

# 1. Minster's Report

## Jo Hellenbrand

2020 was a year of intense learning as a Minister in Training, which started as any other year with our usual services and activities which all ended abruptly when the Covid pandemic hit. We saw the church close its doors and all our groups cease for the first time in our history as the world went into lockdown. This happened just a few weeks after our serving ministers Darren and Melanie Pike announced they were moving on to a new ministry at Bromley Baptist so for the leadership team this first lockdown was spent in prayer for the future of the church, ringing around all the fellowship offering prayer and pastoral support and preparing for when the Pike family left.

I was also shopping each week for those I was aware of in the community unable to get out to get their groceries, up to 7 households some weeks and making sure they had all they needed. Darren set up recording our services on YouTube each Sunday and started a Wednesday evening Prayer meeting via Zoom (a medium none of us had ever heard of at the time!), which continued throughout the year.

Zoom was also used to continue our Friday Club and Energise sessions, led by Darren and Mel and then taken over by Jan. Graham and Andrew, which we were all so grateful for. However, due to a lack of Officers the Brigades never reopened after the first lockdown.

Easter involved daily devotions lead my Melanie and me and then the Good Friday and Easter Sunday services were recorded by Darren for the YouTube channel while we all stayed at home.

At the beginning of July the deacons all congregated in the manse garden with gifts and farewell messages as goodbyes were said to the Pike family and a new era began in the life of Eastwood Baptist church.

The Diaconate had worked immensely hard throughout this period but needed extra help so 4 new deacons were co-opted with their appointment to full deacons being ratified at our AGM in the autumn. We also were extremely grateful for the Rev David Mayne agreeing to be our Moderator, leading us throughout the rest of the year as we started to pray about a what sort of new minister we wished to call.

The Prayer Warriors were set up, a group of people dedicated to praying for the life of the church and we also used the time to take the Talking Jesus and Prayer Courses, inviting Christians from other churches.

The first lockdown ended as the summer began and so we waited until October to reopen the church, under strict Covid conditions which involved wearing face masks, sitting 2 metres apart and unable to sing, but it was good to be able to worship again and be together in fellowship, even if we couldn't have a cuppa afterwards! I preached once or twice a month and we had guest preachers the other Sundays. With the Pike family leaving we had no music group so we started using I-Sing worship and continued to record our services, so they were able to be watched on YouTube for those people still not wanting to come to the church or unable to.

The deacons continued to make regular contact with all those involved in our fellowship and weekly news sheet was produced, originally done by Melanie but then Rosie took over after she left us. These were emailed to those able to view them with over 20 being hand delivered to our elderly folk, not on email, each week by Rosie and Graham. These became much treasured contact with those receiving them looking forward to receiving them. I also organised for the local Cake O'clock tearooms to make over 50 cream teas which I delivered to the elderly members of our fellowship and the ladies of Women's Fellowship as a treat.

After discussing the idea with David Mayne, we set about making plans to become a Distribution Centre for the Southend Foodbank with Sharon offering to manage this venue, a role she is perfect for. She organised training for the large team of volunteers and made sure all the paperwork was done ready to open early the next year. She also agreed to be our representative as a Trustee for the Southend Foodbank.

Women's Fellowship reopened in the autumn and was able to hold a Carol Service before the second lockdown occurred in December and our doors closed again. All the Christmas services were recorded for our YouTube channel with 100 Christingles being put into gift bags and delivered to our church children. We also handed out more at our door on Christmas Eve so families could watch the service, led by the Keeble family, with their Christingles. This service was watched by over 200 households, our highest viewed service, followed by our Carols by Candlelight.

We also made up over 155 bags of gifts, helped by the fellowship of Leighfields church, and delivered them to all the staff and residents of the 3 care homes in Eastwood which are Brooklands, Havengore and Badgers. It was so good to be able to bless these folk who had been through so much and they were very gratefully received with one lady saying she couldn't believe people would want to give a gift to someone they didn't know! These included homemade Christmas gifts, chocolate donated by Tesco's, hand painted stones by the children and toiletries items of hand gel and tissues.

So many people worked so hard throughout this year which saw such great change and massive amounts of paperwork and cleaning so we could continue to worship and serve our community to which I am so very thankful and grateful. And all this was overseen by our Church Secretary Val, who kept us all in order with such love and wisdom.

The year ended after a year like no other but one in which we grew together, prayed together and saw God's hand in all we strived to achieve and as the New year began we were thankful we hadn't lost anyone in our fellowship to Covid, although we did see our sisters in Christ Rosina Eastwick and Maggie Wackett go to glory, and we were full of hope and expectancy for the year to come.

God bless,  
Jo Hellenbrand  
Minister in Training

## 2. Secretary's Report

### Val Statt

Our Motto Text for 2020:-  
At the start of the year Darren preached on this bible verse as we started a new year. Title of the sermon was "Trusting in God with Delight" our first service of the year also included our Re-dedication



to serve our Lord Jesus Christ here at EBC.

On the **11<sup>th</sup> January** the church was filled to see Melanie have her Ordination Service. Nick Lear our Regional Minister joined us as well as many friends and family of Melanie and Darren. Mags Farrow gave the sermon from Matthew 2:1-12 and John 1:1-14. We also heard Molly Pike sing 'You Say' which is always a delight. Melanie has achieved so much since her arrival with us in 2011 and to see her reach this goal was wonderful and inspiring.

**February**, you may remember that we had a storm sweep through called Caira which arrived on the Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> February. On the Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> Jo Hellenbrand hosted a CAP showcase in church. At the end of the month our Youth Group held a Pancake Fiesta on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February instead of Shove Tuesday, because our Ministers were away at the EBA Conference. All were welcome to enjoy the pancakes.

**March** started with news of our dear Sister Rosina Eastwick had gone to be with our Lord on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Her funeral was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> March where we met most of her family, Rosina and Geoff joined EBC in November 1978 and when able Rosina helped with stewarding and welcoming people into our church. We then went into 12 weeks of staying at home because of Covid-19. On the 15<sup>th</sup> March, Darren and Melanie gave us the news that they would be leaving Eastwood Baptist Church and taking a pastorate role at Bromley Baptist Church in London. None of us knew, what was in store for us, especially Darren and Melanie who wanted to plan their departure in such a different way. From the 23<sup>rd</sup> March we all heard from our Prime Minister that we needed to Stay At Home, Save lives, and Protect our NHS.

We then heard this word 'Zoom' and this became an everyday word for many months to come. The Deacons with Darren and Melanie met to make plans and the first of these was to have a weekly Prayer Meeting on Wednesday Evenings. This was a strange platform but it was a way in which we could gather together and hear God's word and prayer together.

Church life changed quite dramatically and Darren and Melanie soon had a plan to help us through what at the time was thought to be possibly 3 months!, and thanks to Darren, Mel Jo Hellenbrand and myself plus Thomas Pike who became an editor overnight for our Weekly Update, met via Zoom each week to put the news together and then at the weekend it was sent out via email and printed copies given to those who did not have computers.

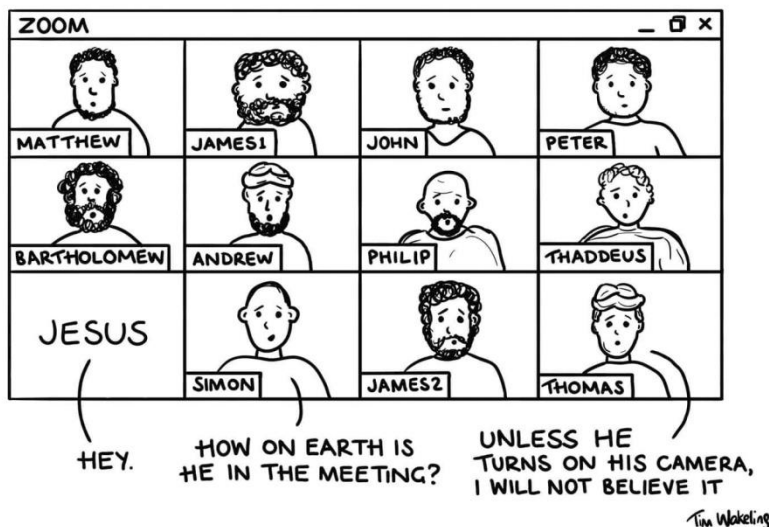
Along with the Weekly Update Darren prepared EBC at Home bible studies each week for everyone. Our services were put together by the Pike family from the Manse each week and were viewed via YouTube each week. Our Young people also had their own Zoom meetings on a Fridays. As we could not use the church and all other groups had to stop.

Easter was different in 2020 and we had to be creative again. On the 5<sup>th</sup> April which was Palm Sunday, and the start of Holy Week. Darren put together our You Tube Service which included Melanie showing us how to make Palm crosses and the team also from their home sung and played for us. Instead of meeting in church for our Holy Week devotions Darren prepared a series of 8 reflections. Plus we had a Thought for the Day each morning from Jo and Melanie. On Good Friday, we also had a service and linked with Leighfields Evangelical Church. Thanks are also given to Jo Hellenbrand at this time who worked tirelessly (and not stopped) with giving support to our congregation who were not able to get out for shopping or medical needs.

As well, as all this, Graham Back started to produce a Weekly Quiz which helped to us all keep our minds working! Thank you Graham.

We also were encouraged to meet after our services for a Zoom Coffee time at 11.30 am. This proved to be very successful in keeping us together and checking on each other too. The Deacons also were given a list of folk to regularly call and make sure they were coping ok.

Zoom and YouTube were to be a household name!!



Of course, it was also decided that we should have my Joke of the week too!!

On 5<sup>th</sup> April, we celebrated Easter Sunday at Home. We still had our Daffodil Cross which was prepared for us by the Pike family and then displayed in the church window for our everyone to see, and was noticed by our community. Rainbows become a theme and Melanie with the help of Daisy, Molly and Thomas produced a lovely window display.

At this time we also asked anyone in the congregation to send in anything that could be shared with the church family, or take part in the video services.

One of these was Gareth Evans, who with the help from Rosie delivered a magazine called Hope. Darren encouraged folk to look at Psalms for our Wednesday Prayer Meetings and to share encouraging scripture and what God had highlighted to us.

Loo Roll Challenge – towards the end of April, Melanie thought of an idea to get the whole church involved as a bit of fun for the young people and from seeing a school do this we were asked to record ourselves throwing a loo roll. This became a short video the idea came from St Edmunds School. You may remember that there was panic buying of Loo rolls!

In **May** we are still locked down but maintaining all our online/zoom meetings and our Weekly Update together with Bible Studies and Graham's Quizzes. Each Sunday also our services go out via You Tube plus our after service coffee and chat time. Going through a pandemic and having to stay a home unless going out for essential shopping or exercise was not easy and some of us were also more vulnerable than others. Along with Jo Hellenbrand the Leadership of EBC continued to contact all those in our church family. We also encouraged each other to call one another and we received prayer emails from Graham and Val Back. Our church window displayed the Rainbow and the text from 1 Thessalonians 5 v 11.

We were also mindful that we had not had a Members' Meeting and there was information that we wanted to share with everyone. In the letter sent in May we asked to have what we called an 'unusual church meeting'. Darren wanted to keep the members informed of church business. This was agreed and we were able to send financial information, summary of what we have done since the pandemic together with actions. Plus the church plan for the departure of the Pike family and church life after that. From this we also invited your questions and a document was put together to answer them.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> **June** Darren prepared the last of his weekly bible studies and Rosie kindly agreed to send the Green Fish bible study material plus take over editing our Weekly News. We were now entering into the last month that the Pike family would be with us, so a gradual handover started to take place and Jo Hellenbrand began to lead our Sunday Worship.

In **July** our Government announced certain guidelines on what we all could do and the Baptist Union also gave further guidance for churches to follow. When all this started in March we did not think we would be still dealing with the pandemic and meant that we could not see our church opening before September at the earliest. The Leadership agreed that an update was needed of these restrictions and a letter was sent out to all members in July. Jo would lead 2 services each month and I would secure other speakers for the other Sundays, with the request that if anyone would like to take part with reading or intercessory prayers they could contact Jo.

As we were not able to meet in church Darren, Melanie, Daisy, Molly and Thomas were not going to be able to have a special service and good bye that they would have like to have had. (It was agreed that they would come back when it could be arranged) We were able with everyone's kindness and generosity present them with gifts from us all. The Deacons met in the Manse garden on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July, and gave them presents and they were very pleased to receive them including a memory book of photos from the time they began to the end. Thanks to Sharon Watkins for helping with this.



Their last service with us was via You Tube on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2020, which was a much viewed service which included a video of many events that we had shared with the Pike family over the last 9 ½ years. Some of us also went to see them leave the Manse on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July, and I had my last walk with Digger, for a while. They had worked incredibly hard from 2011 when they arrived and developed so much with our Youth and Young families. Darren

took funerals, made visits to those in hospital, together with Melanie they visited our church family and helped in the difficult moments of life. As well as all the joyful occasions of births, baptisms, Holiday Clubs and much more. Christmas was especially a wonderful time with them, their home was also open to all who wished to visit at any time, and Daisy, Molly and Thomas were also involved with EBC helping out at Messy Church, Christmas events and towards the end also stepped up to play for us in church. Team Pike are an amazing family and EBC were blessed to have them for the time they had with us.

With the departure of Darren and Melanie from our Leadership, Joan Sage also stood down from the Diaconate in July 2020 and we were extremely thankful for all her commitment and wisdom that Joan had given the team and were sorry to see her leave but understood her reasons. This left us somewhat depleted, and we were pleased to advise you that Rosie Midson, Neil Keeble, David Flatman and Sharon Watkins were co-opted onto the Diaconate. Their gifts and talents were to become a great help as we continued to navigate through a Pandemic and Pastoral Vacancy.

In **August**, Jo and I met with our Regional Minister Nick Lear and discussed who could be our Moderator and we were thankful that after discussions with the Deacons and a virtual meeting on Zoom. Rev David Mayne, from Shoebury and Thorpe Bay Baptist Church became our Moderator.

We also set about preparing the Manse for rental, and we asked for volunteers to come forward to help with cleaning and garden work. I would like to say a massive thank you to all those who helped and the Diaconate who gave their time and resources to achieve this for later rental. We were seeing a decline in infections and certain restrictions lifted so we could meet outside and you may remember the 'Eat out to Help Out' scheme by the Government for August. During this time we needed to complete a Risk Assessment to be able to open up our church in a limited way given the advice from the Government and BU. We did not re-commence any church activities in September and looked at starting in October.

In **September** we did however have the opportunity along with our usual Wednesday Prayer Evenings via Zoom, join Simon Werrett and Jo Hellenbrand in a Prayer course called Talking Jesus. This was open to others too, and started on 9<sup>th</sup> September through to 21<sup>st</sup> October. The talks were from Pete Greig and were accompanied with details sent each week from Jo Hellenbrand.



All who joined would agree that they were engaging and good discussions were held.

We were also invited to attend via You tube, the Induction at Bromley Baptist Church on the 19<sup>th</sup> September of Darren and Melanie and family and a few of us were there in person. I was able to 'hand them over' so to speak to Bromley with an account of who they are and what they had achieved at EBC. Jo also prayed for them. We could not mingle and had to leave afterwards. Thanks to Neil who drove us there and navigated us around the Swanley Interchange!

At this time we also wanted to keep our Young People's Groups going after stopping for the Summer Holidays. A letter was sent to encourage volunteers and helpers to come forward to help with Brigade, Friday Club and Energise and sought your prayers on this.

With all that was needed to safely open up the church, this was scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> **October**, and because of the restrictions booking was required and details of how it will be was sent out to everyone. Our You Tube service was still recorded beforehand and our after service coffee time continued for those who wished to stay at home. At this stage the Government had issued guidelines about a 3 tier system and Essex was in high, but Southend remained medium so we continued with our service and Women's Fellowship met on Monday afternoons plus Green Fish met on Tuesday mornings. All these events followed the Covid-19 rules. We still had harvest donations and many of us collected for the Shoe box appeal.

In **November**, we again held another Prayer Course via Zoom with Jo and Simon leading this began on 4<sup>th</sup> November, - 23<sup>rd</sup> December and was called The Prayer Course and again proved very resourceful and engaged us all in discussion and prayer. On the 15<sup>th</sup> November, we held our AGM via Zoom and were able to deal with the business of the church and our co-opted deacons were confirmed to serve on the Diaconate. Both Andrew as Treasurer and myself as Secretary also were voted to serve EBC for a further term of 3 years. It was with sadness that on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, our sister Maggie Wackett died and Jo led her funeral on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December. We remember Maggie's contribution to EBC in particular for her help with stewarding at our many Holiday Clubs/Craft Fayres and making cakes for our Tea Services.

The Pandemic did not leave us and we then heard the news that a Kent variant had become more infectious and so the lifted restrictions were again to impact

our church life. This meant a 4 week lockdown so from 5<sup>th</sup> November to 3<sup>rd</sup> **December**; we went back to online services and meetings. Although we opened again it was not long before we were again in Tier 4 and advice by the BU was not to meet.

Despite this Jo Hellenbrand was supporting so many of our elderly church family and also was looking outward to our community. Jo contacted the care homes and found out how many were at Havengore, Brooklands, and Badgers and soon asked many folk to make things for Christmas Care Bags. All the items were put together and delivered before Christmas so that they could be quarantined for a few days because of Covid. Leighfields church also was involved and some of us also took part in Prayer walks with them too.

Jo continued to work hard on our Christmas Services, with the first a lovely Christmas Carol Service, the wonderful Keeble family put our Christingle Service together, which was arranged differently, many helped to prepare 'make your own Christingle'. Some were delivered to our young people and Jo and I was on hand on Christmas Eve, to give to those collecting from our 'door'. Our services continued to be pre-recorded and Christmas day was no exception and Jo used material from the Compassion Charity. Plus a special visit from Cliff Richard!! Our Church Christmas Tree was re-located to the window and this gave pleasure for those who passed by.

The year came to a close with our last service on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2020.

A year like no other, but I am so very thankful for Jo and the Leadership Team of EBC as we worked together in so many ways to keep in touch with everyone and keep our church going.

We remember Rosina Eastwick and Maggie Wackett who went to Glory in 2020 and may our Lord Jesus Christ look after their families.

### **3. Treasurers Report**

#### **Andrew Edwards**

The financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 was completely different to what we were expecting as Covid 19 started in March and this prevented services with a congregation. This resulted in a drop in income of £5849.13 against the projected budget of £64.7K.

During 2020 we sadly said goodbye to Darren & Mel who moved onto Bromley Baptist Church. It was decided to let out the manse pending the appointment of a new minister. This involved us in expenditure of £9000.00 approx spread over the year as we had to wait for trade's people to become available to do certain jobs.

Manse was placed with a letting agent in December 2020 but a tenant was not found until February 2021.

We saved money in not paying for ministers' stipends from August to December 2020.

We had communion collections for Olive Tree £184.50 and Christian Hope international £192.07 in the first quarter of the year.

We donated £500.00 to Southend Foodbank in November 2020.

So overall year 2020 was not as bad as it could have been.

## **4. Church Flowers**

### **Shelagh Turner**

March 23 saw the end of all the Sunday services and the flower arrangements due to the Covid 19 restrictions.

*(In 2021 it was decided to just have arrangements for special occasions as the church was not back to full capacity. My hope for the future in 2022 is that we can resume the flower rota for the church on Sundays)*

## **5. Coffee Heaven**

### **Val Statt**

Coffee Heaven which was held twice a month along with Darren's Open Office had to also close when we went into lockdown. A time to come together over a cuppa and chat, all were invited. Sadly, given the restrictions in 2020 we were not able to resume this outreach.

## 6. Weekly Update

### Rosie Midson

The weekly newsheet is a useful tool to keep everyone aware of all that is happening in the church. It is available on the church website but several people prefer to have a hard copy.

Throughout 2020 we have endeavoured to keep people in touch and also added some stimulation in the form of 'Graham's Quizzes' for many months. The hard copies were delivered by hand to those unable to get them via email during lockdown. That has kept Graham and I fit walking the patch!

We have developed a good relationship with Andrew at LPC printers at Jones Corner who kept going throughout lockdown, which enabled collection at the door.

A few folk, who are connected with the church but unable to attend any meeting, still like to receive copies; that keeps them up to date with our church activities. So many thanks to Graham who continues to help me with the weekly delivery round.

## 7. Website

### Jo Hellenbrand

Mark Hellenbrand offered to build the EBC Website, using the framework



purchased from Church Insight. After weeks of watching videos to learn how to put each page together and looking at other church websites to compare design and content, this was completed in a few months. The Weekly News sheet is added each week, along with any changes and updates. After attending a webinar, which offered the main advice that a website is honest and up to date, it is reviewed regularly.

The website is the church's front window and the thing people will check out before ever entering our building, viewed by thousands of people this year. The leadership team was very thankful to Mark for all his hard work.

## **8 Fabric Report**

### **David Flatman**

The main focus this year has been on the manse, after the family moved out in July a full survey was carried out and extensive work was done to the interior including cleaning and painting, the garden was cut back and tidied up and a life expired shed removed. Thanks to many folks from the church who worked hard to bring this back to a good condition. The manse electrics were also brought up to current standards.

In the church several lighting tubes and bulbs have been replaced as necessary.

The normal yearly procedures for fire alarm testing and emergency lighting, fire equipment and gas safety checks were carried out. Two replacement fire extinguishers were required and fitted.

## **9 FISH GROUPS (FELLOWSHIP IN SOMEONE'S HOME)**

### **Green FISH - Rosie Midson**

Luke 12: 32 "do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom."

Our group of up to 14 participants met every Tuesday when we could, finding the enjoyment of studying God's word together and praying a great encouragement. We had been studying the book of Peter and also expected to do the Lent course, prepared by Darren, when the first lockdown meant no further face to face meetings.

Keeping in touch with good communication was an aim of everyone in the church so I asked the group if they would like to receive weekly studies by email or in print for those not on email. This meant we had something in common and many used the regular Tuesday morning slot to read through the

study. Others were invited to receive these studies once it became obvious that no meetings were going to happen for some time.

Having completed Peter we moved on to the Gospel of Mark in July 2020 and that kept us going well into 2021. We have met face to face when allowed, keeping to Covid protocols in spacing, masks and ventilation.

Although nothing replaces the fellowship of actually being together it has been good to keep something in common as we shared our Bible studies and prayers, maintaining awareness of the group members and supporting each other at a distance.

## **Purple FISH – Graham Back**

Until the first Covid lockdown in March, Purple Fish was meeting regularly on Thursdays at 10am, usually at Graham and Val's house.

We enjoyed fellowship and refreshments together, and studying God's word and its implications for us as Christians. We also prayed for things affecting the members of the group, their families and friends, for the needs of our Church, and for other issues. We had an average attendance of about 8 people. Government restrictions prevented any further meetings this year.

## **Blue Fish – Val Statt**

Blue Fish continued to meet each Tuesday Evening at 7.30pm, our host homes continue to be Margaret and Steve and Moira, who graciously prepare for our meeting together with refreshments. Our time together is always enriching as we have got to know each other very well.

We continued with studying the book of Samuel 1 and 2 following the life of King David. These were presented through watching a downloaded video from a church service and Gareth led the discussions afterwards.

After our studies we always prayed for personal needs and those of our church family and current events around our community, country and world. Our meetings end with a cup of tea or coffee and cake.

Our meetings had to cease once we entered into the Lockdown and because of restrictions on meeting in each other's homes we were not able to resume even for a short period. We did, however keep in contact with each other and we could use the bible studies prepared by Darren each week in our own homes.

## **10 Fire, Health & Safety**

### **David Flatman**

I am pleased to report we strive to keep the church premises and facilities in good condition. We keep our regular statutory safety requirements (fire, gas and electric) up to date, in September this year we had the 5 yearly Electrical Safety Certification completed with various repairs that needed to be done.

## **11 Friday Club**

### **Jan Noble**

Friday club was led by Mel for the first half of the year. When lockdown happened in March 2020, meetings were continued over Zoom. When Mel left, the zoom meetings were continued by me and Graham Back. We had quizzes, scavenger hunts and even tried some origami. At Christmas a visit was made to the homes of all children known to the church with a small gift of a selection box and the components for making a Christingle so that they could join in our on line Christingle service.

## **12 Energise**

### **Jan Noble**

At the beginning of 2020 Energise was led by Darren and Mel with myself and Andrew as helpers. Lockdown started in March and the meetings switched to Zoom. Darren and Mel devised quizzes, played bingo and various other games, which was enjoyed by everyone. Darren and Mel left the church in the summer. The zoom meetings resumed in September lead by myself, Andrew and Graham using roughly the same format. We visited everyone at Christmas, taking a small gift of a selection box and also the components for

making a Christingle so that they could join in the on line Christingle service on Christmas Eve.

## **13 External Tenants**

### **Graham Back**

I took over as Booking Secretary from Joan Sage and give thanks for her service in this role.

For several years now we have made our church, together with its comfortable rooms of various sizes and our kitchen, available for local people to hire, either for one-off meetings or long term activities. Obviously, the onset of Covid 19 restrictions led to virtually all of these activities ceasing with the first lockdown in March. The exception to this was the Olive Tree Centre who, because of their charitable status and their counseling work, continued their work throughout the year, albeit that they increasingly did phone rather than face to face appointments.

At the start of the year, and until the start of the first Covid 19 lockdown, our church was being used by people and groups of varying ages and abilities, including

Mandy Lee Health and Fitness-combining diet and exercise for a healthier body.

The New Eastwood U3A-Part of an international organization known as the University of the Third Age, whose main aim is the education and stimulation of mainly retired members of the community. Membership is not related to a specific age, but to a period in one's life after full time employment and parenting. Anyone in their "third age" can join, including those who work part time.

Toddler Sense -This group had been renting the sanctuary for many years, and had lots of interesting equipment which provided a multi-sensory interactive experience that kept toddlers and their parents stimulated and busy through play, games and music. Unfortunately, after a change of ownership Toddler Sense decided to cease having the sessions.



Mum's Night Out provides a night out for mums, sometimes trips out, having a variety of different speakers, raising money for charity, or just having an evening enabling them to make new friends.

The Essex Townswomen's Guild. This group has been booking our premises on a bi-monthly basis for the last two years. The TWG was founded in 1929, following on from the suffrage movement, and is one of the largest women's organisations in the UK. Its aim is for women to develop friendships, get involved in crafts and other activities, and to campaign on social issues affecting women.

WW (Formely Weight Watchers). This well known slimming club started with us in 2019, and met at the church each Friday morning. But WW ceased to run their sessions after the first Covid 19 lockdown in March.

The Olive Tree Centre is well established at Eastwood Baptist Church, in comfortable rooms to the rear of the premises, which are available to them six days a week. From time to time they also use other rooms within the church for feedback and training purposes.

Eastwood Baptist Church is also used for occasional ad-hoc purposes as a polling station for both Local and General Elections, and for police and local community meetings.

Despite the obvious restrictions on usage of the church premises during the year, contact was maintained with most of the regular groups, and two (U3A and Mum's Night Out) even received our church quizzes for circulation to their members.

## **14 Messy Church**

### **Val Statt**

We were not able to hold Messy Church in January and February and then as we went into lockdown and Melanie and Darren leaving we have not held Messy church when we re-opened in October.

## **15 Pastoral Care**

### **Val and Graham Back**

The pastoral needs of our church are supported by the prayers of the members. We send prayer requests via email, and also have a section of the weekly news sheet dedicated to prayers, so that everyone, including those without access to emails, can be involved in the prayer support of our church. Where we can, we try to identify ways to support those who need physical assistance with things in their homes, and with lifts to appointments-obviously, for most of the year, with the restrictions imposed because of Covid 19, we were unable to do this very much.

During the year, especially when we were unable to hold our church services, with the Diaconate we built up a system of regular telephone phone calls to all known people in our church family, members or not.

We recognised in last year's report that most of the previous regular visiting team were no longer able to do so, due to their own health frailties, and that in the future there would be a greater need for visitors and people to otherwise assist, to encourage and comfort those who are unable to get to church, through illness or physical needs. With the coming of the Covid pandemic, that need has become much more, and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future."

## **16 Safeguarding**

### **Rosie Midson**

Once Melanie Pike left as our Safeguarding lead the diaconate asked me to consider taking on this role again, which I agreed to do. Following the virtual AGM in 2020 this was ratified.

I have refreshed my knowledge with an on line training course given through the Baptist Union as has Val Statt as our Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding.

Because we had not actual activities there have been few safeguarding things to consider but we did revise the Policy in 2020 which now includes a bit more detail and emphasis on electronic communications and how these should be handled with care. This also led to a revision of our Data Protection Policy. Both of these policies can be found on the Eastwood Baptist Church website and hard copies are in the church vestibule for anyone to read.

All those who are required to have had a DBS [Disclosure and Barring Service] check, which I am now also responsible for carrying out. The AGM will, again, show the level one safeguarding video which reminds us all of our responsibilities to all classified as vulnerable; children and adults.

## **17 Sunday School**

### **Val Statt**

Melanie balanced helping with the Music Group and Sunday school, unfortunately, although help was requested, this did not materialise and EBC have not been able to hold Sunday school. We have supplied writing and drawing materials for young children at the back of the Sanctuary. There is also a selection of books and toys to assist parents as they take part in the service.

## **18 5<sup>th</sup> Eastwood Brigades**

### **Val Statt**

Our Brigade Group was a joint group with Melanie leading the Girls and Gareth Evans leading the Boys, with the help of Rae Bennett. Daisy Pike also helped with the younger brigade children. They met each Wednesday evening divided into 3 groups and times. During lockdown they were encouraged to join the Friday Club and Energise Group which some of them also attended. With the Pike family leaving and Gareth resigning and rules on groups we sought to ask the church family in September for help to continue. Sadly, we did not receive further help although Rae Bennett would have continued to help if Leaders had been found.

## **19 Women's Fellowship**

### **Jo Hellenbrand**

Women's Fellowship enjoyed our usual variety of speakers from local churches and charities as the ladies enjoyed being able to meet together for the few months at the beginning of the year and the autumn, in between the two lockdowns due to the Covid Pandemic. Andrea and I maintained contact with all the ladies throughout the year and each lady received a homemade card, made with such love and thought, from Mary on their birthdays and during illness.

We were able to put on a Carol service in December which was enjoyed and all the ladies received a cream tea on their doorstep to remind them they were remembered and as a treat.

## **20 Pinocchio Parent and Toddler Group**

### **Shelagh Turner**

After the Christmas break Pinocchio's returned in January 2020 as normal until March when all of the church activities closed because of Covid 19.

During the subsequent months that followed and having many prayers, I felt it was the appropriate time to relinquish my role of leadership of Pinocchio's and hand over to a younger team.

My heartfelt thanks go to Jan Noble who has stepped up into role at such a difficult time with so many restrictions in place. It is great to see Pinocchio's is back again and thriving to the delight of the children and mums.

## **21 All Aboard Club**

### **Roy Norton**

All Aboard Club started on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2010 with around 20 members with Karen and Robin Oldfield as leaders. Kathy and Roy took over in 2012 when Karen and Robin moved away. The last meeting was held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020, since we last met on that date we have had to close because of the Covid-19 pandemic and lock down. Regrettably, after lock down we could not open again as with the retirement of Roy and Kathy we have been unable to recommence. This was a social club which included playing various board

games over a cup of tea and a chat. For this club to continue, new leadership is needed.

## **22 Men's Breakfast**

### **Graham Back**



The team carried their enthusiasm into 2020. In this, our eight year, our intention had been, as with previous years, to hold seven breakfasts, five at EBC itself, with two at The Oakwood. However, the introduction of Covid restrictions near the end of March restricted us to having been able to hold two breakfasts prior to the first lockdown, both of these being at EBC.

The breakfasts were well attended, with an average of 18 of our men settling down and enjoying a full English breakfast, and some others making donations. We had speakers at both of these breakfasts, with the speakers talking about what they were doing in their Christian lives. As James said in Chapter 2 verse 26-“As the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead” As well as giving a speaker fee, we encouraged retiring collections in support of the charities in which the speakers were involved.

## **23 Tea Services**

### **Jo Hellenbrand**

The Tea Service, held one Sunday afternoon a month, was well received during the three we were able to hold before the Covid Pandemic. It involved a traditional service, with well loved hymns and prayers for our fellowship, families, and friends, concluding with sandwiches and cakes.

This service was originally started with the elderly in mind but is welcome for all ages. We were saddened by the passing of Maggie this November, who had been making the cakes for the last few years, for which we were very grateful.

This service offers fellowship as people enjoy time together afterwards while sharing refreshments and we plan for it to restart when we can.

## **24 Ladies Breakfast**

### **Jo Hellenbrand**

The women's breakfasts have been organised by Melanie Pike for the last few years which involved a cooked breakfast at the Oakwood pub and plenty of chat and laughter. These have always been well attended on a Saturday morning once a quarter.

Due to the Covid Pandemic there wasn't any held this year but we hope for them to restart next year, when I have offered to organise them.

## **25 Prayer Ministry**

### **Jan Noble**

Unfortunately the prayer ministry had to stop when we went into lockdown in March 2020. Although the church has now reopened prayer ministry has not yet resumed. It is recognised that this is a very worthwhile ministry and was helpful to many of our congregation. We hope to start again in the near future

## **26 Special Events in 2020**

### **Shoe Box**

#### **Sharon Watkins**

As always we wanted to run the shoebox project, organised by the charity Samaritans Purse, at Eastwood. As we were in a pandemic and unable to meet I wondered just how this would be possible. The charity thoughtfully adapted their ways of working and we were all able to gift in traditional and new ways. The new option was to compile a shoebox completely on line and many people took this advantage of this facility. Amazingly for our service on November 5th we were given over 50 physical boxes. I was able to place them end to end and made a line of boxes leading from the entrance hall right up to the cross at the

front of the church. I was given the opportunity to do the prayers that week so made a video of this so we could celebrate and actually see the amazing response in our own homes. I can report that from the Cricket club collection point in Rayleigh and from Holy Trinity 405 cartons were taken to Tunbridge national collation point. This amounts to approximately 4,050 individual shoe boxes. So far the boxes from Tunbridge have been sent to Belarus, Nigeria, Bosnia, Moldova, Serbia and Albania. The UK total was 200,000 gathered in with just over 500,000 compiled online.

## **27 Social Events**

### **Graham Back**

Normally, social activities at EBC are run at EBC between Spring and Autumn. Unfortunately, this was not possible because of Government Covid restrictions. However, from April onwards, we did circulate weekly quizzes, not only to our church family, but also within the community, for example to groups normally using our church (Mum's Night Out and U3A). We also set up and ran a jigsaw library. Both of these activities helped to keep our "grey matter" going during and outside of the lockdowns.