

the cold and wet (and my instructions) to put them up and take them down again.

For Christmas 2023 we will be working closely with the Town Council to plan, purchase new lights and install them around the town centre.

*Doug Hodges*

## GALLERY FROM 2022



## Wymondham Baptist Church 2022 Annual Reports



# Preface from our Pastor

Wow another year has gone by and seems to me that it is difficult at times to even begin to remember what happened in 2022. By now we are already nearly a quarter of the way through 2023!

However, Cathy and I meet on a regular basis and jot down things that happen as we go along, so my thanks to her for collecting all the info.

Our verse for the year which was from Romans 14:8 with an emphasis on everything we do should be for 'the Lord'.

As you read through all the reports and actions that happened, I pray you capture the thread that indeed everything we do is because we belong to Jesus and we want to honour him in all that goes on in our life as a fellowship together. I pray as you reflect you see that God really is moving in our midsts. There is much to give him praise for and lots for us to be excited about in the future.



especially, organised the very popular Wynterfest in December. Here the streets were packed with people, stalls in Market Place and Market Street, performers and bands on the 'stage' (beneath the Market Cross) and elsewhere, funfair in Middleton St - and, of course, at WBC. If you missed the day or were busy working in the church that day, search on YouTube for Wymondham Wynterfest 2022 and you'll find a couple of videos (both of which



somehow manage to miss the events at the church!):

A Jubilee Picnic had also been planned for June and all preparations made but cancelled due to the forecast of very poor weather - the first time a Town Team event has had to be cancelled.

Town Team and its organisation of future events is a little uncertain at present as Fran Young, who has led the Team and organised the major events is taking a well earned rest after 6 years.



As in previous years, Wymondham Town Team volunteers are also responsible for Christmas Lights in the streets around the town centre and also North Wymondham Community Centre. WBC is very much the base for this and a hive of activity on the

installation and take down days. Ladies from the WI (with, this year, some male assistance) unpack and dress the little Christmas trees and pack them away afterwards and my team of other volunteers brave



pictures on the hymn sheets and the TV screen to give the residents something visual to bring back memories of past harvest celebrations.

We were eagerly anticipating sharing a Carol Service in December for the first time after having to be on zoom in 2021. Our son was coming to accompany the carols as Vic and Mary were not available and everything was in place for great time together. Then sadly, Doug and I had Covid and we had to lead the service on zoom from our lounge! Having been back in person we were much more aware of how difficult it is when working remotely to make things meaningful for residents with dementia.

We have since been back and are now able to freely meet the residents with no restrictions in place. Our team now consists of Vic, Mary, Doug, Christine Frith and me. Every 2 months we go to lead this simple act of worship, to share the love of God with people who can no longer attend a place of worship, to encourage, to bless and to pray for and with them.

Thank you for praying for us in this part of the ministry of WBC. Please continue to pray for us and for the residents and staff of Windmill House.

*Jan Hodges*

## Town Team



provided assistance with both the Jazz Picnic and the Rotary Food and Drink Festival but, more

2022 was another successful year for Wymondham Town Team who



# Wymondham Baptist Church

## Annual Reports

### Verse of the Year 2022:

"If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord." - Romans 14:8

### Vision Verse -

"Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back, lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes." - Isaiah 54:2



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Thank you all for your continued support, please remember the Guides in your prayers as we look forward to growth in the unit and discern the future for 5th Wymondham Guides as we prepare to celebrate our 15th Year in September.

Blessings

*Ramona*

## Windmill House

At the beginning of 2022 we were still leading services on zoom every 2 months, alternating with Wymondham Methodist Church, though part way through the year they were no longer able to participate.

In May we were able to return in person for the first time since February 2020 with some restrictions still in place - we were some distance from the residents for the service and needed to wear masks when we went to speak to them afterwards but that was only a small challenge. After so long without any face-to-face contact we were all delighted to be together again and were very warmly welcomed. There had been many changes in the intervening time and we recognised only a few of the residents. Singing hymns to live music and sharing a simple Bible message was something we had been looking forward to.



Christine Spencer who first started leading services for WBC at Windmill House spoke in July but has had to withdraw for health reasons. We appreciate her involvement and hope she will be well enough to join us again in the future.

In September we celebrated God's faithful provision for us in creation, the changing seasons and the harvest with some of Vic's lovely

we have seen slow but steady growth and now have 8 Guides. Someone once told me God only gives us as much as we can handle and I often wondered if he had a little more faith in me than I did! What I've learned over the years isn't that God only gives us what we can handle but he builds us up in his timing and by his strength we will grow and develop.

Although a small group we have seen significant growth in relationships and confidence in the few girls we have and the space Wymondham Baptist Church provides is a rare blessing. We have been able to utilise the garden in the Summer for outdoor cooking and games. The hall for our annual Panto this year we performed "Encanto the Panto" written by our Guides and performed for a group of Brownies we hope will be joining us after Easter when they have turned 10. We are also able to use the back lounge to conserve heating and lighting being a smaller group.

Last week we even made flapjacks as part of our baking challenge and we're able to leave some for home from home. Teaching the Girls the importance of community, something we do often including community litter picks and supporting with freshening up the recycled flowers on the train station approach.

Having the use of the church allows much more than just a safe space to play, learn and develop. Each week something catches their interest and prompts questions about faith, especially the pictures by Charlotte George and Vic Wrights painting in the school room often triggers questions about whether there were watches in biblical times.

Parents dropping off or collecting our Guides find themselves reading notices about our church life and this prompts questions and interest.

Sometimes it can be difficult with such a small group to see the difference you are making but a difference is being made, not through Bethany or myself as leaders but through God and how he is working in this place and in this community.



## Pastor

It is hard to try and condense what transpired over the past twelve months into a few paragraphs so I will endeavour to share the highlights and challenges as opposed to giving you every detail. There are also other reports that will also cover some of the things I touch on. As already stated my thanks to Cathy for helping capture every month the things that go on in the life of WBC.

At the start of the year we held an Alpha course which was very encouraging and, although most who attended already had a connection with the church, none the less it was very fruitful and gives us encouragement for the future. Also in January the ECO church team formed and met to see how we could engage with environmental issues as a church. On a personal level I attended the Fresh Streams conference for 3 days and found it very informative and refreshing for me spiritually.

In February again on a personal level I was interviewed by the ministry recognition panel to see about my eligibility to become a regionally recognised minister. I am pleased to say I was and then advised to seek national recognition which I later did. As a fellowship we held a Listening day to seek what God was saying to us through prayer and we were really pleased at the number of you who engaged. We also held a Giving day with a specific focus on the proposed building project as part of our Vision. I was amazed and praise God for the response. It was as though Jesus himself was affirming the vision by your sacrificial giving.

Sadly as March came into being, the conflict in the Ukraine broke out. As a fellowship we reached out to the other churches in town and organised a prayer meeting in the town centre.

The building project took a step forward as Ray and I met with the architect to seek a way forward. We then headed into Easter where we held various services and celebrations. Emma and I alongside the girls attended Spring Harvest. We had a really good time and it was so

good for me personally to sit with Emma and receive some teaching and worship together. Something we seldom get to do. May saw the return of cafe church and the team did a sterling job of leading this, again based on films we really believe this is a vital 'stepping stone' for non-church people to be able to attend and explore faith. I attended my graduation service in Chester to celebrate passing my degree in theology, mission and evangelism.



As summer approached we were all invited to the celebration of Vic and Mary's 50th wedding anniversary. It was so good to join in with them and enjoy time together. As well as this we held a quiz evening with Rosedales.

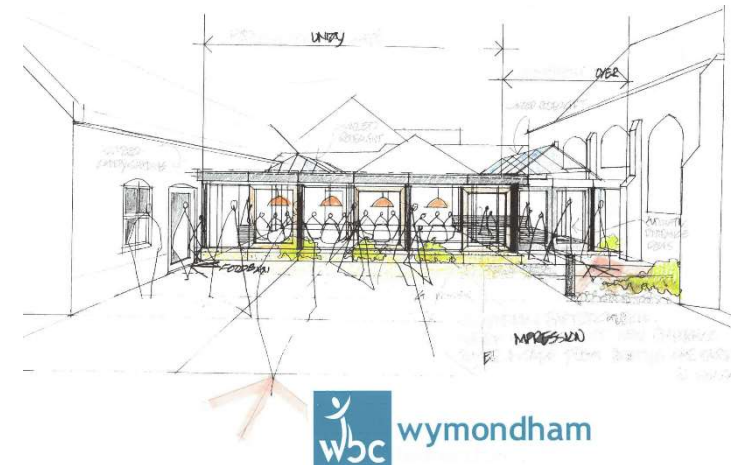
The BU launched a home mission film with WBC as the focus, this is still available to view via our website, just follow the link. More celebrations happened as we entered July with Rita Harris' 90th birthday. A few of us joined her family in a surprise party. We held leadership elections and were blessed by Jason and Neil joining in the team. Please continue to pray for them as they bring their gifting and help shape the futures.

Sadly though we held the funeral of Eve Brewer. It was a difficult time for Henry to adjust and eventually he moved to be closer to his family. Both are sorely missed. As August came we once again entered into our summer program which is led by various different home groups. As like so many churches our numbers fluctuate as people take holidays. However, from there on in we began to see growth in numbers joining us on a Sunday morning. We came back together as a fellowship in September with a church BBQ.

Like the whole nation we focused on the death of Queen Elizabeth the second as we held services of remembrance for her and mourned as a nation. As Autumn came along we were visited by Anglia news and were the main focus of the following news program as to our response

and guidance. Following the Listening Day a Gift Day was held and well over £15,000 was raised. The Architect was then instructed to prepare a planning submission.

When the planning drawings were ready for submission an open meeting was held in the church hall when the neighbours in Queen Street were invited to view the plans. This meeting was well attended by the neighbours and local councillors and there was support for the project.



The planning application was duly submitted and approval granted. Grace Burke has used her skill and expertise to submit two applications for funding through Norfolk County Council with the outcomes expected by the end of January 2023. Sadly these were not successful.

At the present time the way forward is not clear. However, the plan is for the team to re-group and seek God's path for the future.

*Cathy Finch on behalf of Ray Finch*

## Girl Guides

Having now been reopened for a year following the Covid lockdown 5th Wymondham Guides resumed with just 4 girls. Over the last year



approached Morrisons to also support us and they have provided tea, coffee, hot chocolate, biscuits and cuppa soup.

The initial attendance was quite low but this has grown over the weeks. We opened throughout the Christmas and New Year period and were surprised by how many came along.



Although the initial project was to provide warmth in the cold and gloomy weather, and it has been evident that this is a need, however we have in fact found that the main need is loneliness. What the future holds and whether something else will grow out of this project is something that the Leadership Team will need to consider and no doubt their decision will be brought to the church for their comment.

*Cathy Finch*

## Building Project Team

Late in 2021 the Building Project Team met for the first time under the leadership of Ray. The aim of the team was 'To act on behalf of the church's leaders and membership to lead and direct the realisation of the Building Project and Vision'.

The team was comprised of Paul Smith, Emma Smith, Jason O'Dell, Ray Finch, Victor Fromm, Grace Burke and Tracy Kenney. A pre-planning application had been lodged and approved with a couple of comments passed to the architect. The team agreed to report to the church that the next step would be to re-open the Building Fund and seek their approval to make a planning application. The target needed for a planning application to be submitted was £15,000. As you will have read from the Secretary's report the Leadership team agreed that a Listening Day should be held in order to seek God's will

to the energy crisis. We had started Home from Home to help where we could and our thanks go to all involved in helping to sustain this ministry. Both Vic and I were separately interviewed on radio Norfolk on consecutive weekend programs. We also held our shoebox Sunday. Again the response was overwhelming and is a great opportunity to witness to our youngsters and to reach out. In November I completed my min rec interviews and was pleased to be approved as a recognised Baptist minister. Though it still feels odd to say Rev Paul Smith! My thanks for your love and support.

December as always is a busy time in the life of WBC from Wynterfest to the remembrance service we hold with Rosedales and the carol service and other activities as written about elsewhere in these reports.

As I reflect I believe we have so much to be grateful to God for. Not least has been our increase in numbers. I am also encouraged by the prayer life of the fellowship and the fact that we seem to be really grasping the vision God has for WBC. On a personal level I have been encouraged by your feedback with regards to sermons. I also feel valued and appreciated by the fellowship. I am really excited to see what God is going to do in 2023.

I cannot however write this report without acknowledging where I am at the moment as this is written after the death of Ray in the early part of the new year. I am sad and feel wobbled by what has happened. It is times like this I really need to dig deep into my foundations and know that God is still there and in control. Ray was far more than 'just' a church secretary. He was a friend and a trusted companion. He will be missed a great deal for his wisdom and discernment and his skills with regards to the building project. As we go forward I want to honour Ray and support Cathy and the family.

My final prayer is to you. I pray that through WBC we are able to equip you in your ministry wherever that may be, to strengthen your faith, and to build you in your relationship with Jesus. I want to see His kingdom come here as it is in heaven. I am so in awe of all God is doing here. Blessings. *Paul*

## Prayer Life at WBC

WBC places a high priority on prayer, 'the greatest power on earth' as someone said in our recent *Prayer Questionnaire*. This is evident in the times of open prayer and worship in our Sunday services as a whole congregation. Paul Smith and others make creative and inclusive prayer times that don't require people to pray aloud eg post box, paper aeroplanes, praying in pictures on tables, 'fire walk'. Many other prayer times take place which are too numerous to list but include homegroups, prayer before services, before Roots, prayer for specific events. Fellowship prayer needs are published in the weekly news bulletin, along with a monthly prayer focus. People can ask for prayer ministry at any time (via the Leadership Team) for individual needs. Gill Price (Elder/pastoral lead) also has a group of pray-ers that she can task with specific prayer requests when a need arises. And we know that personal prayer is a priority in people's lives. Everyone is encouraged to share in Sunday services how God has answered our prayers - this is hugely uplifting and inspires us all to take everything to the Lord in prayer.

In 2022 we started some new initiatives with these aims in mind:

- Encourage and build each of us up in our prayer lives
- Establish a framework of regular church prayer meetings that underpins all our church fellowship, vision and mission (cf Charles Spurgeon's engine room!)
- Inspire the whole church - everyone of all ages, Christian experience and confidence-levels - to 'catch the fire' and excitement of praying together



So far we've organised two prayer meetings for the whole church. The first one was held in October 2022 to pray for Wymondham (churches, schools, town life, those who support people in need) and another in January focused on WBC - our vision, youthwork, outreach and our leadership team. These were both supported by about 15 people and were good times of prayer, a promising beginning which we pray and believe will gather momentum in 2023. We long to be

Shirley Marwood, Rita Harris, Ros Codling, Nicky Waterworth, Penny Seall and Vera Cooke.

It's a privilege to be used in this way and the appreciation shown has been both encouraging and humbling - it is so good to be supported by prayer and the wonderful knowledge that at the Last Supper, Jesus said "Do this in Remembrance of Me". If anyone reading this knows of a need then do chat with a member of the Team or ring the Church Office for details. It will be interesting to see what God has for this ministry in 2023.

*Shirley Marwood and Vera Cooke*

## Home from Home

Home from Home was the name given to a project laid on Ray's heart when it became evident that many in the local area were going to face difficulties as the winter months approached and fuel costs were forecast to escalate. Ray brought this idea to the Leadership Team who supported the suggestion.



At the beginning of October we started opening the church premises on Wednesday and Thursday afternoon for three hours inviting anyone in to a warm space where they could enjoy a hot drink, and biscuits and later hot snacks, soup and toast and spend time playing games, doing puzzles and spending time together. We have three or four volunteers who join with us each day.

We joined the Warm Space project and advertised in the local area and through Roots and the local churches. We were successful in securing funding from the Local Authority and also received a donation from a church member. These funds have been used to contribute to the church energy expenses and to purchase newspapers, puzzle books, bread for toast and sausage rolls. We



Despite the change in delivery style, the key aim of each Café Church service is to communicate a message from the scriptures. Having undertaken Café Church for a few years, the team have now settled into a regular model for each session. Attendance numbers continue to be in the region of 70-80, with a few people only attending because it is Café Church week. The team are keen to learn and develop the sessions and they are currently reflecting upon feedback forms which were completed.

The team have decided to continue to use films in the forthcoming year and five new Café Church's are already being planned. Please look out for the new leaflets which will advertise the next group of dates for 23/24, and continue to invite new people to the sessions.

*Grace Burke*

## Care in the Community/Home Communion

Over the last couple of years, a small group from the church has responded to the request for home visits, including those when we specifically 'Break Bread' together. From this move, a ministry of taking and sharing Home Communion has quietly grown as part of the Pastoral Care at WBC. Requests come from people who for a variety of reasons, miss out on church fellowship. There are those who are housebound or a request may come from a Social Worker or Carer. The pattern of Service is informal and will have been discussed in a visit prior to anyone new taking part. No pressure is put on to attend church for those referred from outside the church. Each situation is lovingly assessed.

The Church Leadership is informed of each visit which maybe bi-monthly and the team goes in pairs. Home visits are personal and those going into people's homes are subject to the church's safeguarding protocol and the need for confidentiality, another area of prayer support. Those involved are Christine Spencer,



prayer warriors for the Lord Jesus and to see Him do great and powerful things in and through us this year.

In December we sent out a *Prayer Questionnaire* to help us understand what people see as our prayer priorities and how we can deepen our personal and church prayer life. Nearly 30 completed questionnaires were returned - this is most encouraging. People had given a lot of thought to their replies. They show a real appetite to talk about and engage with all sorts of prayer at WBC. The next step is to identify the key themes from the responses and draw up some recommended actions for the Leadership Team to consider. This will be an exciting springboard into this year of prayer.



*Vera Cooke and Gill Price*

## Roots Community Café

Roots continues to grow; we are still welcoming new visitors to some sessions but equally have our regulars who have journeyed with us from the beginning.

As always we struggle with volunteers, we still haven't managed to find someone who can fill the kitchen role completely and we rely on myself or Paul being there to run a full session.

We have seen Bev Woodhouse join the team, although she doesn't attend the church she has quickly become an invaluable member of the team, she arrives at 8:30am and is there until the end. We have also had Kate, Robbie, Keith, Catherine and Claire join from the church. They all bring something different to the group and help to serve our community and share God's love.

Unfortunately, I don't get to see many of those who come through the doors but I know Vic keeps us informed as often as he can in church services and at the church meetings of the stories and challenges faced.

There has been an increase in donations to the pay it forward board but sadly there has also been an increase in those needing to use it. The cost of living has meant our shopping bills for Roots have increased and we will therefore be reviewing our prices at Easter.

We have a few practical things to sort this coming year, the counter under the coffee machine needs replacing and some equipment also needs replacing. We are looking forward to having a purpose built area!

Roots was pleased to be part of the Wynterfest celebrations in the town, we estimated over 1,000 people came through the doors. It was an exhausting but rewarding day.

We also helped Cathy to celebrate Ray's life by providing the food for His thanksgiving service.

I want to thank all those who have helped at Roots, either regularly or as and when, we have definitely touched our community with God's love this past year.

*Emma Smith*

## Thrive@Roots



Thrive still remains relatively small but has seen growth this past year. Each week the youngsters come bounding in and are so comfortable in the church building.

We have a good few hours chatting and playing games with them, Ruth is the go to for the trickier homework questions but it's great to see them working together in their small groups, engaging with each other and us adults.

*Emma*

In November, we were delighted to receive the Bronze Eco Church Award and are hoping that this will inspire us to look for more and more ways to put our love for God's creation at the heart of everything we do at Wymondham Baptist Church.

As a fellowship, we are very supportive of each other and we would like to thank everyone who has supported the Eco Church activities and events over this year, both with their time, skills, and finances.



The team meets about every 6 weeks, and we would be delighted to see new faces or to hear from anyone who has ideas for future projects.

*Nicki Waterworth on behalf of the Eco Church Team*

## Café Church

The Cafe Church team (Grace, Vic W, Victor F, Owen and Matthew) are pleased to have completed a full year of services following the forced break during the pandemic. Together they have led services that use themes and clips from films to deliver a godly message. This year has included messages using the films of Star Wars, Hacksaw



Ridge, Finding Nemo, What we did on our Holiday and The Wizard of Oz. The services are deliberately offered in a less formal way, attempting to move away from the usual Sunday routines by doing something that is more creative whilst family friendly. Services don't begin until 11am which also allows time for people to mingle and chat, seeking to help build

stronger relationships within the congregation.

In September, we played our part in the Great Big Green Week. In that week during Roots, Greening Wymondham operated a stand in the church and WBC ran a PowerPoint presentation demonstrating how our church is responding to taking care of our environment. Thank you to Ray and Cathy Finch and to Doug Hodges for preparing this.



### Personal lifestyles of our congregation

In February 2022 we started a recycling scheme at WBC for items that cannot be recycled by the roadside collections. The stationery items are taken to Rymans in Norwich. Medicine blister packs were taken to Superdrug in Norwich and other items were taken to Val Keel in Wrentham to be recycled via Terracycle. Unfortunately, we had to stop the collection of blister packs at the end of 2022 but will be expanding the recycling in 2023 to other items. We have a recycling notice board in the corridor with all the information about our scheme.

There are regular updates, tips, and suggestions in the Rooted Life magazine.

In October the Eco Church and Leadership teams completed a Carbon Footprint calculator (the WWF Carbon calculator) and we then encouraged the fellowship to do the same. We want to encourage small and positive changes with an emphasis on personal responsibility and are hoping that this Carbon Calculator will be another way of making us think about how we can make these changes.

### And finally....

Finances: We hope to be a self-funding group and with the funds raised this year, we have given a £125 donation to A Rocha charity, contributed £350 for the loft insulation at the Manse and paid for the birdboxes in the church garden.

## Sunday Youth Church

### Dynamite

"The primary school-age group continues to use Superbook - video based material which connects Biblical events to the experience of current day children. In the second part of the year we learned about the lives of the early disciples including Peter and Paul, and we are now focussing on the teaching of Jesus.

The number of kids attending varies from week to week - sometimes only 3 or 4 but on other weeks several times that.

We are thankful for the strong

friendships within this group and for the freedom the young people feel to express themselves.



Over the past year Charlotte Jordan has been helping with the group as part of her Duke of Edinburgh award - we have really valued her faithfulness and enthusiasm. She will shortly complete her service and so we are looking for new people to join as helpers - no advance preparation required!

Our longing is that these young people would not just know about God but that they would come to know Him, developing faith that they can call their own and being empowered to share the love of Jesus with their friends."

*Ruth Rallan*

### T412

The high school age group have used a new resource this year from the Raise up Faith collection. We have used the new ImPossible+ resource from LZ7, the first half of the year was focused on God encounters - From the very beginning of things God has been showing



up, revealing Himself, being present in the mess, troubles and struggles. We kicked off with six sessions that looked at how God's light, His presence made a difference in the lives of humans.



*1. Moses [I will be with you]*  
 Theme  
 God's love | God's power  
 Story  
 Moses and the Burning Bush  
 (Exodus 3. 1-15)

*2. Gideon [God is waiting for us]*  
 Theme  
 God's love  
 Story  
 Gideon Fights the Midianites (Judges 6-7)

*3. Elijah [The whisper of God]*  
 Theme  
 God's voice  
 Story  
 The still small voice (1 Kings 19)

*4. Pentecost [Flame on]*  
 Theme  
 Holy Spirit | God's voice  
 Story  
 The Holy Spirit is Sent to the Disciples (Acts 2. 1-13)

*5. Paul [Blinded by your grace]*  
 Theme  
 Grace  
 Story  
 The Conversion of Saul (Acts 9. 1-19)

*6. Turning the Tables [YOU are the Light of the World]*  
 Theme



### Our Buildings and Land:

The church swapped its energy providers in 2022 which was not only beneficial financially but also allowed us to sign up with companies with more favourable environmental credentials. (SSE and Crown Gas)

As part of some repairs to the Manse, a proportion of the Eco Church funds paid for loft insulation to be installed.

In the garden, as mentioned, we now have bird boxes and bug hotels. Shirley Marwood has been working regularly on the Church flower beds with an emphasis on perennial plants that will encourage pollinators. We also have a team of volunteers who regularly mow the grass and tidy the hedges.



### Engaging with our local community and with global campaigns

In June 2022, WBC hosted a community event called ECO@WBC. Local groups were invited to have a stall to showcase all the excellent care that is already happening in our community. It was a great time to find out about these groups and to chat about how we can work together to look after our world. Greening Wymondham, Hedgehog Haven, Toadwatch, Wymondham in Bloom, Wymondham Nature Group and the WI all supported the event. We had a Food Savvy stand from Norfolk County Council and there was an opportunity to make a bug hotel. In addition, there were plant, cake, card, and craft stalls together with refreshments. Nearly £800 was raised and the proceeds are to fund ECO Church projects at WBC.

We have asked Nicola Maunders from Greening Wymondham to contribute to our Rooted Life magazine and she now writes a regular feature with easy and encouraging tips on how we can live a little more carefully.

## ECO Church



In January 2022, Wymondham Baptist Church signed up to be part of the Eco Church Project. It is A Rocha UK's award scheme for churches in England and Wales who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth.

The vision of Eco Church is as follows: 'for churches of all denominations to care for creation as an integral part of loving their

neighbours and following God faithfully' (taken from Eco Church website).

A small group first met in January 2022 to form an Eco Church Team at WBC and to start with, we completed the online survey which is designed to help us express our care for God's world in 4 key areas:

- in our worship and teaching,
- in looking after our buildings and land,
- in engaging with our local community and in global campaigns
- in the personal lifestyles of our congregation.

So...what have we at WBC done in these 4 areas over the last year?

### **Worship and Teaching:**

Our summer programme had an environmental theme (Why should we care?) with each homegroup basing and leading the service around one element of Creation (Creation/responsibility, light/energy, water/seas, vegetation/use of land, creatures/care)

Our young people spent 2 practical sessions, one in February led by Ruth Rallan and Chris Flaxman and one in November and led by Ruth Rallan looking at the diversity of birds and insects and to make birdboxes and bug hotels for our church garden. Our thanks Ruth and Chris and to The Shed in Ayton Road for preparing the bird boxes for the young people to put together.

## *Jesus*

### *Story*

#### *Turning the tables (Matthew 5:14-16)*

The second part of the year we looked at Jesus Encounters - John's Gospel declares that Jesus is the 'Light of the World' and this series looked at some incredible stories of the encounters Jesus had with ordinary people - like us - and how they were transformed, and also how Jesus can transform our lives too.

1. *Bartimaeus* [ASK]
2. *Woman Healed* [SEEN]
3. *Woman at the Well* [ACCEPTED]
4. *Zacchaeus* [WELCOMED]
5. *Nicodemus* [AUDIENCE OF ONE]
6. *Peter* [RESTORED]

The group is small - with 4 attending regularly. We only meet three weeks out of four - no group on the first Sunday of the month.

The youth team, like all areas in church, could do with more volunteers and we are in the process of having discussions about group dynamics and changes needed going forward.

Unfortunately, we haven't been able to run creche in the same way we have in previous years. This has been because of a lack of volunteers, the parents of the smallest church members have covered this themselves which isn't ideal and we would love to be able to cover this in a different way. Please pray for the ongoing challenges we face as a small youth team.

*Emma Smith*

## **Friday Night Youth**

Emma and I, alongside support from Jamie Burke have continued to provide Friday night youth on a fortnightly basis.

At the beginning of the year we had an average attendance of around 20 children aged school years 7 and above. By the end of the summer term some of the older ones sadly left as they needed to concentrate on school work and have outgrown the group. We are delighted to have journeyed with them for their younger years and still pray for them on a regular basis. Since returning in the autumn term we now have around 12 young people.

The group meet between 6:30 - 8pm and the evenings involve free time for the first hour which is mostly spent playing football, catching up with friends and playing various other games. Our thanks must go to Chris Flaxman as our emergency glazier as he has been called into action on a couple of occasions. After an hour we provide the youngsters with tuck and they organise the rota to serve each other out on their own, which we feel is encouraging. We then spend time with a team game and some Bible based teaching. After all the charging around the young people are always engaged and very open to talking, sharing and working out how to practice their faith in real ways. Not all who attend have a faith but still listen and take an active part in the teaching time. We also do various other activities which have included playing French cricket at the local park, crafts and other fun things.



At Christmas we asked the group what they would like to do, perhaps an outing such as bowling or to go for pizza? We were surprised by the overwhelming response that they wanted to stay at church and have Christmas dinner together along with some games. This was at their instigation and was really encouraging for us. We duly carried out their request. So, with additional help from Jamie and Ruth we served them all a meal, we had a gingerbread house building competition, a quiz and then we had asked the youngsters two weeks prior to think about the nativity story and engage with it replacing the traditional characters with modern day equivalents. This was FANTASTIC! They were so engaged and we had some really good discussions and ideas and we believe it really helped bring the familiar biblical account to life for them.

and his team, and getting lots of photos and video footage for use in presentations, newsletters etc.

Please pray for the team as we seek the way forward in all aspects of the work.

*Neil Starling*

## Homegroups at WBC

At WBC we believe that it is important to be part of a Homegroup so that we can get to know a few people on a deeper level and we can care and be cared for in a smaller safe environment. Homegroups usually consist of a time of study either following a relevant subject or passages from the Bible, then some prayer time where people can bring their needs and concerns. There is also an opportunity to chat to get to know each other better and drink tea (or coffee).

We have three active Homegroups at the moment, with Christine's group not meeting at the moment while she receives treatment.

These groups are more or less at capacity, if groups become too big people may not be so comfortable in sharing and asking for help. So as much as we would like everyone to have the opportunity to attend a Homegroup we do lack people to lead/host new groups.

We do have a number of people who would like to be part of a Homegroup so if anyone is willing to host or lead please let me know and we will get a new group in place.



*Gill Price*



minimal incomes. All of these things are improving with this project. Several have received different trainings: pre-school teachers (a new thing for the village), other teachers, animal husbandry and farming. Children are now getting a better introduction to education and are asking to go to school. They have been breeding a stronger breed of goat from a donated Billy goat! This means they are surviving and providing a good source of income for them.”

“With our prayers for you as we thank you for your prayers for us.

Alan and Megan”

*Neil Starling*

## The Falconer Trust

The Falconer Home in Kabulamema, Zambia currently provides a home for around fifty-five children of all ages from 1-year-old to mid-teens. The Home continues to face many challenges - building work is progressing very slowly, with accommodation being prepared for the children while the repair of the roof of the main house takes place. The project is made more difficult by the demands of Zambian Social Services for certain standards of accommodation. The sending of parcels to the Home is generally fraught with difficulties, as the customs process is becoming more lengthy and onerous.

At home, the New Year has started with a challenge, as Ken Webb has stepped down as Trustee and Director of the Falconer Trust. Neil is therefore working with the remaining trustees to establish the way forward, with many decisions to be made. Neil is keen to explore how to improve working practices, and establish a more fruitful working relationship with the Falconer Home. We are also considering whether to invite new trustees to come on board.

Neil is planning to visit the Home in June, along with one or more trustees. The purpose of the visit is to assess needs, ensure that what we send is appropriate and being used, giving encouragement Simon

Going forward we ask that you pray for us as leaders to stay enthused. It can be tiring at times to keep going. We also would like to see some more youngsters join us but we really wouldn't want anything to impact the ethos or dynamics this group have developed. We really would like to see our young people engaged with faith and come to know Jesus in a real way.

*Paul and Emma*

## Secretary

As I write this report on behalf of Ray, I can hear him saying to me don't forget to include this or that or something else. I am sure that I will forget some things but please bear with me.

Looking back over the past year (2022) we as a church have seen God at work. There is no doubt about that. The first full year after lockdown and being able to meet together in person, we have still had a number of the fellowship succumb to the dreaded Covid. However, with the new skills that we have learned during lockdown we have been able to be together through Zoom - what a blessing this has been.

At the beginning of the year we anticipated an overspend of £13,000+ but through the prompting of the Holy Spirit and the response of so many of you we ended the year with a surplus - our cup running over - isn't God good?

At the beginning of January 2022 we ran an Alpha course. This proved to be an encouraging experience for those who attended. Most who attended had some knowledge of Jesus Christ, but the Alpha material encouraged them to go deeper in their faith. The aim is to repeat this during 2023 inviting those with little knowledge of our Saviour.

During 2022 various forms etc. were completed with regard to our Pastor Paul going through the Ministerial Recognition process. As church secretary Ray gave references on behalf of the fellowship at

WBC, highlighting the way in which we have seen Paul develop, giving confirmation that we were certain that Paul was called to the role of Baptist minister. Towards the end of the year after attending gruelling interviews Paul became an accredited Baptist minister and in January 2023 we celebrated his ordination.

As a leadership team it was decided that we needed to seek confirmation from God that the path that we were walking in connection with the extension to the premises was the right way forward. In order to do this in February 2022 a Listening Day was held, when we could talk to God specifically about this aspect of the church vision and listen to Him as we pursued our desire to bring more people to Christ. Then later in the month we held a Giving Day. On this day we asked God to confirm that He wanted us to go forward to apply for planning permission on the project designs. God gave us a resounding 'Yes, get on with it' as the total raised far exceeded the funds needed.



In April we took part in a Fire Drill on a Sunday morning - an interesting exercise which ensured that we all knew exactly what we were supposed to do in the event of a fire during a morning service.

Ray and I attended the Wymondham Town Council Brighter Futures meetings as representatives of WBC.

In May we welcomed the Trussell Trust Foodbank back to the church on Friday mornings, between 11a.m. and 12 noon. Initially they had a table in the Roots Café where they could meet clients, however they have since decided that it is best to meet in a separate room and now use what was Paul's office since he has now moved out of that room.

Ray attended the local churches together meetings when Paul was not available and was able to get to know other representatives from the local churches.

Rachel is visiting the UK in April, and will be speaking at WBC on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

#### Alan and Megan Barker

Alan and Megan Barker are currently based in Kathmandu, Nepal (since August 2021) to develop a wider itinerant role for capacity strengthening of BMS partner organisations. As part of this they (especially Alan) give particular input to HDCS, a locally based partner. They joined BMS in 2000. Their initial overseas placement was with United Mission to Nepal (2000-2004) in Kathmandu where Alan worked in management and Megan as an occupational therapist. They returned to Nepal in 2007 to work with International Nepal Fellowship (INF), initially in Surkhet where Alan worked in management and donor relations, training local staff and Megan developed rehabilitation services, expanding the work beyond leprosy to include other disabilities, working alongside and training Nepalese therapists. Remaining with INF, they moved to Pokhara in 2017 where Alan supported the partnership and communications team and Megan worked in the Occupational Therapy Department and also advised on rehabilitation issues across all INF programmes. Alan and Megan have three children who live with their respective families in the UK, Vietnam and South Korea.

Their most recent newsletter (November 2022) contained the following news:

"We are very thankful that both Covid and dengue are on the decline here and our friends and colleagues are all well at the moment."

"We got to visit Ghusel, the place featured in the BMS Harvest Appeal this year, and to see first-hand the work there. It's amazing that a place so close to Kathmandu can be so underdeveloped. It took just 1½ hours to drive there but they have been living at such a basic level. There is a road we travelled to get there which has only recently been completed. This is real progress as it means that they now have better access to the city, both for receiving goods and as an outlet to sell their own produce. As we met with representatives of a couple of self-help groups, they told us that 80% are illiterate, children didn't want to go to school, they had a poor diet, limited access to water and power and

holes in walls, decorating, repairing, including our garden shed etc. etc. For those who provide the flowers to enhance our worship.

The danger of thanking people is that some may have been missed out and for that I apologise. However, I must say how encouraging it is to be in a fellowship where so many do so much. Thank you.

*Vic Wright*

## Outreach and Mission

Many of our Mission and Outreach activities and connections are covered in other reports, but here are others that are not:

### Rachel Spencer

Rachel is working in Paris with GEM (Greater Europe Mission) and World Team France to bring the gospel to a deeply secular society.

Rachel's latest newsletter has recently arrived. She has moved house to another flat close to her previous one. She has linked up with a lady called Angelique, and together they have created and officially registered a 'cultural association' called Xenia, to 'create an environment of friendship and welcome among different cultures, validating and celebrating the diversity of the town, and working together for the good of the community'. Through this organisation they hope to combat loneliness, and encourage a sense of community, aiming to build relationships through which they can communicate the gospel.

Rachel writes: "On February 1st I started a PhD programme in Missiology at the Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam. I will do this part-time and anticipate it will take six years. I'm still finalising the details of the research proposal, but my goal is to develop a contextualised public missiology for the French evangelical church, helping it to engage more effectively in French society and public life."

During August Ray was responsible for the Church Clean and Big Clear out. All the rooms and cupboards in the church were cleared out and a skip was hired to take away all the items that were no longer required. The clear out ended in a Big Church Clean Day, when together we worked to ensure that every nook and cranny was cleaned and left sparkling.



In September Ray attended the EBA Gathering at Bluntishall Baptist Church and was able to gain an insight into the recent building extension that they had carried out at the church.

During the course of the year we continued the work to change our charitable status from an unincorporated charity under the Baptist Union to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This took a lot of time and patience as although we used the services of a solicitor there was still an incredible amount of work to be done by us and complicated jargon to understand. We eventually became a charity on June 14<sup>th</sup> 2022 and all the church assets were transferred to the new CIO on 31.10.2022. The setting up of a new bank account was arduous and currently we have two bank accounts operating whilst standing orders and direct debits are re-directed.

Ray served as church secretary for just over two years and whilst not always an easy task it was one that he enjoyed and did to serve his Lord and Saviour. We look forward to what God has in store for the next church secretary.

*Cathy Finch on behalf of Ray Finch*

## Church Administrator

During 2022 I have continued to be present in the church office on Monday, Tuesday and Friday mornings. I have regularly checked that



the church policies are up to date and regularly reviewed by the Leadership Team. I have also endeavoured to ensure that the general notice boards around the church are kept as up to date as possible. Each Monday morning Paul and I test the fire alarm and emergency lighting.

As part of my role I am responsible for the church duty rotas for the Welcome Team, Refreshments Team, Communion Team and the Duty Deacon. I am grateful to all those who have helped in these duties and would welcome some more volunteers on these teams. Please let me know if you think you might be able to help. We have also started a list of people who are willing to read the scriptures on a Sunday morning. If this is something that you think you might be able to do, please let me know.

The move to a CIO and the necessary HMRC registration and new bank account set up have taken a lot of administrative time. I think everything is now in order and complete with the exception of the necessary transfer of standing orders and direct debits from the old account to the new one - I think this will take some time.

During the year we have continued to prepare a weekly notice sheet giving details of activities at the church and other items of interest. As well as this we have developed our Rooted Life bi-monthly magazine. It is good to have items from different people for this magazine. Please continue to let me have your ideas, your book reviews, your experiences, puzzles and contributions that make the magazine interesting reading not only for our church family but the wider community when they visit the church. I have also endeavoured to keep the website as up to date as possible, this has been a learning experience which I have enjoyed.

Once again we entered Wymondham in Bloom and again were award 'Excellent'. This year we tried to follow the red, white and blue theme, but not all the flowers were in bloom in colour at the judging

This report outlines the more major work that has been carried out to keep our premises safe and in good order. At the manse we have replaced the guttering, fascias and soffits with white plastic as the existing were in a poor state of repair. Following on from this work, because of the age and condition of the existing windows and cladding, two windows and cladding were replaced. Replacement of the other windows has been agreed by the Church Meeting and a local contractor appointed to carry out the work as soon as possible. The manse loft insulation has also been upgraded to improve the insulation.

In the past year we had to replace the church kitchen boiler as the old gas boiler was unsafe.



Work has been carried out to the garden shed and through the summer the gardens have been kept and tended by Shirley, Nicki and their team. A group took it in turns to cut the grass. Chris cut back a huge amount of the leylandii hedging and disposed of it.

There was a skip arranged (and filled!) on a clear-up day during the year. The old exterior sign at the end of the church school room was removed, and prepared for the new signage we now have this year. We employ a cleaning company to regularly keep our premises clean and tidy. You may also have realised that Paul has now moved his office to the far end of our church building and our thanks to him for carrying this out.

Without listing all the jobs done around our premises I want to thank various people for the great work they have done. For the Eco team in our gardens, Paul and Emma for keeping our manse and manse garden looking great, for the sound team looking after our sound system week after week, for Emma keeping our church kitchen up-to-date, safe and hygienic. Thanks to Cathy for keeping us up-to-date with fire extinguishers and testing etc. I would personally, and on your behalf, thank Keith Hilton for all the jobs he has carried out for us, filling in

## Music in Worship

The music team currently consists of Neil, Vic, Mary, Owen, Katie, Lara and Chris. We are also grateful for the work of the Tech Team on the sound desk.

Our heart always is to provide an environment within which everyone feels that their worship is aided and enhanced by the music. We recognise that different people have different backgrounds, experiences and preferences, but we hope that within a service there is something for everyone!



The worship team has expanded in the last year or so, and ideally this means that it gives us the flexibility to rotate the team, giving everyone the opportunity to take time out to worship from within the congregation. In recent months ill health has kept a number of the team from singing/playing as regularly as they would wish. It is very difficult to find times when all of the team can practise together, because of work and family commitments. Our main time for all practising together is before the service on a Sunday morning, though ideally we would want to do more than this. There are times when some of the group are able to get together for further practice.

We are always ready and willing to consider ways in which we can improve what we do, and welcome input from anyone who has constructive comments and suggestions.

*Neil Starling*

## Buildings, Garden and Maintenance

Firstly, we give thanks above all to our Father God who has entrusted us with our church buildings. With this trust comes the responsibility of giving the best care we can to our church and manse, making them places that honour our God.

time. Hopefully next year we will be able to invite the judges into the back garden at the church as it is developed in the future.



As part of the Finance Team I continue to support our Church Treasurer. I have also continued to prepare agendas with Paul for Leadership Team meetings and Church meetings and minute those meetings.

As I face the difficult days ahead, I know that being able to work as Church Administrator will help me through. Thank you for your continued support.

*Cathy Finch*

## Treasurer

### Summary of 2022 financial performance

	2022			2021	2020
	Budget	Actual	Variance to budget	Actual	Actual
Income	62,300	78,413	16,113	68,151	54,648
Expenditure	75,683	73,978	1,704	68,598	57,201
Outturn	-13,383	4,434	17,817	-446	-2,552

The table above is a summary of the financial performance of Wymondham Baptist Church during 2022. You can see from the table that we predicted our expenditure would be more than the income by £13,383. During the year the church were asked to pray about our financial position and consider their giving to the work of the church.

As the year progressed our financial position improved and as the table shows God truly blessed our church. By the end of the year not

only was our income up by £16,113 against budget but we managed to control our expenditure meaning our income was in fact £4,434 ahead of expenditure.

This financial performance means that for the first time in at least three years our General Fund finishes the year in a credit situation (£2,123) as shown in the Balance Sheet below.

We must thank God for hearing our prayers and encouraging members and attendees alike to support the work of Wymondham Baptist Church.

#### Balance Sheet as at 31.12.22

Fund category	Funds	As at 31.12.2022
Unrestricted	General Fund	2,123
Designated	Reserve Fund	11,900
	Fellowship Fund	131
	Roots Community Café	17,389
Restricted	A Roche – Eco Church	384
	Alpha	282
	Building fund	15,435
	Home from Home	2,154
	Paul's Education	0
Totals		49,800

#### Key points

During 2022 there were a number of key principles that as a Leadership Team, we felt it was important to stick to:

- Tithing. We continue as a church to tithe our income and selected three organisations close to the church to support.
- Facilities. We are committed to do the best we can for our facilities bearing in mind our financial resources e.g. we have replaced some of the windows in the manse, the gutters and the facias. There is still more work to do in this area.
- Vision. We endeavour to continue supporting the vision of Wymondham Baptist Church financially.

#### In conclusion

I would like to thank the members of the Finance Team for their continued hard work and support in paying invoices, processing entries, checking details and producing financial reports each month. It is down to them that each month we have an accurate update of where we stand and what issues are on the horizon. Thank you.

Victor Fromm - Church Treasurer

#### Wymondham Baptist Church Statement of Financial Activities For the period from 01 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

	Unrestricted year funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior total funds
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>					
Donations and legacies	£49,945.64	£18,063.32	-	£68,008.96	£44,186.78
Income from charitable activities	£29,055.84	£574.25	-	£29,630.09	£13,978.58
Other trading activities	£411.55	-	-	£411.55	£676.16
Investments	-	-	-	-	-
Other income	£34,809.16	£8,747.41	-	£43,556.57	£33,724.50
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£114,222.19</b>	<b>£27,384.98</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£141,607.17</b>	<b>£92,566.02</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds	-	-	-	-	-
Expenditure on charitable activities	£25,078.42	£77.23	-	£25,155.65	£14,773.96
Other expenditure	£76,510.33	£14,403.92	-	£90,914.25	£69,948.62
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£101,588.75</b>	<b>£14,481.15</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£116,069.90</b>	<b>£84,722.61</b>
Gains/losses on investment assets	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer</b>	<b>£12,633.44</b>	<b>£12,903.83</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£25,537.27</b>	<b>£7,843.41</b>
<b>Transfers:</b>					
Gross transfers between funds - in	£1,189.25	£182.23	-	£1,371.48	£3,033.05
Gross transfers between funds - out	(£1,371.48)	-	-	(£1,371.48)	(£3,033.05)
<b>Other recognised gains / losses</b>					
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>£12,451.21</b>	<b>£13,086.06</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£25,537.27</b>	<b>£7,843.41</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	<b>£19,092.72</b>	<b>£5,170.03</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£24,262.75</b>	<b>£16,419.34</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>£31,543.93</b>	<b>£18,256.09</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£49,800.02</b>	<b>£24,262.75</b>

