



Love God, love each other, make disciples

ANNUAL REVIEW

of

2008

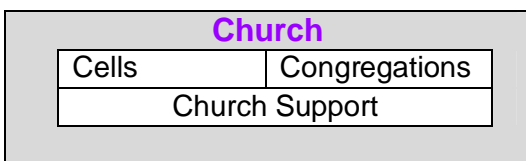
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CHURCH

In the Old Testament, Israel worshipped in their homes and then in exile in the synagogues. A synagogue could be started by just ten Jews. And then they gathered in large numbers at regular intervals during the year, for festivals, feasts and holy days (Ex 23:14-17, Deut 16:16-17). The Psalmist wrote, "I will fulfil my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people".

New Testament Christians worshipped in much the same way. There were no church buildings and they could not meet in large numbers in the open, so they gathered in one another's homes and small groups. Yet they also had a keen sense of a wider grouping, so that Paul could write to the Christians in Rome, the Christians in Philippi, and so on.

One of the most exciting movements of the Holy Spirit to sweep the world today, is a fresh sense of 'being church' in cells and celebrations. This brings a creative diversity and flexibility within a church that reflects the complex missional situations which surround us. Such churches, often known as cell churches, are much more able to be 'all things to all people' as they reach out in Jesus' name.



Here, at GBC, we are still working out what it means to be a church made up of cells and congregations. More about that during 2009! In this review of 2008, we have used **cells – congregations – church** to organise the reports from our different groups and activities.

To begin with there are two ministries which are church-wide: **prayer and mission**.

Prayer

There have been many blessings in the prayer life of the church during 2008, including:

- The regular Come and Pray Together sessions on the third Saturday morning each month – particularly the prayer walk in January, the meditative prayer time led by Guinette Davies in February and the 'Seeing in the Dark' Advent session in December.
- The completion of the prayer vision and the sharing of this through Jeremy's visits to cell groups in the prayer vision road-show.

Challenges ahead for 2009 include:

- Encouraging the whole church in prayer.
- Developing the breadth and depth of intercessory prayer throughout GBC and finding new ways to communicate the excitement of answered prayers.
- Developing prayer ministry at GBC – as part of services and also in small groups.

As we move on through 2009 we are excited about the working out of the prayer vision and the potential to get more of our young people actively involved in the prayer life of GBC.

Andrew Shefford has stepped down from the Core Prayer Team during this year and we are grateful for all he has contributed. We are glad to have recently recruited Ann Newman and look forward to the sensitive insightfulness she will bring to our team. We are also glad to have John Smith's input and look forward to the wisdom and experience he will bring.

Jeremy Lange – for the Core Prayer Team

Mission

World Mission

The GBC Mission team is Carol and Geoff Collett, William and Lai Ming Wyers, Rachel Thurley, Mike Noble, Christine Heaton, Kath Pickersgill and Tim Martindale. The team were sorry to receive the resignation of Daniel Duncanson Hunter in 2008, who was thanked for long and dedicated service on the Team.

The Missions supported by GBC and which continued to receive God's blessings in 2008 are:

Rehoboth Children's Home in the Philippines, UK Secretary Connie Andrews ably assisted by Pat Jacobs. The REAP programme, which started in 2008, has proved a great blessing to many children by helping them through education whilst remaining in their own homes.

Kathryn Thompson gave a personal report to the Church on her visit in the Spring and continues to thrive, living and working at Rehoboth in the Philippines.

Jonathan and Matty Thurley in post in Asia with Frontiers International also gave a personal report to the Church upon their visit in the Spring, recounting God's blessings in many ways in very difficult political and practical circumstances.

A.I.C (Anglo Indian Concern) led by Rachel Thurley has been blessed financially with increased giving, especially from members of GBC. Praise God the government inspector came to check-out the Vine Charitable Trust on 28th January 2009 and said that he would make a positive recommendation for the long awaited foreign currency account.

SAO Cambodia, Chief Executive Geoff Collett also took on the role of Chair of ICC in 2008 and presided over the continued growth of ICC adding new partners and programmes to the work in Cambodia.

Mission Direct, of which Tim Martindale is a Director, saw the number of volunteers travelling on short term Mission to help the poor double in 2008, taking nearly 450 people on trips.

A number of other Church members are involved in the above and in other Missions in a variety of roles.

Those travelling abroad from GBC on short term Mission trips in 2008 included Dorne and Catherine Watson, Annette and Roger Hickling, Rachel Lynn, Pat Jacobs, Brenda & Justin Wood, Abraham Kalyapu, Simon Martin, Javan Hirst, Emily Mayes and the Ruckman family.

A **Mission Sunday** held in June was a new opportunity to highlight Mission in its wider sense. The service included the presentation and prayers for those travelling abroad during the summer and was followed by a cross cultural lunch, where we enjoyed food from "around the world".

Overseas missions in general and those represented and supported by GBC face a number of challenges in the coming year:

- Funding is becoming a great challenge as the credit crunch tightens personal finances and the fall in the value of the pound affects all overseas missions.
- The world's economic problems are hitting the poor and marginalised very hard in the countries where our Charities work as they see staple foods double and treble in price.
- Jonathan and Matty face considerable personal and wider Mission challenges, living and working in a Muslim community.
- The Trustees in India of the Vine Charitable Trust want to develop the scope of the work and appoint new trustees able to supervise such developments in Chennai.
- Within GBC, the challenge remains of recognition, communication with and Mission to the diversity of cultures living in Godmanchester and those visiting GBC.
- Bringing and keeping Mission as a holistic part of worship at GBC is an ongoing challenge.

As we continue our work this year we are excited about the following:

- Dorne Watson is now volunteering with Mission Direct, based at the Luton office, currently dealing with overseas staff recruitment.
- Rachel Lynn is volunteering with Mission Direct as a member of Overseas Staff. She will be in Cambodia from January to March, then moving on to Moldova, Eastern Europe, which she visited on a two week trip in 2008.
- AIC are encouraged to see families in Chennai who have been helped over a long period becoming self-sufficient, especially those who have also come to know the Lord.
- The appointment of John to the role of Senior Pastor at GBC

Tim Martindale for Mission Team

Local Mission

Explorers

We have been blessed in many ways during 2008, including:

- Our dedicated and committed leaders with a real heart for young people.
- The fact that over 30 children attend Explorers almost every Thursday and that over 40 children have attended at least one session. Very few accidents and incidents! The children have different reasons for coming: most are keen about the games and craft, but for a number of children the message spot is their favourite part!
- A highly successful Holiday Club, with a large team of enthusiastic leaders, attended by over 120 children during the week (average attendance just under 120).
- Our second Torch party on 31st October 2008.

Challenges for 2009 include:

- Making the programme attractive to primary years 3-6 so that many more children will come regularly: there are so many alternative activities. Attracting the children to the Torch party is very difficult.
- With the Holiday Club now under the Explorers' banner, to see even more children who attended the summer club coming to Explorers on Thursdays so that we can build relationships more deeply.
- Encouraging children from GBC families to come along with their friends.
- Maintaining sufficient leaders who can play their part in keeping the club running.

As we continue with our work this year we are excited about:

- Getting to know a new cohort of children, seeing them grow a little both physically and spiritually.
- Challenging the children to think about their personal faith, sharing our own faith and telling them about Jesus.
- Another Explorers' Holiday Club!

Duncan & Tine Marsh

Football Project

We have been blessed this year with relationships growing and six of the lads attending d-Caf regularly on a Wednesday evening. Three of them have made a commitment. Praise the Lord! Leaders have also been blessed by being able to support in court hearings, family support and prison visiting and writing letters.

The challenge that we are facing for 2009 is that the number of lads playing on a Monday evening has dropped, but that has given us an opportunity to develop deeper relationships. In September most of the lads will be too old to play, so we pray for new lads to come along.

We are excited about the fact that we have a strong committed team of helpers many of whom were new in 2008. This work will face a new and exciting challenge of recruiting new players for 2009.

Martine Woodbridge

Kings Ripton Court

The Kings Ripton Court Project has continued to be blessed during 2008. We have continued to visit the centre on alternate Thursday evenings throughout the year. The residents are always pleased to see us and are normally waiting at the door for our arrival. It's a brilliant opportunity to meet them on their home ground and get to know new residents, re-establish old contacts that we haven't seen for a while and develop friendships with residents and staff. As I looked at the list of names on last year's register I was amazed to see we had worked with 81 different young people with an average of 20 each week. We have shared a lot of fun and laughter, but also tears and sadness. What a privilege God has given us to be a part of the lives of so many un-churched young lives!

There are a number of challenges facing us as we continue this work through 2009:

- We need more people to join the team (please speak to Maria if you want to find out more about what's involved)
- We need God's help to build good relationships with the new management team and to develop those with the staff we already know.
- We also need God's help to continue to build and grow friendships with the young people: to be aware of individual needs and respond in His strength to often difficult and painful situations.

We love spending time with and getting to know this group of special people! It's really exciting to see their openness to God and be a part of what He is doing in their lives. We look forward to all God has planned for us in the coming year with hope and excitement. In particular we look forward to taking a group of them to Soul Survivor in August again. God has used this event to really impact many of our young people in recent years and we hope that it will again be a pivotal point in many lives.

Maria George

Littlefoot

Littlefoot Club continues to grow in numbers on an almost weekly basis. Currently on an average week there are about 30 carers and 40 children. Many regular attenders bring along their friends which continually swells our numbers. Word has spread and we get people from many places further afield than Godmanchester, eg. Brampton, Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon and even as far as Chatteris. As a result we now use 3 rooms including the worship area. We are very grateful to Mike Lusha who spends the whole morning in the sometimes very cold worship area, supervising the activities in there. Jane Fasham organizes the often messy craft which the children really enjoy. Amanda Last and I provide refreshments, welcome, conversation etc. We feel that this ministry is as much to the adults as the children and so making people feel welcome and cared for is a priority. To help with this we have been able to arrange visits by our resident beauty therapist, a mobile hairdresser, chocoholics, fair trade and our twice yearly parties. We are encouraged to hear people say how friendly and welcoming the atmosphere is in the group and we hope to be able to continue that in the coming year.

As the numbers increase we are very conscious of safety issues eg. toddlers standing on babies! We have a good team of people who help to run the group but we still feel an overall leader would be beneficial. Patricia Lynch led the group until May last year having faithfully and ably served for many years. We are very grateful to her.

We have started a parenting course (Parentalk), using Care for the Family material, on Friday mornings. The morning includes watching video material and then discussion in small groups.

Refreshments and a creche are provided so that hopefully the parents will be more able to relax and enjoy the course. We hope to use opportunities to encourage people to join in with other things, eg the marriage course. Interest has been expressed in that so hopefully there will be another one this year. Links are being developed with the Children's Centre based at Godmanchester Community School and with their help we hope to re-start the toy library although at present we don't have anybody to run it. We are considering a one off event to help prepare parents and children starting primary school. We want to use these opportunities to introduce people to the love of Christ through our care and interest in them and their needs.

Christine Heaton

Marriage Course

The aim of the Marriage Course is to build a healthy marriage that lasts a lifetime. We ran this course during the Autumn Term and six couples came along, two of which didn't have any links to GBC. Each night took the form of a candle-lit dinner for two followed by a video and tasks enabling private discussion for each couple on topics such as communication, resolving conflict & good sex. In everyday life some of these topics are difficult to raise with your partner and the course provided a safe and structured way to address difficult issues.

The guests really appreciated having a meal out together (especially the choice of puddings) and time to talk - married life is often too busy to talk about such things!

Vince and I think that this is a fantastic course - it was the third time we had been through the material and we still got plenty out of it. Many thanks to Andy Blakey in the kitchen and the army of helpers setting up and providing the food.

Patricia & Vince Lynch

Rock Solid

God has blessed this work in many ways during 2008:

- Some kids becoming Christians!
- Kids from non Christian homes beginning to ask leaders to pray for their situations!
- Kids asking deep searching questions and keen to listen to the talks.
- Good relationships built with leaders.
- Kids (and some parents) moving closer to the realization that Christianity is 'normal'- a lot of parents will chat with leaders when picking up their children or will trust the leaders with their children whereas before they would be cautious!
- Luke Todd taking on more and more leadership.

We do have challenges to face though in 2009:

- Lack of strong leadership who can take on the ministry.
- If we have huge attendance the evenings can be difficult to manage.
- With high energy levels that 11-14 year olds have, the venue seems small sometimes for activities, with chairs stacked along the walls.

But we also have exciting things to look forward to in 2009:

- Being able to take the kids on a Christian weekend away.
- A possible parents' gathering!
- Bringing in professionals to do sessions – e.g. Stephanie Brown, Geoff Collet, John Smith, a Local Police Officer!
- Kids becoming more and more open to us sharing the Gospel with them.

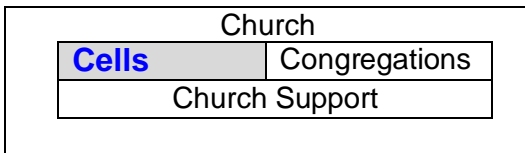
Abraham Kalyapu

Schools Work

This year we have continued to be involved in most of our local schools in a variety of different ways.

- 'It's Your Move' – for the 3rd year running we have run a lesson based on the Scripture Union book 'It's Your Move', which is a book to prepare children for the move from primary to secondary school. We run this lesson at Godmanchester Primary and St Anne's Primary with help from St Mary's church.
- We continue to do assemblies on behalf of Churches Together at St Peter's and Hinchingsbrooke Secondary Schools - the whole school is covered over one week each term.
- GBC have also continued to do a monthly assembly at St Anne's School and at Godmanchester Primary when invited. The Headteacher at Godmanchester Primary (Phil Ellington) came to speak at GBC as part of Education Sunday.

CELLS



Cells (our small groups and teams) are the foundational unit of our church life. We have many “small groups” which meet within our cell structure. It is in cells that we study the Word and apply it to our lives. It is where we experience the Holy Spirit as we build up and encourage

one another. It is where we can combine evangelism, spiritual growth, calling to service and decision making. It is in small groups that believers can use their gifts to serve one another and their world. We call this “**loving, learning, doing and deciding**”.

Cells have the flexibility to closely meet the needs of their members and to respond to their own mission opportunities. Our cell group leaders have reported many blessings over the past year – as well as challenges as they move on through 2009.

Blessings include:

- Numerical and spiritual growth – many benefiting from the study materials provided, from occasional visiting speakers, from studies such as ‘Freedom in Christ’ and ‘Encounters with God’ and from worshipping together.
- The development of deep friendships and the ability to provide pastoral care for each other and others outside the groups.
- Prayer support for each other and answered prayers.
- Enjoyment of social times together – having fun!

Mission initiatives have included:

- Crafts with a Cause
- An African meal – which also raised funds towards the Kings Ripton Shoebox Christmas gifts.
- The Buckden Youth Club
- Evening meals, a neighbourhood barbecue and a ‘Swiss’ evening.

Challenges for 2009 include:

- The need to strengthen some groups and to replace leaders who are moving on for various reasons.
- One group’s commitment to support those who are grieving and on their own.

One group’s feedback was short and sweet but summed up well the common messages coming from all the groups: New faces, old friends; thoughtful study, thriving fellowship; challenging families, changing health; diverse service, direct mission; champion diversity, celebrate unity!

From a collection of comments from various cell group leaders

Ignite

There have been many blessings in the work of Ignite during 2008:

- Seeing some of our Ignite guys move on with the Lord.
- 3 teenagers were baptized in April.
- 3 applied for church membership and have been welcomed into the body of Christ at GBC.
- Teenagers have continued to show a hunger and a keenness to go deeper in our Bible studies. They have taken part in the planning of the series we have been studying.
- The young people led services during the year.
- The production of ‘Rainbow Sheep’ (the new termly Youth Magazine)
- We took many of our teenagers to Soul Survivor and RISE with a number of them committing their lives to Jesus for the first time or rededicating their lives to Him.

Challenges facing us in 2009 include:

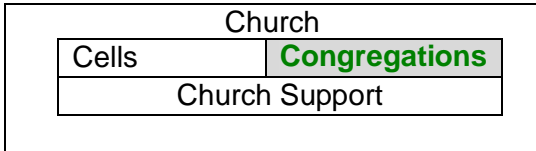
- The need for more leaders to support and mentor these wonderful kids God has given us.
- Kids not feeling a sense of belonging – although this has greatly improved.
- Attracting guys who are 14+ and have graduated from Rock Solid.
- Most teenagers are getting busier and busier with their academic work, so doing series and maintaining continuity is a big challenge.

There is lots to be excited about for 2009:

- Seeing these guys moving on in their faith.
- Seeing the teenagers being involved more and more in the church life – e.g. planning and leading young people led services.
- A possibility of forming a cell/cells for teenagers.
- Soul Survivor is always exciting and a spiritual boost for these kids and leaders who come. Most of them are already counting down and have invited their non-Christian friends!

Abraham Kalyapu

CONGREGATIONS



Belonging to a congregation is our other visible way of 'being church'. We gather for worship together in larger numbers because this gives us the sense of festival, whether that is in **singing praise, learning from**

Scriptures, or caring for each other in prayer. It is where we know we belong to something bigger than our cell, and are aware of God's activities in a wider context.

Currently we recognise our congregations as **Sunday morning, Sunday evening and d-Caf.** During 2009 we sense God is leading us to establish a **Songs of Praise** congregation as well as to support other church congregations in our area.

Sundays

Worship

I am so often reminded by people from other churches who remark at the number of musicians we have at GBC how fortunate we are, something many of us take for granted. We are blessed by the different styles of each of the groups and our abundance of musicians also frees us to be used in other churches too. During 2008 our ministry at Stukeley Meadows ecumenical church, which we have supported over several years, came to an end and while some members have joined GBC, others we no longer see. However, we continue to support Yelling Baptist Church and they seem to be going from strength to strength with a vision for youth work and a steadily growing church.

We have also been very blessed by Abe's Youth Band who we have seen mature over the last 12 months. They now play an equal role in leading our main Sunday worship and I am looking forward to seeing how this group will develop in the future. Thanks also for David Fennell's and Paul Bradshaw's faithfulness and skill in leading worship over the past year.

Our main challenges for the coming year are:

- To give more space for God to speak in worship – perhaps moving towards a simpler service.
- To develop more creativity in our services.
- To make sure we fully resource all our services (eg children's worship, Songs of Praise etc) as well as looking outwards to see if we need to support other fellowships within the area.

One of the things I am particularly excited about is the potential for a simpler service style to allow more times of intimate worship.

David Rootham

Youth Band

We have been blessed this year by leading worship at Recharge, Burwell Baptist Church, Biggleswade Baptist Church, and GBC. The young people have just grown in their faith and confidence, as well as their musical skills.

Challenges facing us for the year ahead include the need to find a female leader, a vocalist, and more young people for the band. We would also like to find an alternative venue for practices – where noise levels are less of a challenge than they are at GBC.

We are grateful to God for bringing Ed Newson to take part in leading the band. I'm excited about the fresh ideas he has to take the band forward. The training with Sam and Sara Hargreaves (from St James Hemingford Grey) will just take us deeper in our worship skills and heart! We're excited about more involvement with worship at church and possible missions opportunities in other churches.

Abraham Kalyapu

Movement in Worship

'For in Him we live and move and have our being' Acts 17: 28

It has been a joy meeting together and receiving God's blessings as we seek to explore wonderful worship songs through movement. We thank God for the opportunities we have had to share this ministry and also for the enthusiasm of the children taking part in the morning services. We are excited that our group has started to grow and that we have been asked to perform for additional events and at different churches. We ask for prayer for protection, inspiration and the challenge of finding time to practice. Thank you to the Worship Bands for their support and encouragement.

Delia Steer

Drama

During the past year drama has been used in church at various times, including Easter, Christmas and multi-media services. It has been a blessing to see the hard work put in by all the different people involved and to receive encouraging responses. It can be a challenge to find or devise new and relevant scripts to use, but I believe drama remains an exciting way to communicate and reinforce messages. I hope and pray that God will use drama to speak to people in the year ahead.

Emma Blundy

Junior Church

We have been blessed in 2008 with

- Dedicated and committed leaders with a real heart for young people.
- Two of the children becoming Christians.

Our challenges for 2009 include:

- We really need more leaders and helpers. We also need worship leaders.
- Many Junior Church children attend irregularly. This makes it difficult to maintain a teaching programme that engages with the children.
- Encouraging the children to invite their friends to Bring-a-Buddy.
- Work in partnership with parents.

We are always excited about the new opportunity that each Sunday gives us to teach our children about God, Jesus and the bible.

Duncan & Tine Marsh

GROW

There have been a good number of boys joining GROW from Junior Church this year and so attendance has been good. A number of kids from Rock Solid Club (without a church background) have joined us on Sundays! Lots of the kids are keen to learn. We have had 2 girls from this group baptized this year.

We still urgently need more leaders. Some of the kids' behaviour is challenging and this is proving an ongoing difficulty. Finding material which these kids can engage with is also a challenge.

We're excited though about kids asking if we could do tough series from the Bible, and the prospect of a possible youth alpha or Christianity explored course over the summer. I'm hoping to take some 12 year olds to Soul Survivor. I'm excited about a few new leaders and also about the kids' involvement in Youth services.

Abraham Kalyapu

Support for Sunday Services

Sound

2008 was a lot like 2007 as far as the sound was concerned. We've made some cool technology changes to the sound system but it's basically the same small crew running it. 2009 is the year when we will have to beat volunteers off with a stick and say "No! Get back! There is no room in the rota until 2018!" This will be achieved by installing more gadgets that glow and flash enticingly and by running an advertising campaign in "Update". "Volunteer now to avoid disappointment/being beaten back with a stick!" Full indoctrination into all things audio will be given. (Titus 2v1, Proverbs 4v2, 2 Tim 4v3 NIV)

Ian Heaton

Other

We are blessed that so many of our fellowship at GBC have servant hearts and willingly do the 'behind the scenes' tasks that are so essential in making our Sunday services happen. So thank you to those who: arrange flowers; prepare communion; prepare the baptistry; prepare and project songs etc; record services; serve tea & coffee after the service; set out chairs; wash towels and tea towels; welcome people and carry out other stewarding and caretaking duties.

Our challenges for 2009 are the same as always – to recruit more helpers and to continue to aim for excellence in all that we do.

d-Caf

D-Caf has evolved from an Alpha course to become one of our congregations which meets on Wednesdays at GBC and is a multi media cafe style expression of church aimed at the 16+ age range. We have had up to 45 people attend including leaders.

The blessings in 2008 were many and include seeing numerical growth, Christian commitments, baptisms, dedications and growing levels of trust. Many people were taken to Christian events for the first time and had life changing experiences.

The big challenge for 2009 is putting in place effective and relevant discipleship and offering opportunities for service and also an effective pastoral care structure.

As a team we are looking forward with excitement to see God grow d-Caf and see people discover gifts and learn to serve and see yet more people hear the good news for the first time.

Adrian Woodbridge

Songs of Praise

We had a great turn out for our first Songs of Praise style service in November 2008 (traditional hymns followed by afternoon tea). Of the 75 people attending, about 25 were people from outside of our usual GBC congregation – mostly contacts from our involvement in all the local sheltered accommodation complexes as well as contacts from the newly re-launched lunch club currently held on Tuesdays at the Salvation Army premises. We are hoping during 2009 to continue to build on these many contacts with older people in our community and to provide regular services in this style.

Carol Singing, Hospital Services and Services in Sheltered Accommodation

Carol Singing

Another enjoyable festive round is over! Again, we visited 5 venues – The Chestnuts; Oak Tree Court; McCartney House; Rectory Gardens and Woodley Court. 66 residents came and sang their hearts out along with a good crowd of singers and musicians from the church. This really is a great outreach as many of the residents now recognise us from previous years and they really appreciate our visit - plying us with tea, coffee, mince pies and other drinks! Joey II (cockatiel)

once again gave us a lovely accompaniment including keeping a good jazzy rhythm in 'See Him lying on a bed of straw'.

Chatting afterwards is an important part of the visit and the residents are always keen to enter into conversation. Thanks to all those who came along and joined in from church. We don't always have a large group so more are always welcome.

A big thank you to those who led the sessions: Roz Ball, Dave Rootham, John Pickersgill and Keith Doe. This may be the only Christian input that some of the residents hear in the course of a year. It is only a short message (2-5 minutes) as the main purpose is to sing carols. The residents certainly enjoy choosing their favourites at the end – although 'Angels from the realms of glory' and 'Ding dong merrily on high' leave us all out of breath!

It would be good to do something at Easter – not a service – but some sort of get together with an Easter theme – eg Easter food. Any ideas?

Alison Ball.

Hospital Services

We thank God that we have been blessed by our involvement in the services at Hinchingsbrooke hospital this year and that God has used us to bless others – it is a privilege to be there for patients if they need to talk or if they want us to pray with them. We still need more people willing to come and help at the services.

Gwynneth Fellowes

Langley Court

The St Ives Cell Group has continued to hold monthly services at Langley Court and it has been a privilege to be given the opportunity to share our faith at a deeper level. It was wonderful to see a large number of residents attend the Christmas service with the local school choir.

Delia Steer

McCartney House

The monthly service at McCartney house has now been running 22 years and is blessed by the regular attendance of a loyal core of faithful residents, who show great care ensuring fellow attendees are aware of the date and time, accompanying and encouraging folk to join us.

Occasionally we are challenged particularly in the summer months, if resident 'non attendees' wish to enjoy sitting in the sunny common room, where the services are held, or out on the adjacent patio, and may appear to find our presence intrusive, although the service lasts barely half an hour. They are always encouraged to join us, and we pray for wisdom and sensitivity at these times.

The faith, love and compassion of those who attend, often despite health problems or bereavement, encourages and excites us, as does Pat Jacobs' musical input, and regular support from Alison Harris.

We believe this is an important outreach to those who may be unable to attend any service outside the residence and pray that it may continue to be a blessing to all who participate. Any others feeling called to this ministry are most welcome to join us.

Colin and Hatty Borland

Oak Tree Court

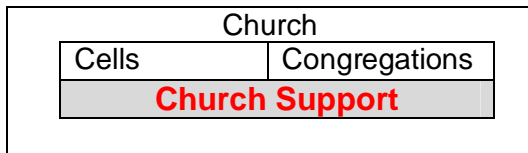
Meetings on a regular monthly basis have continued with appreciated assistance from Pat Jacobs (music) and Connie Jacques (scripture reader) and support from Rachel Thurley. It was good to see a number of the residents at the Songs of Praise afternoon in November which they all thoroughly enjoyed. We continue to pray for more residents to attend.

Peter Harris

Rectory Gardens

Godmanchester Churches Together continue to lead a service at Rectory Gardens on the 4th Sunday afternoon of each month – John George leading each time it is GBC's turn on the rota.

CHURCH SUPPORT



In order to be free to respond to God's Spirit, whether in congregational worship, cell groups, or mission opportunities, we need the exercise of another set of support ministries. These ensure that our church is organised well and we can therefore maximise the impact

of the God given work we have been given to do. These are servant ministries which often go unseen and this Review gives us the opportunity to recognise and appreciate this 'backroom' work.

Buildings & Maintenance

We continue to be encouraged about:

- The extensive way in which the church buildings are used throughout the week for a variety of events in furtherance of the gospel.
- The faithfulness of those who contribute to the regular maintenance and upkeep.
- The work that has been carried out this year in replacing the heaters in the small hall and office, carrying out decoration to the hallway, rewiring the lighting for the stage in the worship area and fitting plastic fascia to the main entrance as well as general repairs and maintenance.

Some of us who are most active in the work are not as young as we used to be and it would be good to have some younger helpers join us on a regular basis.

We are excited about the opportunities there are to continue to improve the buildings that God has provided for us to use.

John Stevens

Child Protection

We want to say a huge thank you to Sally Baker who, as Child Protection Co-ordinator, has overseen a complete and thorough revision of our Child Protection Policy in 2008. Thanks to Sally again – with help from Steve – for revising our Child Protection Training materials and delivering them to those who had yet to receive this training.

John Brown has overseen the recruitment process – with more individuals added to the database of those who have been both CRB checked and interviewed.

Ruth Blakey has overseen the renewal of about 50 CRB enhanced disclosures – for all those whose initial disclosures were over 3 years old.

Challenges for 2009 include:

- making progress in devising and implementing some specific guidelines and training for those involved in our more detached type youth work (eg Football Project, Kings Ripton Court and d-Caf)
- getting to grips with new government legislation – which will mean learning new ways of processing applications – just when we all knew what we were doing!
- Devising and delivering some new, shorter, refresher training sessions for those whose initial training was some time ago now

Ruth Blakey

Finance

At a recent evening service, Adrian asked us to decide which part of the human body corresponds to our place in the Body of Christ. It occurred to me that those of us who serve in the area of Finance and in other administrative roles are part of the skeleton of the Church – unseen yet providing support and shape for the more high profile parts and a solid framework which allows the

muscles to bring movement to the body. I want to thank all those who provide invaluable help with the Finance tasks, counting the Sunday Offerings, administering the Gift Aid claims, paying the salaries and being our Independent Examiners.

Our blessing over the last year is that, as in previous years, we have had sufficient for our needs and even a slight surplus to carry forward to 2009. Thank you to all who have contributed generously and sacrificially.

The challenge for 2009 is that with John's appointment our expenditure in 2009 will be greater than in 2008. We therefore will need to see even more generosity from the Fellowship if we are to maintain and even develop the activities of the Church.

It is exciting to see God at work in and through those activities, drawing in many who were previously 'un-churched'. GBC is breaking into a run – but it would collapse in a shapeless heap without a skeleton!

John Pickersgill

Health & Safety

When pondering how has H&S been blessed in the last year, my first thought was to wonder whether that question was really relevant! But thinking about it, God has blessed us greatly, as we have had no serious accidents or incidents. As for the year ahead, we have to undertake a PAT Testing exercise, which will involve safety testing and logging each piece of electrical equipment in the GBC building. This will take some time! As for what we are excited about, well it's hard to get excited about H&S, but I guess it's that we remain safe and healthy in all that GBC does.

Nathan Blundy

IT & Website

We have been blessed this year by things working more or less the way they should with only a few hiccoughs. The web site was launched in April to a very positive reception. We have added some extra functions like a church building wireless internet connection and a new pc on the sound desk.

Some of the challenges we face in 2009 are ageing office computers and a disparity in software versions that will cost an amount to reconcile. The colour laser printer has proved expensive to run so we need to research cheaper alternatives.

We are excited about stage two of the web site project. John (who is something of a technologist) is introducing the office team to some of the more advanced features and functions of Exchange and the church server.

Brett Mickelburgh

Library

In 2008, our church library continued to feature different topics every few weeks. This was well received and many books, videos, etc were borrowed. It is encouraging to see the library being used by visitors - parents at Littlefoot, for instance. May this be the start of an evangelistic trend . . . ! One challenge for 2009 is that some of our stock of paperbacks is quite old. An attempt is under way to discard old and tatty ones and increase the provision of useful, up-to-date books. Since the books and other media are donated by you, the good folk of GBC, please pray about how you may share with others in the spirit of Acts 2:44. Thank you.

Eileen Campbell

Office

It's evident from the broad content of this Review that GBC is a very busy place with lots of activities happening throughout the week. The administrative (+ some caretaking) support offered by those who work either as paid staff or volunteers in the church office underpins much of this activity and keeps us all busy.

We continue to meet weekly on a Thursday morning for staff prayers and monthly on a Thursday morning for staff planning – giving us opportunities to support each other and to share information, ideas and plans.

The big change in 2008 was when we said goodbye to Eileen Campbell at the end of May when she retired. We miss Eileen's particular skills and gifts in the office a great deal but were glad to affirm her call from God to move on to the next phase in her life and to enjoy more time with her family at what seemed to be the 'right' time.

Emily Mayes finished her Viz-a-Viz Optimum Volunteer year with us in July although she came back to help with the Explorers Holiday Club in August!

Luke Todd joined us in September as our 2008-2009 Viz-a-Viz Optimum Volunteer.

When Eileen left we decided to try and share out some office tasks to volunteers and it is a real pleasure to be able to report that we now have a structure whereby a number of different people are helping out in the office on a regular basis. Thanks particularly to our regular helpers during 2008: John Brown, Maria George, Cathy Lane and Martine Woodbridge – and to Hatty Borland and Craig Rattigan who have recently joined that 'rota'. Thanks also to all those who have helped on an occasional basis with specific tasks – including such tasks as the collation of Blue Pages and the extra work involved with preparations for the Explorers Holiday Club in the summer.

We would like to make good progress in 2009 with training this team of people to take on more responsibility for specific tasks and to be comfortable and confident in providing effective office cover for times when staff are on holiday etc.

Ruth Blakey

Activities in Cooperation with other Churches

Christian Aid

Our involvement with the Christian Aid Week street collection in 2008 was blessed in many ways:

- Enough people to cover all the streets currently allocated to GBC.
- We were able to maintain the level of giving as with previous years.
- The counting and banking went very well with no unexpected discrepancies.
- I was allowed to leave my new job at 15:30 each day that week so that I could be here in time to go out and collect myself.

Some challenges remain for this work in 2009:

- There are streets that are currently not covered and it would be good to have some extra collectors so that these streets could be covered too.
- To get counting help from within the fellowship to overcome the need to ask for help from elsewhere.

I am always excited at the opportunity to equal or exceed the previous year's efforts so that the support the money provides is not diluted by inflation or exchange rates.

Jeremy Lange

Christmas Lights Switch On

In Huntingdon, working with Churches Together, we had a stall on Market Square during the Christmas 'switch on' festivities where we promoted 'Hope 08'. We gave away 150 goody bags and had many interesting conversations. Churches Together led the carol singing.

In Godmanchester, the churches were given a slot in the Mayor's Carols event when the Godmanchester lights are switched on. We shared some Christmas readings and we also gave away 50 goody bags which were well received and talked about for quite a while afterwards.

Cornerstone

We are grateful to God for His hand on the work of Cornerstone and His many blessings and answers to prayer during the last year. We continue to offer counselling each Monday in the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Termination Clinic and have started a second year of PHSE lessons in St Ivo School and our fourth year in St Peter's. We are still manning the telephone answer service every evening between 7.30 and 9.30pm and we have also seen an increase in the number of people requesting Post Abortion Counselling often within one to two weeks of the event. Consequently we remain busy.

One of our counsellors had a conversation with a woman at the Hinchingsbrooke Clinic who was waiting for her friend, who in turn, was seeing the other counsellor. She admitted having been in the clinic herself the previous year and had actually seen the counsellor to whom she was speaking. She went on to thank her for what she had said and went on to explain that she had decided to continue with the pregnancy and she was now trying to help her friend.

Humanly we would like to expand the team. We see many opportunities to increase the schools' work but simply cannot do any more either from a time perspective or as volunteers. We would appreciate prayer, that God would bring onto the team the people of His choosing to serve Him in this work and to stand with us in the gap.

Laurel Fennell

Gala Day

Gala day in 2008 once again proved to be a successful day of community outreach. Working with Churches Together in Godmanchester we ran a cafe on the showground and gave away 100 goody bags with gifts, invites to events and Christian literature inside. We also ran a colouring

competition in our local schools which the mayor judged on our stall. Many GBC people helped to make this possible alongside a group from d-Caf.

GAP

We chose a new chair person this year who has loads of ideas on how we can take GAP on. Youth leaders in the area have continued to work together. We hosted a training session for all the Youth Leaders in the area with Tim Hawkins – an experienced Youth Pastor from Australia. We also hosted GAP at the end of the year with lots of our youngsters attending as it was held in our local school. We were also involved in a community venture over the summer where Emily Mayes and Joseph George took a leading role.

A few churches have moved on and have set up their own evening services which have reduced numbers to some extent. Noise levels remain a challenge in finding good venues to host GAP! In 2009 we need to concentrate on training and mentoring young leaders.

We are excited about arranging a social event for the youngsters from different churches to meet and get to know each other in a different environment from GAP itself which is primarily a worship service.

Abraham Kalyapu