attend church and give them friendship and support. The Bubbles Group, for ladies who have lost their life partner, continued to support each other through difficult times and met for lunch and occasional outings.

Prayer is an important part of the life of the church and prayer breakfasts took place live in the building on the first Saturday of the month and online on the third Saturday. These times help to deepen fellowship and also helped to keep in contact with those serving overseas as they could join in via the Zoom link. These meetings included eating together followed by a time of prayer.

The weekly news sheet, The Way, kept the fellowship up to date with the latest news of others in the fellowship which enabled people to pray directly into their situations and support them more. Prayer requests for themselves, family members or for others or situations are also sent by email to the fellowship. These are greatly appreciated by those on the receiving end of our prayers and support which included the provision of meals to families who were having difficult times. News was also included of our Mission Partners serving in different organizations including those with BMS, MAF, UCCF, Fusion and a family in India. The bi-monthly pastoral letters to all our seniors continued to be greatly appreciated and provided many a talking point.

Our links with our students continued to be strong, providing support not only in prayer but also practically and the link extends into their university and college life. A board in the church shows the young people who are in training. This is updated regularly so the fellowship can pray with knowledge for them as they know at what stage in their training they are. They are visited by members of the fellowship and often taken parcels of goodies, both edible and practical, as well as cards of encouragement, written by members of the fellowship. These are very much appreciated and their fellow students are amazed at the support that the church provides. Support is also offered both financially and with prayer for those who were involved in specific Christian mission activities thus enabling them to widen their witness and tell others of the Good News of Christ.

As missionaries we are committed to being a Church whose priority is to share the Good News of Jesus by word and action.

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The children's work, under the leadership of our Children's Worker, continued to flourish. The numbers of children that we are in regular contact with in Lighthouse remained encouraging although those returning to Lighthouse on Sundays still has not picked up as expected. Deliveries of activity sheets and gift bags at special times of the Christian year ensured that the children and parents still felt connected to the church and cared for. Many doorstep conversations took place which were very helpful to all. Messy Church was held on the first Saturday of the month and attracted families who do not usually attend church. At Christmas the 'Christmas Cracker' event was held with children and their parents invited to join in with Christmas crafts, songs and activities with of course the Christmas story being shared.

In October, as an alternative to 'trick and treating', a 'Pumpkin Party' was held. This included Bible teaching as well as crafts, fun games and of course edible treats. The aim was that minds were turned to the 'Light of the World' rather than the usual dark characters of that night. These sessions attracted children and their parents, many of whom do not regularly attend activities at ABC.

Our Children's Worker remained in contact with one of the local Lower Schools and offered support with assemblies and Open the Book. We also hosted in the building the Harvest Service of a local school. The service was led by our Children's Worker and there were many children and their teachers and support staff in the building which made for a full house. With the Children's Worker having decided to step down during next year, a small search team was formed to look at the role. They produced a revised job description and the post will be advertised early in 2024 with the hope that the appointment will overlap with the present person.

Coffee Stop continued, a weekly drop-in event, which caters for parents and pre-school children. The contact with the parents enabled friendships to be formed and support given.

Friday Club for 10 – 13 years old continued. This included a time of Bible teaching that ended an active evening of games, craft activities and special events such as Bubble Zorbing. Relationships continued to be built up with the children and parents receiving friendship and support in difficult times.

The youth work, continued under the leadership of our Youth Team volunteers with Open House, on Fridays, which gave an opportunity for the youth to hang out and socialize with friends or take part in the organised activities. Special activities were also planned as part of the programme such as go-karting. Sixth Form socials take place monthly which include a meal and time to chat thus forming a support group for the young people of this age. A small search team was formed to look at the role of Youth Worker and they have been in discussion with the Young Life organisation with the purpose of working together to find a new Youth Worker.

The monthly Fellowship Lunch reaches out particularly to the older and more vulnerable members of the community and is attended by about 70 individuals. A two-course hot meal is given followed by an after-lunch speaker on a variety of topics. Friendship and fun as well

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as a good meal are enjoyed by those attending. The Associate Pastor with responsibility for Seniors is in attendance and this has led to his helping and supporting many of the seniors.

T@2, an open house style meeting for adults, on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 2pm, provided an occasion for people to come and play board games, do crafts, jigsaws, etc. or just enjoy good company. The afternoon finishes with tea and cake and a thought for the day. This provides a space for fun and fellowship as well as support and a spiritual input.

Richmond Manor is a care home in the town to which we were invited to go once a month to lead hymn singing with the residents. This is led by various members of the fellowship who intersperse the singing with some Christian thoughts. This is much enjoyed by the residents who attend and we are warmly greeted by the staff.

A new venture started once a month on Saturday nights. This was to encourage people to come into the building and enjoy an evening of fun with Christians. On alternate months this was in the form of a Board Game Café and the next as a Quiz night. These events have been greatly enjoyed and many good conversations about Christianity have been had with persons who otherwise would not have entered the building.

We held our Big Questions event in the Autumn in new premises of the Find Coffee shop in the town. They were delighted to welcome us. This event attracted around 30 different people of all ages to the five weeks when questions such as 'Does God exist?', 'Fake news: is Christianity a fairy tale?' were spoken to. There was much ready discussion and the events were much enjoyed by those who attended and helped them to receive some answers to the questions posed on the evenings and explore faith more deeply.

We are very blessed by still having a good number of volunteers who give of their time and energy to help run our many activities. They offer, as well as practical help, friendship and show the love of Christ through their interactions with those who attend. Training for the Sunday welcomers took place as did First Aid training. This means that there is a trained First Aider at our meetings.

Much pastoral support continued throughout the year to tend to the needs both physically and spiritually of those who had contact with us. Much takes place behind the scenes showing that we are a caring community.

The Church was opened one morning a week and people could drop in to the Renew Wellbeing Space, where it was 'OK not to be OK'. There they found friendship, crafts to do, a place to pray and be prayed for and refreshments. This has been a great success and those attending speak very highly of the environment and the friendship and help that they gain.

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Mission continues to be at the forefront of our thinking as we consider how to pray, act, give and send, as we learnt about Christian organizations working directly in different areas. We welcomed visiting speakers from different charities who helped to broaden our vision of Mission both here and overseas. Our Advent appeal for four organizations, chosen by the members, was again very successful raising a good amount despite times of financial difficulty. Each week during Advent a different organization was spoken about in the morning service providing information that we do not often hear about work both in the UK and abroad. Our link with Shefa'amr Baptist Church in Israel continues. Our links with our BMS partners, MAF, Impact and UCCF continue. Special mentions, prayers and videos in the Sunday morning services also take place. These help to keep us informed of their activities and enable us to pray for them. Newsletters and emails from the various partners are also issued. We continued to support the Samaritan's Purse Shoe Box appeal and a good number of boxes were again donated this year.

Our special Christmas services attracted visitors and were well attended both in the building and by livestream. The children of Lighthouse delighted us as always with their performance. The Carols by Christmas lights service attracted many visitors to the church. As usual the worship group and the specially formed Christmas Choir excelled themselves with beautiful music and singing. The Communion service on Christmas Eve, as always, was a serene event and prepared us for the festivities of the next day. The Christmas Day service was as usual a joyful occasion and was accessible both in person and online and attracted many to watch and join in with the celebrations.

The One Big Christmas event on Christmas Day, for persons who were to be lonely or by themselves on Christmas Day, took place and a great time was had by all. This included a Christmas dinner, watching the King's speech on the big screen and a time of games. Those attending also went home with a goodie bag. The event was very much appreciated and it showed our love and care for them and helped them to remember that they were not forgotten. This was also supported by very generous gifts from local traders in the community.

Service to the community continued, when possible, in the provision of rooms on a regular and occasional basis to a number of organizations from outside the church including the Ampthill Town Band, the local nature group and a housing association. We hosted the Central Bedfordshire and Ampthill Town Council safer community event where our own community events were also advertised. This showed our commitment, care of and involvement in the community. ABC was also the chosen venue of some families for the funeral service of their departed loved ones. These services, which were very much appreciated, were taken by one of our pastors who were able to give comfort and show care to the relatives.

We continued to be part of the Baptist Union, the Central Baptist Association and the Evangelical Alliance, and connect with LICC and the Four Counties Gospel Partnership, and benefitted from these in various ways.

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ABC continues to grow in activities, in our range of interests and in influence in terms of the people we are building relationships with. We are greatly encouraged by the numbers both in the building, including new faces almost weekly, and by those watching online. We continue to grow in our desire for greater discipleship, mission impact and growth. We have a team of three dedicated Pastors and a Children's Worker, and many willing volunteers. These work together in providing all round spiritual oversight, pastoral care and support for many. Numbers at Sunday services increased steadily and many new people have joined the fellowship. These are getting involved in our activities as both attendees and as volunteers and some have asked for Church membership.

We continued to be constrained by the size of our building which we have outgrown. There is much room for growth in our work in the community as the town is growing and many new houses continue to be built. The Building Development Group (BDG) have continued to meet and have been actively exploring different sites on which we can build a bigger and more purpose-built building that gives us the facilities we need to expand, not only for our services on a Sunday but also for the many activities during the week where we work with the community. Discussions continue with different agencies but as yet no site has been purchased. However, our land agent helps us in our search. The members are kept informed at the Church Members meetings as to progress being made by the BDG so as to keep the vision fresh. This is an exciting time in the life of ABC but we are also aware that the process may well be a long one.

There have been various Special Church Members meetings called during the year to consider and then agree the various resolutions needed as part of the process of ABC converting to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation). Solicitors have been engaged to help us in this process. A meeting was called when members of the fellowship were invited to look at the data that had been commissioned concerning the population in our catchment area. This helped to see where there were areas of growth and need in the town and so would enable us to consider where to tailor our activities to best serve the community. There was also a dedicated prayer evening for the building project.

Technology has become an increasingly important part of how we communicate. The Sunday morning online services have created some challenges technically but we were grateful for the in-house expertise that had enabled this area of church life to grow and develop. We continue to carefully consider the best ways to make disciples online. To aid this, the website and our social media presence is kept up to date so those interested in the church are able to more easily access what we have to offer. Some newcomers to the church have been watching us online and then have decided to come in person as they know what we have to offer and that is attractive to them. The various courses have also proved to be a way into the fellowship.

A Climate and Environment group continues to meet. They conducted a survey provided by A Rocha to see how we are doing in various areas and have given guidelines on how we can operate in a more environmentally friendly manner. We were delighted to receive the A Rocha bronze award for our efforts.

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In October we celebrated our 226th anniversary and thanked God for His faithfulness to us as a church through the many years that ABC has been a witness in the town. During 2023 the Trustees have seen so much at ABC to give thanks to God for. The witness of the church continues to grow and has reached people that we would not have otherwise been able to do so. Meeting together with person-to-person contact is vital both within the fellowship and the community and so the chance to hear the 'Good News' and also for us to show in a practical way the love of God. We pray that God will continue to bless the work and look forward to what adventures He will lead us into in the coming year.

FUTURE STRATEGY

As noted in last year's report, the Members agreed to create a new charity in the form of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation to continue the activities of the Charity. Following the successful conclusion of all the required formalities, the assets, liabilities, activities and employees of the church were transferred to the new CIO on October 1st, 2023.

All required approvals have been sought and gained from the Charity Commission, the Baptist Union and the Baptist Pension Scheme.

The new CIO will continue the centuries-old ministry of church, ensuring that we remain in a position to meet the needs of a changing society in the coming years. The mission remains unchanged – *"to help people meet Jesus Christ and become His fully devoted followers."*

The key challenges for 2024 include the significant re-shaping of the Pastoral Team. The Associate Pastor (seniors) and the Children's Worker are both retiring. The position of Youth Worker remains vacant. The Church is seeking to fill all of these roles as soon as possible, and is trusting that the right people are called to continue the ministry.

FINANCE REVIEW

We remain very grateful to our faithful members and supporters as without this on-going support we would not be able to continue to function as a Church and see the ongoing impact in our community. The figures for 2023 are for three months only. Income was £241.1k and expenses were £231.9k

We are pleased to report that at the end of the year, total funds stood at £853.2k of which £131.2k was in unrestricted general & fabric funds.

Full details of the financial activities are given in the attached financial statements.

RESERVES

The Trustees have set a minimum free general reserves limit of between 90 and 180 days' current year cash expenses. At the date of transfer reserves stood at £121.9k

INVESTMENTS

Any short-term surplus cash is invested in interest bearing accounts. This is reviewed by the trustees.

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GRANT-MAKING POLICY

The Trustees consider grants to external organizations and individuals on the basis of need and whether they are in line with the charitable objectives of the church. There are no upper or lower limits of support but, while some donations from the fellowship are specific, other amounts are ultimately determined by the status of free reserves. The Church Meeting is the final authority for the making of such grants. Grants totalled £6.3k and are detailed in note 7.

RISK MANAGEMENT

All major insurable risks are covered by the Church and employers' insurance. Contractual risks are reviewed before being entered into, to ensure that they could not significantly impact upon the Church's ability to fulfil its objectives. An annual review of all areas of risk is undertaken by the Trustees in conjunction with responsible staff and volunteers. A financial risk management policy exists and is reviewed annually along with the all-area policy.

FINANCE CONSULTATION GROUP

This group continues to meet on an ad-hoc basis to consider financial matters and advise the treasurer.

SAFEGUARDING

It is a priority for the church that those attending events and entering the premises are safe. The church operates a safeguarding system to protect children, young people and adults at risk. The Safeguarding Policy is reviewed each year and training sessions are made available for volunteers and leaders of the many activities.

The Safeguarding Trustees and the Designated Person for Safeguarding/Deputy Designated Person for Safeguarding are fully aware of referral processes should they be required.

Each year at the Annual Church Members Meeting, the members are made aware that Safeguarding is a collective responsibility for the whole church.

As well as the usual training, other courses attended included Trustee Safeguarding training. Advice from the Baptist Union and 31.8 (regional and national Safeguarding advisors) is received and reviewed regularly.

Risk assessments for all activities are reviewed regularly and revised as required.

The leaders of the various ministries and the members are aware of Natasha's law and displaying the contents of food items is now second nature in events. Food training and an annual external hygiene check is in place.

We hold basic first aid training and have trained First Aiders on site at our meetings. A Health and Safety group oversees the safe use of the site, premises and resources.

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STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing a trustee's annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statement
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the association will continue in business

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included in the charity's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom for governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 6TH JUNE 2024

and signed on its behalf by:



~~Marie Mead~~, Secretary
CLAUDIA TYSON



Simon Herbert, Treasurer

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INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF AMPTHILL BAPTIST CHURCH

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the financial statements of the Ampthill Baptist Church (the Trust) for the year ended 31st December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust 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 Trust's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of financial statements set out in the Charities (Financial statements and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the financial statements 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.



Stephen Mason Bsc FCA
GKP (Ampthill) Limited
3 Doolittle Yard
Froghall Road
Ampthill, Bedfordshire
Bedfordshire
MK45 2NW

Date:13/06/2024.....

AMPTHILL BAPTIST CHURCH
ANNUAL TRUSTEE REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31ST, 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Income:							
Donations and Legacies	2	207,037	5,936	13,934	-	226,907	216,254
Charitable Activities	3	463	10,535	-	-	10,998	13,754
Other Income	4	666	300	-	-	966	1,172
Investment Income	5	2,325	-	-	-	2,325	899
Total Income		210,491	16,771	13,934	-	241,196	232,079
Expenses:							
Charitable Activities	6	179,863	40,697	11,425	-	231,985	224,477
Total Expenses		179,863	40,697	11,425	-	231,985	224,477
Net income/(expense)		30,628	(23,926)	2,509	-	9,211	7,602
Transfers between funds	11	(27,594)	27,594	-	-	-	-
Other recognised gains/(losses)							
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension	9	12	-	-	-	12	19,722
Net movement in funds		3,046	3,668	2,509	-	9,223	27,324
Total Funds brought forward		128,197	5,203	10,657	700,000	844,057	816,733
Total Funds carried forward		131,243	8,871	13,166	700,000	853,280	844,057

All gains and losses have been recognised in the statement above.

The notes on pages 18 to 26 form part of these financial statements.

AMPTHILL BAPTIST CHURCH
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BALANCE SHEET
AS AT DECEMBER 31ST, 2023

		December 31st, 2023		December 31st, 2022	
	Note	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	10		700,000		700,000
Cash in hand and at bank		144,790		143,291	
Gift Aid Claims outstanding		10,899		4,014	
Current Assets		155,689		147,305	
PAYE and NI payable		(1,697)		(1,764)	
Other Creditors		(682)		(1,442)	
Current Liabilities		(2,379)		(3,206)	
Net Current Assets			153,310		144,099
Long term liabilities - Pension			(30)		(42)
Total Net Assets			853,280		844,057
Unrestricted Funds			131,243		128,197
Designated Funds			8,871		5,203
Restricted Funds			13,166		10,657
Endowment Funds			700,000		700,000
Total Funds			853,280		844,057

The notes on pages 18 to 26 form part of these financial statements.

**AMPTHILL BAPTIST CHURCH
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a. Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The presentation currency of the financial statements is the Pound Sterling (£).

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern with unrestricted income continuing to exceed our expenditure together with our flexibility to reduce optional expenditure should the need arise.

b. Donations & Room Hire Fees

Donations are accounted for gross when received. The limited income from room hire fees are accounted for in the year the hire occurred.

c. Legacies

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

d. Investment income

The only investments are bank accounts and the Baptist Union Loan Fund. Interest from these accounts is shown separately.

e. Fund raising and publicity costs

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

f. Donations payable

The Church makes grants (donations) to other organisations whose charitable objectives complement its work. They are accounted for in the year in which they are paid.

g. Governance costs

This represents direct expenditure on the governance of the church. The management is currently carried out without charge by volunteers. The intangible cost is not included in the Statement of Financial Activities since there is no measurable cost to the volunteers for their services.

**AMPTHILL BAPTIST CHURCH
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h. Fixed Assets

The Church Property and the Manse are valued at Market Value.

The policy is to revalue the Church & Manse every 5 years.

All other Fixed Assets (Equipment and Furnishings) are expensed in the year they are purchased.

i. Depreciation

The two church properties have now been revalued to fair market price. The land & buildings are not depreciated because, in the opinion of the Trustees, the residual value of the asset is not less than the last revalued amount.

All other Fixed Assets are expensed in the year of purchase.

j. Gift Aid income

Gift Aid is recognised in the accounts as income in the same period as qualifying donations.

k. Designated, Unrestricted, Restricted and Endowment Funds

Designated funds are those received for use on specified purposes. Expenditure which meets those criteria are allocated to that fund. Unrestricted funds are those received or generated that can be used on the general aims of the Church.

Restricted Funds are those where there are special conditions on how the monies can be used. Endowment funds hold the values of the Church building and the Manse, where there are restrictions on the use of the capital should the property be sold.

l. Reserves policy

It is the policy of the church to hold a minimum reserve against the Unrestricted funds equivalent to at least three months General Fund expenditure.

m. Pension Deficit policy

It is our policy to value the pension fund deficit for the closed Defined Benefit pension scheme against our General Fund in accordance with FRS 102. The deficit is valued using the actuarial figures provided by "The Baptist Pension Scheme".

n. Fund Transfers

Transfers between Unrestricted General Fund and Designated Funds are used to ensure funds are available for and ring fenced for Trustee approved Mission Grant policies, also used to subsidise the income from Holding Fund church activities

o Legally, Ampthill Baptist Church is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

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2. Donations and Legacies

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Congregational Giving	186,802	179,186
Gift Aid	40,105	37,068
	<u>226,907</u>	<u>216,254</u>

3. Income From Charitable Activities

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Events and Activities	<u>10,998</u>	<u>13,754</u>

4. Other Income

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Room Hire	579	924
Other Income	387	248
	<u>966</u>	<u>1,172</u>

5. Investment Income

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Bank Interest	<u>2,325</u>	<u>899</u>

AMPTHILL BAPTIST CHURCH
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6. Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £
<i>Staff Costs and Expenses</i>	117,075	-	-	117,075	140,870	-	-	140,870
<i>Fellowship Costs</i>	5,685	13,024	1,477	20,186	5,881	16,438	-	22,319
<i>Administration</i>	30,829	29	3,756	34,614	14,568	48	-	14,616
<i>Building Costs</i>	23,142	73	-	23,215	15,813	-	-	15,813
<i>Equipment</i>	2,053	-	-	2,053	950	-	-	950
<i>Subscription fees</i>	1,079	60	-	1,139	916	50	-	966
<i>Grants</i>	-	27,511	6,192	33,703	-	25,649	3,294	28,943
	179,863	40,697	11,425	231,985	178,998	42,185	3,294	224,477

7. Grants

	2023 £	2022 £
Bedford Area Schools Christian Trust	4,200	4,200
BMS World Mission	8,251	8,250
BMS Birthday Scheme	-	139
Central Baptist Association	7,000	7,000
Fusion	960	560
King's Arms Project	12	831
Leeds CityWide Mission	-	500
MIND	63	781
Mission Aviation Fellowship	5,000	5,000
Shelter Box	12	831
Sue Ryder	63	851
World Vision	500	-
Carers In Bedfordshire	1,398	-
Keech Hospice Care Total	1,398	-
Rebecca Langley	1,448	-
Rob Baker	300	-
The Need Project	1,798	-
Association of Baptist Churches in Israel	1,300	-
	33,703	28,943

All grants were made in accordance with the policy noted on page 18, and all were made to organisations rather than individuals.

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8. Staff Costs	2023	2022
	£	£
Salaries	93,893	118,624
National Insurance	3,871	5,361
Pension Costs	8,553	9,265
Manse Utility Costs	4,733	3,778
Settlements	5,000	-
Pension Deficit Payments	12	2,567
	<u>116,062</u>	<u>139,595</u>

The church had 2 paid office holders and 4 employees during the year (2022 – 2 and 5). Namely, the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, a full time Youth Worker, a part time Children's Worker and a part time Church Administrator. No member of staff received emoluments in excess of £60,000 during the year (2022 – None). National Insurance costs are shown net of the NI Rebate of £5,000 (2022 - £5,000).

One Trustee, the Senior Pastor (Andrew Goldsmith) who is also an employee lived in a house owned by the church.

No sums were reimbursed to the Trustees for their work as Trustees (2022 – None).

As employees of the charity Revd Andrew Goldsmith and Revd Elaine Abdon-Shortley were paid a stipend and reimbursed for day to day expenses totalling £1,013 (2022 - £1,275) for training, books and travel expenses.

The church pays pension contributions for its Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, Youth Worker and Children's Worker to "The Baptist Pension Scheme" which is a defined contribution scheme which started in January 2012. The church contributions to this scheme are shown above.

9. Pensions

The Church is an employer participating in a pension scheme known as the Baptist Pension Scheme ("the Scheme"). The Scheme is a separate legal entity which is administered by the Pension Trustee (Baptist Pension Trust Limited).

The Minister and some members of the church staff are eligible to join the Scheme.

From January 2012, pension provision is being made through the Defined Contribution (DC) Plan within the Scheme, which are operated and managed on behalf of the Pension Trustee by Legal and General Life Assurance Society Limited.

Benefits in respect of service prior to 1st January 2012 are provided through the Defined Benefit (DB) Plan within the Scheme. The Scheme, previously known as the Baptist Ministers' Pension Fund, started in 1925, but was closed to future accrual of defined benefits on 31st December 2011.

A formal valuation of the Defined Benefit (DB) Plan was performed at 31st December 2019 by a professionally qualified Actuary using the Projected Unit Method. The market value of the DB Plan assets at the valuation date was £298 million.

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In July 2022, the Scheme announced that they had signed an agreement with the insurance company JustGroup ("Just") to secure DB Plan members' pension benefits. This agreement is referred to as a 'buy-in policy'. It follows a similar agreement with Just in 2019 that covered most pensions in payment at that time. The combined agreements mean that Just are now providing financial backing for all DB pensions provided through the Scheme's DB Plan.

The costs of such policies are largely driven by financial markets and these have moved substantially in the Scheme's favour. As a result, this transaction takes the Scheme out of a shortfall position for the first time in two decades. Although risks remain, the Baptist Union and the Trustee have agreed that deficit recovery contributions from each participating employer in the DB Plan will reduce to just £1 per month from August 2022.

Under FRS 102 we are required to value the pension deficit. The Trustee and the Baptist Union have agreed that Debt Reduction Contributions (DRC) will reduce to £1 per month for each employer from the August 2022 payment until June 2026. Currently, they do not anticipate reinstating the requirement to pay full DRCs in the future but we cannot rule that out at this stage. Participating employers remain responsible for providing a share of any additional funds that the DB Plan may require in future. Based on this, we have revalued our pension provision to £30 (2022 - £42).

During the period, the church paid £12 (2022 - £2,567) in Debt Reduction Contributions, and £8,553 (2022 - £9,265) in contributions to the Defined Contribution Scheme.

10. Fixed Assets

	Church	Manse	Total
	£	£	£
Cost b/fwd Jan 1st, 2023	275,000	425,000	700,000
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
Cost c/fwd Dec 31st, 2023	275,000	425,000	700,000
Depreciation b/fwd Jan 1st, 2023	-	-	-
Charge in year	-	-	-
Released	-	-	-
Depreciation c/fwd Dec 31st, 2023	-	-	-
Net Book Value at 31st Dec 2023	275,000	425,000	700,000
Net Book Value at 31st Dec 2022	275,000	425,000	700,000

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11. Analysis of Income and Expense by Fund

	Balance at 1st Jan 2023 £	Income £	Expense £	Net Movt £	Transfers £	Re-valuation of Provision £	Balance at 31st Dec 2023 £
General Fund	114,625	210,491	173,163	37,328	(29,994)	12	121,971
Fabric Fund	13,572	-	6,700	(6,700)	2,400	-	9,272
Total Unrestricted Funds	128,197	210,491	179,863	30,628	(27,594)	12	131,243
Board Game Café	-	173	39	134	-	-	134
Children and Youth	-	8,253	6,539	1,714	-	-	1,714
Coffee Stop	200	395	283	112	-	-	312
Fellowship Lunch	500	3,226	2,612	614	(614)	-	500
Holiday at Home	500	2,463	2,171	292	(292)	-	500
Israel Visits	502	-	-	-	-	-	502
Churches Together	554	300	268	32	50	-	636
Fusion	1,207	1,175	1,274	(99)	-	-	1,108
Mission Grant Fund	1,740	786	27,511	(26,725)	28,450	-	3,465
Total Designated Funds	5,203	16,771	40,697	(23,926)	27,594	-	8,871
ABC 200	4,000	7,500	4,926	2,574	-	-	6,574
Advent Giving	6,105	5,354	6,192	(838)	-	-	5,267
BLCF Grant	552	-	-	-	-	-	552
One Big Christmas	-	1,080	307	773	-	-	773
Total Restricted Funds	10,657	13,934	11,425	2,509	-	-	13,166
Holburn Trust (Manse)	425,000	-	-	-	-	-	425,000
Fairburn Trust (Church)	275,000	-	-	-	-	-	275,000
Endowment Funds	700,000	-	-	-	-	-	700,000
TOTAL FUNDS	844,057	241,196	231,985	9,211	-	12	853,280

Church resources have been allocated to the following funds:

- **General Fund** – unrestricted funds given to further the mission of the church.
- **Fabric Fund** – unrestricted fund held for major repairs to the buildings and equipment. Income is allocated from general fund.
- **Board Game Café** – a new venture to provide a social interaction with the wider community
- **Children & Youth** – relates to activities such as youth clubs, camps, outings, celebration events.
- **Coffee Stop** – weekly coffee morning for parents/carers and pre-school age children.
- **Fellowship Lunch** – monthly lunch club and worship service, mainly attend by seniors.
- **Holiday @ Home** – summer week-long activity for seniors.
- **Israel Visits** – funds to support visits to partner church in Israel.
- **Churches Together** – funds held for ecumenical activity in Ampthill and Flitwick.
- **Fusion** – summer week-long activity for junior school-age children.
- **Mission Funds** – funds used to support partners in national and global mission (see note 7).
- **ABC200** – restricted funds towards the purchase or redevelopment of the church building.
- **Advent Giving** – funds given during the advent season to support specific charities which are chosen each year by the church members.
- **BLFC Grant** – funds given to refurbish the youth hall (Upper Room).

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- **One Big Christmas** – funds donated to support the Christmas Day meal and Seniors Tea during the Christmas period. We are grateful for the £1,000 donation from Waitrose towards this.

At the end of the year, transfers have been made between various designated funds to either clear deficit balances in specific funds or to move excess balances from designated funds to the general fund.

12. Analysis of Net Assets by Fund

The fund balances at the end of the period are represented by the following net assets:

	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total 2023	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	-	-	-	700,000	700,000	-	-	-	700,000	700,000
Current Assets	133,652	8,871	13,166	-	155,689	131,445	5,203	10,657	-	147,305
Current Liabilities	(2,379)	-	-	-	(2,379)	(3,206)	-	-	-	(3,206)
Provisions	(30)	-	-	-	(30)	(42)	-	-	-	(42)
Total Funds	131,243	8,871	13,166	700,000	853,280	128,197	5,203	10,657	700,000	844,057

13. Merger Disclosures

Amphill Baptist Church (registered charity number 1127548) merged with Amphill Baptist Church CIO (registered charity number 1198662) on 1st October 2022. The objects of the charities are the same.

Analysis of principal SoFA components for the current reporting period

	Amphill Baptist Church (Pre Merger)	Amphill Baptist Church CIO (Post Merger)	Combined Total (Post Merger)
	£	£	£
Total Income	178,842	62,354	241,196
Total expenditure	(180,073)	(51,912)	(231,985)
Net income/(expenditure)	(1,231)	10,442	9,211
Other gains/(losses)	9	3	12
Net movement in funds	(1,222)	10,445	9,223

Analysis of principal SoFA components for the previous reporting period

	Amphill Baptist Church	Amphill Baptist Church CIO	Combined Total
	£	£	£
Total Income	232,079	-	232,079
Total expenditure	(224,477)	-	(224,477)
Net income/(expenditure)	7,602	-	7,602
Other gains/(losses)	19,722	-	19,722
Net movement in funds	27,324	-	27,324
Total funds brought forward	816,733	-	816,733
Total funds carried forward	844,057	-	844,057

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Analysis of net assets at the date of merger

	Ampthill Baptist Church £	Ampthill Baptist Church CIO £	Combined Total £
Net Assets	-	842,835	842,835
Represented by:			
Unrestricted funds	-	126,201	126,201
Restricted funds	-	7,377	7,377
Designated funds	-	9,257	9,257
Endowment funds	-	700,000	700,000
Total funds	-	842,835	842,835

14. Trustees Remuneration and expenses

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st December 2023 nor for the year ended 31st December 2022.

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31st December 2023 nor for the year ended 31st December 2022.

15. Related Party Transactions

During the year, a grant was made to a student outreach organisation called Fusion. In part, this funding will support the income of a family member of a Trustee. The grant was £960 (2022 - £560) and is disclosed in note 7.

A further one-off grant of £300 (2022 – Nil) was paid to a family member of a Trustee to support a music teaching trip as disclosed in note 7.

16. Related Charities

The custodian Trustee of the church is the Baptist Union Corporation Ltd which is 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, and the Central Baptist Association. The church made a donation to the Baptist Union Home Mission Scheme as set out in note 7.

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