

1. Ministers Report

Jo Hellenbrand

Last year was a good year in the life of EBC which much to celebrate and be encouraged by with the feeling of new growth after we had been pruned during the Covid years and answers to the many prayers given to God during this time. The year started slowly though, with the church and all its groups still closed due to the pandemic and the building only being used by the Foodbank. All the services were being pre-recorded and put on our YouTube channel with a Zoom meeting afterwards to enjoy fellowship together. The weekly Prayer meeting also continued every week until the summer.

Thanks to the success of the Covid vaccinations we were so delighted on Palm Sunday to be able to reopen the church again, with the restriction of no singing or socialising allowed but on Easter Sunday we were able to sing the last song, Thine be the Glory in the car park. It was the first time we had been able to sing together for over a year and it was an emotional moment as was the moment we could sing without any restrictions later in the year!

We also packed over 170 gift bags for staff and residents of the three care homes in Eastwood, Havengore, Brooklands and Badgers which were gratefully received. We did the same at Christmas with the addition of being asked to take Carol Services in the first two homes which was a joy.

Our Children's Groups and Women's fellowship reopened after Easter, with restrictions by the spring and by the autumn we were able to finally have refreshments together again which was great allowing for the Tea Service to start again.

We had new volunteers at Pinocchio's groups after Shelagh stepped down after many years of leading this, (with our grateful thanks) and Jan took over (also with much thanks as she also led the Friday Night Youth Groups). We also started to employ Gracie as our Play worker to support Jan which worked well and gave Gracie an opportunity for work experience while she studied her college work.

We were blessed by many visiting ministers and preachers in this time who generously recorded their message for our YouTube channel and came to the church to preach to those in our building and we continued to be led by our excellent moderator Rev David Mayne and hardworking officers and deacons.

Despite the restrictions we welcomed new people into the church and had the joy of baptising Annette and Gracie in the church and welcoming Annette into membership. We also looked to improve the spiritual life of our fellowship with our FISH groups and we did the Prayer 2 course with our friends from Leighfields church, along with prayer walks around our schools and care homes.

We also hosted a Worship Unlimited service and were part of the 5 churches service with our friends from several of the SABN churches along with a Compassion Sunday and continuing as a partner church for the Southend Cap Debt Advice Centre.

We continued to look at the community and became a Dementia Friendly church ready for the Community Café which was waiting to open once restrictions eased. This was planned for the end of the year but an increase in Covid cases delayed this again, but we were able to hold a Dementia Friendly Carol service at Christmas.

Christmas was a joyful month with the baptism of Gracie, the Ordination of myself (after completing my College course), and the Pinocchio's Christmas parties, along with being able to have the Carols by Candlelight and Christingle services in the church plus our Christmas day service. These were able to be Live Streamed thanks to a generous donation and the hard work of Neil setting it up.

We also offered Minister in Training Martin Wright, who we had been interviewing and invited to preach several times in the autumn to become a minister at EBC. We were delighted when he accepted along with his wife Kim and children Cooper, Macie and Essie after a unanimous vote at our church meeting. We look forward to them coming in the spring of 2022.

This year started with a closed church and ended with a new minister being called, new requests for membership, baptisms and much to be grateful for. Many people worked incredibly hard keeping the children's groups, Foodbank, Fish Groups, Women's Fellowship, Sunday services, news sheets, computer and sound desks operating, on top of the policies, finances, welcoming, reports and building maintenance and the many other jobs required to keep EBC running, and sharing the love of Jesus to our fellowship and community of Eastwood and I thank everyone who were involved in this.

I really feel the church was left in an excellent position ready to see where God has called us to spread the Gospel and support the vulnerable as we look to 2022.

2. Secretary's Report

Val Statt

January - 2021 began with us not being able to meet in church because of the Covid restrictions. We continued to have our services recorded and I was happy to be able to ask many faithful friends to help us with pre-recorded sermons. One of our regional ministers Graham Ross started our year on 3rd January. We also had help from Michelle Eversden-Thomas and Simon Werrett. Jo of course, continued to support the church in caring so much for everyone and preaching. The big highlight of January 21 was the opening of our Foodbank on the 20th January, and Sharon Watkins had worked so very hard to co-ordinate and made it possible with Covid restrictions to have all volunteers ready. On the 31st January, our Regional Minister Nick Lear gave us his last sermon as he was going to be moving away later in the spring.

We continued with our 'after service coffee time' via Zoom which brought many together, to be able to see faces was so wonderful and encouraged us all.

With our Manse ready for letting, I would thank Andrew Edwards for arranging for the letting agent to have access and also for everyone who had helped in the refurbishment of the manse.

Our Wednesday Prayer times via Zoom continued on at 7pm for a chat then prayers started at 7.30pm. Although this was a different form of praying together, we soon appreciated the opportunity to pray for the needs of our world, country and ourselves.

Jan Noble with the help of Andrew Edwards and Graham Back, were able to have the young people on Zoom for Friday Club and Energise on a Friday evenings. This was a challenge for them all but again the team were passionate about wanting to keep in contact with our young people.

Rev David Mayne, Minister from STBBC as our Moderator met with the Leadership of EBC to formalise the process of looking for a new Minister, and our first stage of this was to have open and honest discussion with all members and friends of EBC.

February – A letter was sent to everyone from David Mayne explaining how we will be finding a new Minister. All were invited to join a Zoom Meeting with David Mayne chairing, David asked each group the same questions: What are EBC's strengths, challenges, area of development and opportunities. For

those who could not participate via Zoom were able to have telephone conversations or write their suggestions and pass to me. David also chaired one Zoom meeting with our Energise Group along with their parents. With the help of David, I was able to put together a document with all views, suggestions that had come out of all these meetings.

We then were able to put a church profile together ready to send to the Pastoral Vacancy Selection Committee.

It could be seen that the church held very similar views on what we wanted and one of these was to keep Rev Jo, when her Minister in training period ended in November, 2021. This was confirmed unanimously at the Members' meeting on the 25th April.

Thank you to everyone who contributed in this process which helped enormously and with the continued support of our Moderator David Mayne.

At the beginning of Lent Rev Jo and Jan Noble delivered cakes to the fellowship, which were so gratefully received by everyone. Jo had contacted the local Cake O Clock cafe/bakery for help with this. Just another way that Jo helped everyone stay connected during these most difficult times. As it was also Mothering Sunday daffodils were also added for the ladies and Rosie and Graham helped with their delivery. See photos in Graham Back's report.

On the 22nd February, our dear sister Gwen Harper had her home call and had been a faithfully servant of EBC for many years serving as treasurer and other roles. Gwen's thanksgiving service was held on Friday 26th March.

We were able to hold our first Members' Meeting on the 28th February via Zoom.

March - We were now very used to zoom meetings and Jo with the help from Simon Werrett (Leighfields) began Prayer Course 2 which covered "Unanswered Prayer" by Pete Greig, which ran on a Monday morning.

On the 20th March, we were treated to a magic show which Neil Keeble arranged with his Christian Magician friend Steve Price, all this via Zoom. It was once again a creative and enjoyable event we were able to do.

One group that we had to make the painful decision to close was our Brigade and Neil Keeble took responsibility of letting the Brigade Headquarters know. However, 5th Eastwood will remain EBC's group should it be able to recommence in the future.

Restrictions eased by the end of March with churches being able to meet, but with social distances, wearing of face masks a no singing. I would like to thank Rosie Midson at this point for all the work she did putting together our Risk Assessment and making sure our church was Covid ready; we had to also make a note of everyone attending. Palm Sunday on 28th March was the first Sunday we opened. We were also mindful of the advice given by the BU.

April - Holy week was observed by Rev Jo, providing daily 5 minute devotions which were seen via our YouTube channel. Our Good Friday service was led by one of our Regional Team. Then triumphantly Jo took our Easter Sunday Services, and as we were able to sing outdoors, we all went into the car park where we used music from my ipad, not that we needed it as everyone was in good singing voice as we sung "Thine be the Glory". I think it made us all, joyful and tearful in equal measure. Rev Jo as she did before Christmas arranged for Care bags to be given to all the residents and staff at our 3 local homes; Badgers, Brooklands and Havengore. Thank you Jo, and everyone who contributed by making different things to go into the bags, not forgetting those who distributed them too.

Our Church Profile had reached the stage where the Leadership agreed that it was ready for the church members to view, before sending to the BU Pastoral Vacancy Settlement Team.

May - Our Profile was sent and was accepted and added to the PVL (Pastoral Vacancy List), ready for prospective ministers to read and send in their submissions to me as church secretary.

Our Women's Fellowship was able to resume on the 10th May.

This was also the time when Jo first started to look at the possibility of live streaming our services and obtain the information on how much it would cost EBC. We are blessed as a church as we learnt that the cost would be covered by a generous donation, which we all are very grateful for.

Our Friday Club and Energise group were able to meet in Oakwood Park instead of via Zoom, and this continued whilst weather permitted. Also on the 10th May the Pinocchio's Baby and Toddler group took place with all the safety cleaning precautions in place.

We held our 110th Anniversary on 23rd May which was Pentecost Sunday and Rev Jo led our service. Jo also created some lovely bookmarks for our anniversary.

Celebrating 110 years in Eastwood



Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

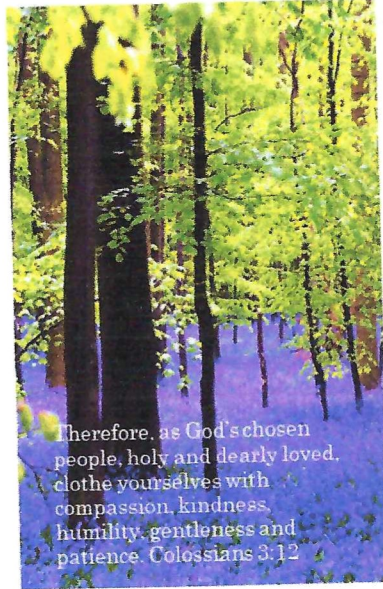
Acts 20:28

A Blessing

Take everything we are, everything we have been, and help us recognise everything you would have us be. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



Eastwood Baptist Church, Nobles Green Road
www.eastwoodbaptist.org.uk



Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Colossians 3:12

As we continued into **June**, Rev David Mayne led our service via a recording and we also were introduced to Pastor Fred on 13th June for the first time and he came back on subsequent visits. All enjoyed his style of preaching and was a great encourager. On the 15th June, we were able to hold a thanksgiving service to a dear friend of EBC – Lillian Fitzgerald.

Our young people's groups were now meeting in church and the Pinocchio's group were seeing fluctuation in their numbers.

Another initiative we did with Leighfields and Simon Werrett was to have Prayer walks, these groups were split into 3 groups and we prayed for the schools and the care homes in the Eastwood Area. This has enabled us to have strong links with the care homes and our local schools.

Our Profile had resulted in 3 candidates sending in their profiles which the Leadership team viewed and decided that none were what we were looking for at this time, so our PVL was resubmitted and the date extended to 11th July.

Rev Jo, our MIT was completing her assignments very well and on target and it was recommended by the EBA MRC for her to change her application from Regional to National Recognition as a Baptist Pastor. This proposal was agreed by the Leadership and was also agreed at the church members meeting on the 18th July.

In July, Jo was continuing to obtain approval from Southend Council for EBC to become a Dementia friendly church. We had been told what changes we needed to do which were minimal but bold signage showing where the toilets were needed to be in place along with arrows.

Along with Jo, Neil Keeble had become involved in what we needed for live streaming and meetings were had in the church to look at what was best. At this point we needed to be exactly sure on what we wanted. It was estimated that we could look at September as a possible changeover date to the work that Jo had done with her mobile phone; recording the services and uploading them onto our YouTube channel. I wish also at this point to say a huge thank you to Jo who spent many hours recording and uploading during this time period.

Our pastoral vacancy had exceeded the time and it was decided to allow no end date to be given.

Our groups had done extremely well in operating during this term and now would be taking a rest as normal during the summer holidays. Thank you to all the group leaders who served in the various ways and to new people who joined them too.

August - On 8th August, we learnt a lot from Ullly-Lange from Compassion who came to lead our Sunday service. This charity looks for sponsors for children in different parts of the world and how it changes the lives of those who have been sponsored.

The Wednesday Prayer Meetings stopped on the 18th August, giving the opportunity for the FISH groups to recommence although the Green FISH had been provided with a study from Rosie every week.

September - We were able to offer Gracie the paid role of Play Worker to help Jan with our Friday Club, Energise and Pinocchio's.

Covid Restrictions had lifted so that we did not have to social distance nor wear face coverings.

We received Martin Wright's profile which was circulated to the Leadership and it was agreed to invite him for an informal meeting which took place on 24th September.

Jo was able to once again hold the monthly tea service and with the help from Rosie who agreed to make cakes and supervise refreshments.

As normal we launched our Shoebox Appeal for Samaritans Purse on the 12th September. On the 25th September as part of our Harvest Celebrations Neil Keeble hosted fun and games magic show with a bring your own supper and Neil also led our Harvest Service on the 26th September which we collected food and toiletries for Southend Foodbank.

Neil had brought some of the equipment for our live streaming and now was learning how to operate a new system called ProPresenter.

October – After a successful meeting with Martin Wright it was agreed that he would come and preach at the Tea Service on 10th October, this went very well and we also met Martin's wife Kim and their three children. Afterwards they chatted with folk over tea and cake.

Not necessarily directly affecting EBC but it was with such shock and sadness that we heard on the 15th October, that our MP for Southend West, had been murdered at Belfair's Methodist Church whilst conducting a constituency surgery. Sir David Amess had been a supporter of our church and most recently attended Jo's Call to Ministry in November, 2019.

We had a different kind of service on Sunday 17th October, which was a joint service with other Baptist churches in the Southend area. We heard from Diane Watts a regional minister. The following weekend Neil Keeble once again took our service with some of his new illusions.

On the 1st **November**, the leadership and David Mayne had another meeting with Martin Wright, where both EBC and Martin could ask questions. The meeting ended and Martin left giving him time to pray and reflect. The Leadership agreed that we wanted to hear Martin come again with the 'a preach with a view'. In due time I contacted Martin and he agreed that he did want to proceed and he returned on the 28th November which was the first Sunday in Advent.

Also during November, we held our postponed visit from Worship Unlimited a local group of Christian musicians. This was a most joyous occasion with quite a full church just praising our Lord Jesus Christ. The team also prayed for a few people within the church. The following weekend on the 20th November Graham our Quiz Master held a successful quiz night raising money for church funds.

On the 23rd November, our brother David Wackett had his home call to glory. A quiet man who along with his late wife Maggie helped with social events at EBC.

December – We held a special church meeting on Wednesday 1st December where there was one item to discuss and that was whether to invite Martin Wright to become our Minister and work alongside Rev Jo. The meeting was not long and after some questions a vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed to ask Martin to become our Minister if he wanted too. I took a few minutes away from the meeting to speak with Martin, who did not need any time to reflect and gladly accepted the call to be our Minister. Once I returned the meeting all applauded and we look forward to 2022 when Martin and family can re-locate.

As we draw to close of the year, we were aware of the increasing number of cases of a new variant of Covid-19 and were keeping ahead of rules.

On the 5th December, it was a great delight to see Gracie being baptised and seeing many of her family and friends present.

On the 8th Jo held the first Community Cafe Carol Service and on the 10th December the children from Heycroft School came to help with filling the Christmas Care bags for the care homes, the children from Heycroft and also created lovely messages on Christmas cards to go in the bags.

After completing her MIT Jo had her Ordination service on Monday 13th December, and this was our first live streamed broadcast thanks to Neil Keeble. This was a memorable occasion and saw many of the ministers and speakers we had during 2021 come and support Jo along with family, friends and our own church congregation. Earlier that day Jo had also conducted the funeral of our dear brother David Wackett.

On Christmas Eve we once again had a group of us make up Christingles and we had one service at 3pm which Neil took for us, a good number of people were present. Our Christmas Day service was lead by Rev Jo Hellenbrand and she said she had a surprise for me and it was a clip from Cliff Richard!! Then on 26th December which was also Boxing Day Rosie Midson took the service.

In closing, I would like to thank all the Leadership Team and others within EBC who have helped so much to make EBC a loving place to worship our

Lord Jesus Christ in whom we serve.

3. Treasurers Report

Andrew Edwards

The financial year 2021 saw an increase in income from a variety of sources; Manse rental totalled £11746.68

Gift aid refund from HMRC totalled £8068.11 for tax year ending 05/04/2021
Inheritance received in January 2021 totalling £28363.73.

Expenditure was reduced as we only had to pay one stipend and expenses totalling £15369.37 (some of this was covered by donations towards the minister in training's stipend and costs)

Pulpit supply was £1989.19.

Church Maintenance was £16174.57; this included new heating for church total £9570.00 paid in 2 instalments of £4785.00 in April and £4785.00 in May.

We also replaced the boiler in the church kitchen for £2550.00. Rest of total was usual maintenance.

4. Weekly News

Rosie Midson

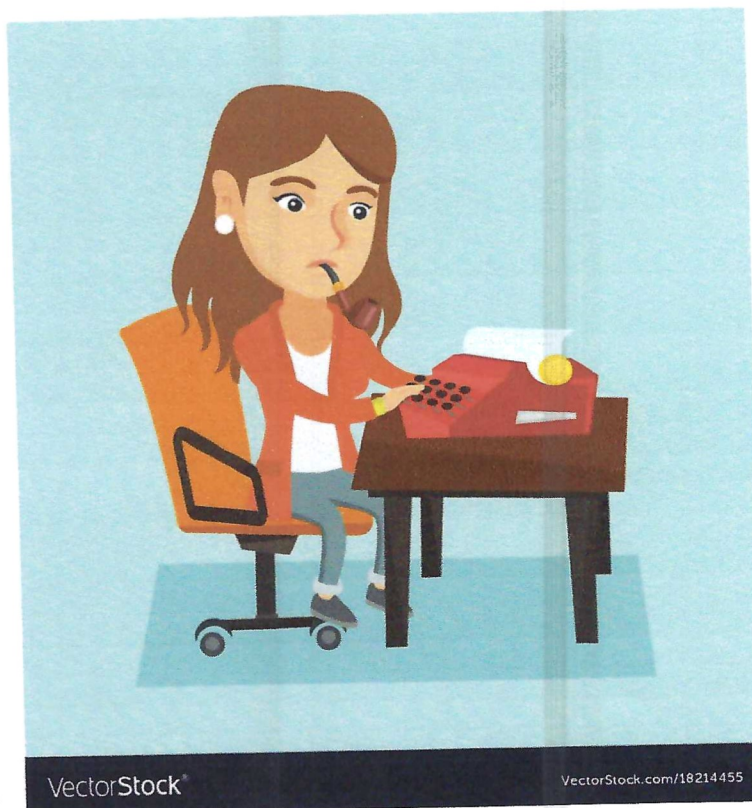
The weekly newssheet is a useful tool to keep everyone aware of all that is happening in the church. It is available on the church website and accessible to all who have the internet but several people prefer to have a hard copy.

Throughout 2021 Graham and I have continued to deliver hard copies by hand to those unable to collect them at church as 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.

Many use the weekly diary as a reminder to pray for the daily activities. Advance events can be publicised as well as updates as to what has gone on.

The Food Bank team often put in requests for items for the week and this is helpful for those planning to shop and bring goods in.

Graham contributes weekly with items for us to consider in our prayers, an addition to the more personal prayer emails which cannot be published due to respecting privacy.



5. Website

Jo Hellenbrand



Mark and I went on a Web Seminar exploring Church Websites during the Autumn of 2019, when it became clear we had no volunteers to set up the new site and the old one was years out of date. Mark has agreed to take this on and spent hours and hours watching videos and emailing computer experts and taught himself how to set it up from scratch in the spring. Once the

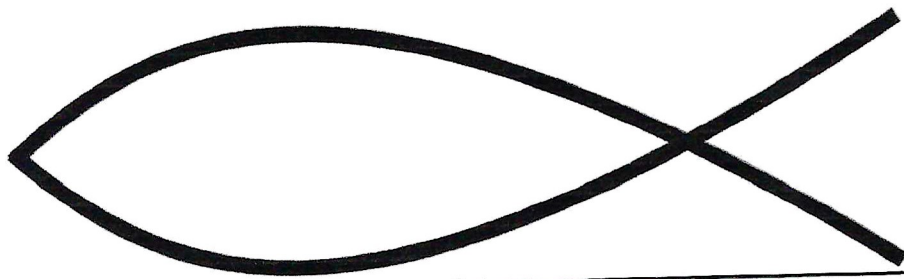
“bare bones” of the site were in place we both looked at how to make it a place people would want to engage in and learn more about the life of EBC and ultimately how to find out more about a life of faith.

We were told on this seminar that the website is the shop window of the church and so it's important to always be up to date, eye catching and always honest with photos shared that reflect the fellowship so no one who comes to a service after viewing the website is surprised.

Once the website was set up I spent hours looking at other church websites to get inspiration before I added the images, scripture and mission statements we want to portray of the beliefs of us here at EBC. I continue to make sure it is up to date and I am always looking for new ideas to keep it relevant going into the next year.

6. FISH GROUPS (Fellowship in Someone's Home)

a) Green Fish – Rosie Midson



During 2020 we had been keeping in touch with the group members receiving weekly studies by email or in print for those that not on email. This meant we had something in common and many used the regular Tuesday morning time slot to read through the study.

We commenced our in depth look at the Gospel of Mark in July 2020 and that kept us going well into 2021. January 4th saw our first face to face group resume and we have continued with that, keeping to all Covid protocol precautions as required.

After completing Mark's Gospel we looked at various Psalms and then began the Epistle to the Ephesians. As well as looking closely at the Bible passage each week and trying to find application to our own lives we share in prayer for each other, for the church and for the wider world issues

Our numbers have fluctuated over the year with health issues causing some to have to drop out but a faithful core of half a dozen or so continued throughout.

b) Blue FISH – Val Statt

Blue Fish were not able to meet because of Covid restrictions on numbers allowed in a home. We kept in touch with each other and some received the Bible Study that Rosie from Green Fish prepared.

In the autumn were able to meet again and were decided to listen to the recordings from Letton Hall on Joseph.

We met mainly at Margaret's home and sometimes at Gareth and Christine's home where our group were made most welcome.

Our time together also included praying for our church and each other followed by refreshments.

7. Fabric

David Flatman

This year has been very expensive regarding the church heating systems, the failure of the main church boiler in January required this system to be replaced, as we were in lockdown for the early months of the year this allowed us to look into various replacements and we eventually found a local contractor who could take on this work at a reasonable cost, which was completed in May. The boiler for the lower hall and backrooms needed replacing in March and the boiler for the upper hall and vestibule/toilets needed replacing in December. So now we have three systems which should be working for the next ten years.

The back corridor carpet was replaced in September.

The rear door steps and safety rail were damaged in the autumn and these together with a damaged manhole cover were replaced at the end of the year.

The front porch rails were repainted in the late summer.

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.

8. Fire Auditor/Health and 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.

9. Friday Club

Jan Noble

We started the year still in lockdown, with meetings continuing on Zoom. It was quite difficult to keep the young ones engaged and interested for an hour each week, so with the agreement of parents we shortened the sessions to 30 minutes, which seemed to work much better.

In the spring we moved from Zoom to meeting in the park, which was really lovely, just to be able to see and interact with the children in person.

As soon as Covid allowed we moved our meetings back to the church, and were able to recommence our short teaching and chat sessions, in which the children participated well. I think they probably enjoyed the games more though.

By September, after the summer break things were more or less back to normal and we were able to end the year with our annual Christmas party when Neil came along and organised some games for us

10. Energise

Jan Noble

We began the year, still in Covid restrictions and therefore continued to meet each Friday on Zoom. We had some good discussions, quizzes and games. As the evenings got lighter and restrictions eased a bit, we started to meet for games in Eastwood Park.

Once restrictions allowed we moved back to meeting at the church, wearing masks and adhering to social distancing, which proved challenging when choosing games.

After the summer break we were at last allowed to meet under fairly normal conditions and things became much easier and more enjoyable for everyone. We were able to finish the year with our annual Christmas Party when Neil came along to organise some music and games for us.

11. External Tenants

a) Graham Back – January to May

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 2020, and this situation unfortunately prevailed well into 2021. 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. Two other pre Covid groups (The Essex Townswomen's Guild and Weight Watchers) decided during the lockdowns that they would not be returning.

Despite the obvious restrictions on usage of the church premises, especially during the first part of 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. Mum's Night Out decided that, with the increasing age of their members, they would prefer to change to weekly Thursday afternoon (rather than evening) sessions.

During the lockdowns, opportunities were also taken to keep past and potentially new tenants informed of our requirements for use of our building, and observation of Covid rules. We were also able to identify some actual and potential users (our own and external tenants) who would only be using the building once a month, as opposed to weekly. We were able to set up future arrangements (post Covid restrictions) for such groups to meet on Wednesday afternoons. This helped to release future space for other more regular weekly external tenants.

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.

b) Jo Keeble – May - December

The outside groups using the church have remained fairly constant, with one group leaving (Eastwood Townswomen's Guild) at the end of 2021.

The regular groups are:-

Pilates-Tuesday morning

New U3A - 3rd Tuesday in the month-pm.

Cake Club (parenting group) -Thursday morning.

Mum's Night Out- Thursday pm

PHOLK cookery Club, for adults with additional needs - Thursday evening.

Olive Tree continues to book training days and their supervisions, also their Thanksgiving service in October.

Two parties

Already had an enquiry for a possible booking for April 2022, from the Eastwood Floral Art group.

Local elections

Resident's meeting- Beaver Tower

Adult education meeting.

Schools visits - including Easter/Harvest/Christmas services.

Police community meeting

Magic workshop/ show

Thanks to Rosie for putting together new contract and to those who have opened / closed for events.

12. Pastoral Care

Graham and Val Back

The pastoral needs of our church are supported by the prayers of the Members. We send prayer requests via email, and also have an entry on the weekly News Sheet dedicated to prayers, so that everyone (including those without access to emails, and those who are unable to attend church services, to whom the Newsheets are delivered), can be involved in the prayer life of the church, including support of the Members, their families and friends.

We also send requests for lifts to medical appointments via emails. And where we can, we try to identify ways to support those who need physical assistance with things in their homes.

The continued effect of Covid 19 on people's health (both physical and mental) has meant that during the year the need for contact by phone or email has been very important. The diaconate has made regular contact with our Members and church friends during this difficult period, when attendance at church for services and other events has been restricted, and for some, not possible. However, we recognize that in the future, given lifting of Covid restrictions, there will be a greater need for visits to encourage and comfort those who are unable to get to church, through illness or physical needs. Despite all the restrictions that were created by Covid, there were still a few odd moments when we were able to lighten the mood a bit. Here are two photos, taken on the doorstep, when gifts of daffodils and leeks were presented on the occasion of St David's day!



Trevor



Gareth and Christine

13. Safeguarding

Rosie Midson

Our AGM provided the opportunity to show the level one safeguarding video which reminds us all of our responsibilities to all classified as vulnerable;

children and adults. Apart from that 2021 was thankfully a quiet year for Safeguarding, children's work not resuming until the autumn.

14. Women's Fellowship

Jo Hellenbrand

Women's Fellowship has continued to meet in the church restarting in April after the pandemic, being able to start having refreshments after the sessions in the lower hall from October when the Covid restrictions lifted which many of the ladies enjoyed but some still remained cautious.

We have enjoyed a variety of speakers, which our Secretary Andrea arranges for us, from Local Baptist Ministers, ladies from other churches and speakers from the projects we support. We continued to raise funds for the Motor Neurones Disease, having not had a full year of donations last year. Nearly £400 was raised adding to the £273 raised in just the first three months of 2020.

At Christmas we were unable to go for our usual Christmas meal but we had singers Steve and Sandra Copsey come and sing Christmas songs which we could all join in with.

We have many ladies who never came back after we closed during Covid, mainly due to aging and health issues but we have been pleased with new ladies joining us.

This group continues to be a blessing and the highlight of many of the ladies week.

15. Pinocchio's Parent and Toddler Group

Jan Noble

We started the year with the country still being in lock down. We formed a new team of leaders with Carole Collier taking over the registers and supervising refreshments, with Christina Petrou and myself organising the programme. Rosie Midson very kindly offered to take over the accounts side of all the youth work, which was a real blessing

In the spring we made activity bags for all the children as we still weren't allowed to meet in person. As soon as we were able, we started our meetings again. Under Covid restrictions we were only allowed 15 adults, excluding staff, we all wore masks and we weren't able to serve refreshments or to sing. All

crafts had to be individually packaged for each child and all toys needed to be cleaned after each session. Slowly things got easier and we saw our numbers on Mondays increasing once more, although Fridays were a bit slower to get going. Gracie Redding joined us as a play worker in October and was a great asset.

We ended the year with a Christmas party when Santa paid us a visit. A big thank you to all our volunteer helpers during this difficult time, we couldn't have managed without you.

16. Men's Breakfast

Graham Back



The team were, as ever; keen to carry their enthusiasm into 2021. In this, our ninth year, our intention had been, as with previous years, to hold seven breakfasts, five at EBC itself, with two at The Oakwood. However, the continued problem of Covid restrictions and uncertainties meant that we were only able to have one breakfast. This was our Christmas breakfast at the Oakwood.

We hope and pray that we will soon be able to return to having our normal number of breakfasts together, as described above, when at the "in house" breakfasts we will aim to return to having speakers, to talk about what they are 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".

At these breakfasts, as well as offering a speaker fee, we will as before suggest retiring collections in support of the charities in which the speakers are involved.

17. Tea Service

Jo Hellenbrand

After the Tea Services ceasing in March 2020 due to Covid, after prayerful consideration, we felt God was calling us to restart them when the restrictions changed in the autumn of 2021, allowing refreshments to be served. We were therefore able to do several services, with Rosie kindly offering to make the cakes and organise the refreshments, which was like old times as she was fundamental in this service starting 10 years ago by organising all the refreshments.

Cecilia has blessed us by playing the keyboard for us meaning we can have the traditional hymns which aren't always available on the i-sings worship we use on a Sunday Morning. We have the same faithful team of volunteers who help set up and put away each month who are Godsend.

This service is primarily for the elder members of the church and folk on the fringes of church life who like the older style of worship and hymns. We have regular people who only come to this service and it's a joy to be able to share fellowship with them afterwards.

18. COVID 19 - Management

Rosie Midson

Who would have thought that during 2021 we would still have to be considering issues around protecting ourselves against Covid 19?

In the early summer of 2020 we had a small working group to determine policy **and behaviour supporting both Government and Baptist Union guidelines** and also, of course, legal requirements.

This was in the form of risk assessments which were regularly reviewed and changed as guidance changed. Initially we could not meet at all to worship, and so we developed skills in recording services and using zoom and other technology in order to keep in contact with each other. Increased pastoral support, contact calls, shopping for those who could not get out and newsletters became the norm alongside mask wearing and hand washing.

Once we were able to use the building the numbers had to be limited to safely space and so using the white plastic chairs we could not only easily set more spacing but clean down afterwards too. Hand hygiene became the order of the

day and we developed a safe system of taking communion too; Baptists and separate cups had a great advantage here!

By the end of 2021 things looked as if we might be getting back to a new normal routine but then a new variant struck and we had to reconsider all we do.

We remain vigilant but, while mask wearing is no longer required; good hygiene remains the basis of all infection control and all groups ensure that rubbish is properly disposed of and areas cleaned. Covid will likely stay with us much as the common cold has, so we ask everyone NOT to attend church if they are unwell.

Formal risk assessments will resume if required but thankfully we can do most things much as we would have done prior to this pandemic and remain grateful to God for His protection over the church.

19. Foodbank

Sharon Watkins

W A S H



Eastwood Baptist Church opened its doors for the first time as Eastwood Distribution Centre Foodbank on Wednesday 20th January 2021. It is part of the wider Southend Foodbank charity running under the guidance of the Trussell Trust. Leading up to that day was a lot of planning, recruiting, paper filling in and training. There is a team of 15 who all play an active, manual, role in the running of this project. It opens every Wednesday morning from 9.30am to 11am. The church is open for donations on Mondays 3pm – 4pm and Fridays 11.30am to 12.30pm. We have four drivers who take turns to collect the boxes of food and take the donations of goods between the warehouse at Belle Vue Baptist church in Southend and EBC. There are also a team of prayer partners who faithfully pray for the Wednesday opening sessions. Then there are the amazing band of volunteers who form the rota to help each week to distribute food and other essential items.

There was a very slow uptake of the Foodbank provision for many months so we had to pray and consider how to make our presence known. One of the most effective ways was the production of a big weather proof banner that is clipped outside the church, advertising to everyone that passes on the Eastwood road. We did some leaflets drops as well. Gradually the number of guests increased and we have had weeks where we have given out every box of food we have had stored.

The end of year figures, 01/01/21 to 31/12/21 show what a fantastic impact we have made in helping those in our community of Eastwood and supporting the work of Southend Foodbank across the borough:

***193 vouchers were issued that fed 539 people full meals for three days which works out giving to 321 adults and 218 children. As well as food there were personal hygiene items, cleaning products and a variety of other items as well as the love of our church.**

***4403 Kilograms of food has been donated via Eastwood Baptist Church. That works out at 5.8% of all the food donated to Southend Foodbank. The church was the fourth biggest channel of donations, the three higher being supermarkets.**

The ethos of the Trussell Trust is that in the future there will not be the need for Food banks. To this end there is an understanding that as well as providing food the DC will signpost to other organisations that can give professional help in all areas of life. When there is the opportunity to talk to the guests and if they want to talk, we listen. There have been many personal stories of great hardship shared. We had the privilege of sharing some of these at our Harvest Festival where we focused on celebrating and giving to Southend Foodbank.

This is a big operation that pulls together the time, vision, love and hard work of many in our church. Having grown small roots we have learnt plenty over the past year and know that there are many directions in which we can develop. We need to prayerfully find out which of those we should explore more deeply.

20. Shoeboxes – Samaritans’ Purse

Sharon Watkins

We launched our shoebox appeal in September. As Puppet partners were not able to be with us in church we did the next best thing and showed a video of a performance which always gives a jolly start to the project.

21st November was the gifting day. We were really pleased to welcome people to the church who are not regulars yet brought in their filled shoeboxes to us. Kingsway Preschool worked their magic again via Jo gifting 34 boxes. There were at least 9 boxes gifted on line. Cash gifts and a range of individual presents were also given to the appeal. Thank you Rosie for transporting all these gifts to the packing centre in Rayleigh

In total we were able to give 106 boxes plus extras this year.

21. Community Cafe

This new venture was not able to start as planned in 2021.

22. Social Events

Graham Back

Normally, social activities at EBC are run between spring and autumn. Unfortunately, this was mostly not possible because of continued Government Covid restrictions. However, from spring 2020 until spring 2021, we did circulate weekly quizzes, not only to our church family, but also within the community, for example to other groups normally using our church (Mother's Night Out and University of the Third Age). We also continued to run a jigsaw library. Both of these activities helped to keep our "grey matter" going during and outside of the lockdowns.

In the autumn, restrictions eased a bit, and Neil Keeble was able to provide us with a very enjoyable Magic Show...on 25th September.



23 Flower Ministry

Shelagh Turner

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.

24. Live Streaming

Neil Keeble

During our Deacons meeting in May 2021 we discussed what options we had with regards to being able to get our services out to members/friends of EBC that could not attend in person.

At that time there was a lot of work and duplication getting a service recorded & released. We also found that it was difficult to ask for outside speakers to not only record their sermons but to attend in person.

Therefore, we started looking at Live Streaming.

With the assistance & guidance of our friend Jon Stanton from Earls Hall Baptist (EHB), Jo H & I went and viewed what EHB used. This was our first viewing of Pro Presenter.

Although looking rather daunting we were not put off.

After some months of viewing various YouTube tutorials, we proceeded to ask Jon's advice on what equipment was required. Jon kindly provided a list along with costs. EBC have been blessed in that a very generous donation was made to specifically be used for Live Streaming.

Therefore, new computer, camera, cabling etc was purchased. Jon came and assisted me in setting up the equipment. We found that there were issues with the sound. As a result we needed to seek further advice.

I'm pleased to say that we were able to live stream Jo H's ordination service in Dec 2021. We've had a few 'wobbles' but we were pleased with the outcome.

Thanks to David Mayne's help I was introduced to his 'AV Man (Audio Visual)' and a meeting will be set up in 2022.

I would just like to thank the church for the support & patience whilst getting this all finalised. Volunteers are always welcome!