

# Heaton Baptist Church

*Annual Reports 2022*

ANNUAL REPORTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2022



HEATON  
BAPTIST  
CHURCH



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# MINISTER'S WELCOME

By Dave Tubby



Dear friends,

I have often wondered who came up with the idea of writing the first dictionary. There's a hilarious Blackadder sketch about it, where a guy called Johnson comes in enthusiastically proclaiming that he's written the first dictionary, and Blackadder then spends the rest of the programme mischievously offering made-up words, which Johnson frantically scribbles in to prove he's still up-to-date.

Writing a summary of the last year feels very much like a similarly impossible task. Every time I think I've got a summary of all that happened, I remember something else that I frantically scribble in. It's been quite a year, hasn't it? Nevertheless, let's try and nail jelly to a wall and summarise all that God has been up to! 😊

## Thanking our faithful God

2 Thessalonians 3:3 is the verse I think of when I reflect on this last year: 'But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.' There have been many things that have been difficult over the last year, and yet, in it all we have seen the work of a faithful God who has given us everything we've needed. He's held us together and led us forward.

Our worship has been varied and ever-changing, and I'm so grateful to all who have led, preached, tecchied, sung, played, prayed, read, served refreshments, welcomed, led Junior Church or youth in the strangest of times Sunday-wise. We've spent time together reflecting on Practical Discipleship on how we grow as followers of Jesus together. As lockdown eased, we've explored our Connecting Points and how to rebuild relationships with God, each other and our community. Into the New Year, we've begun to explore the book of Hebrews together and we're now examining our newly-formed values within the church, finding ways to show and grow more like Jesus.

We've also had the joy and privilege of celebrating new life as we've baptised Mohsen, Mohammad, Rosita, Matthew, Meghan, Mhairi, Mattie, Mohammad (another one!), Jon, Mohsen (another one, again!), Abbie, Nicola and Miguel. Isn't God good? What an astonishing reminder of God's fruitfulness and faithfulness over this last year - He is always at work and we praise Him for that!

We've shared in the joy of dedicating Siobhan Chifen, Benjamin Onions and Toby Blair, and we've grieved together the loss of our dear friends, Toks Fajemirokun and Terry Morton. The constant thread through all these stories is the faithfulness of our God who promised He would never leave us, whatever life holds.

As you read this report, you will see so many things that God has done. There are so many answers to prayer, so many ways God has brought us closer, so many ways He has revealed us more of Himself. As you read, give thanks, for our God is faithful in all circumstances.

### **Celebrating the seasons**

As we've begun to reconnect in-person, I'm reminded of Ecclesiastes 3: 'There is a time for everything and a season for everything under Heaven.' We have seen a number of longstanding ministries reach a natural conclusion during lockdown, and it's important to say 'that's ok'. We want to recognise, celebrate and honour all that God has done in these ministries over many years.



The work of MAPs has been a wonderful resource and support to pre-school mothers for many, many years. The Partnership Fund has been led wisely and sensitively for a long time here, generously supporting those in mission and ministry across the world. Hizkidz has been a source of real community for men and their children or grandchildren and has brought much fun and laughter. Messy Church has offered creative and innovative ways of praising God with our wider community for a long time. Each of these ministries has involved prayerful, faithful, diligent, wise leadership and each of them has pointed people to Jesus. We give thanks for all that God has done in these ministries, and we praise God for raising up leaders to serve them. He has done wonderful and transformative things for His Kingdom through all these ministries, and we praise Him for them all.

### **Looking forward to the new thing God is doing**

As we move forward, we also praise God for signs of His fruit in the new things that He is birthing. The Place of Welcome café has become a thriving community of fun and laughter with a beautiful sense of identity. The newly-formed Mission Support Group, there to release financial support and encourage our missional heart, is beginning to take shape.

There are growing numbers of prayer walks around the communities we live, literally bringing the Good News of Jesus to the places we walk, offering something of His hope and love into all the places we go. The work developing

in Walker going on behind the scenes to nurture the presence of God there in an ecumenical partnership between Walker Parish Church, Holy Trinity Jesmond and MINE in Byker has been a privilege to witness, and we look forward to seeing that grow. These are some of the new things that God is doing – life at Heaton is ever-changing and ever-moving, and these are signs of God’s work not ever standing still.

Of the 13 people baptised since the Autumn, ten have joined the church in the last three years. Our Christian journeys are never static, and the growing diversity within the church is a reflection of the richness of God’s Kingdom. I am so excited to see God growing us in this way, and pray He will continue to reveal more of His abundant treasure to us in the year ahead. We cannot know what He holds for us next, but if we continue to seek Jesus and stay in His groove, I know we will continue to see His fruit in our lives.

### **And finally, a thank you!**

I want to thank you all for your grace and patience over this last year. I know it has been hard, and I know we have sometimes taken decisions that have not always been popular. We have always sought to do the best we can to protect the congregation and encourage us in our spiritual journeys. Thank you for your patience with us as we have done so.

I want to close by paying tribute to the leaders of Heaton Baptist Church. This has been the toughest time in my ministry to lead a church. In among all that ‘normal’ church life brings, the pandemic has left us with wave after wave of new and difficult decisions to make, none of which we anticipated and all of which has had an impact on how we worship together. Through all of this, our elders and deacons have led with grace, humour and energy. Please join me in continuing to pray for them, thanking God for all that they have given out, and praying that He will restore and replenish them in the year ahead.

And so we continue moving forward. We lift our eyes in gratitude, we lift our voices in praise and we lift our hands in worship to a God who leads us on. Let’s be ready to embrace all that He is preparing for us.

Every blessing,

Dave



# CHURCH SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Rob Wallace

You don't need to read this.

You don't need to read this because the message here is what you already do, what you already know and what you already are.

I thought after five years in the job it was time as Church Secretary to remind people about their responsibilities and privileges as members.

So, you don't need to read this – because you are the kind of person who takes time to read church communications. You prayerfully consider your response to forthcoming agenda items in members' meetings and try your best to get to these meetings. And you cast your vote when we have a vote. You volunteer to help out with things in church because you take seriously your commitment to the furtherance of God's Kingdom here in this place, with these people- your local brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank you for your work, for that commitment, for that care.

When I was a secondary school teacher I used to say to my classes 'There are pupils absent from class today. They are missing an important lesson. They will not be able to catch up easily. They are not here!' And the class would say to me, 'Yes, but we are here.'

And so you are here. You are reading this. You don't need to read this. The people who are not reading this are the ones who need to read this.

Of course I know, understand and appreciate that there are other activities, interests, life events and infirmities that keep people away. There is God given Christian work and family responsibilities that keep members away from direct involvement with Heaton Baptist Church activities. These are important things, good things.

But with 167 members we have had recent members meetings (where we meet to discern the will of God for our community, our people, our members) that were attended by the absolute bare minimum number of members (33) for us to be able to make decisions under our constitution.

Furthermore, almost every area of church ministry is struggling to operate as there are not enough volunteers.

But you know this. You were there. You are there. Thank you. You don't need to read this.

Some might say that this Church Secretary's report is a bit too direct, perhaps a bit too strong. But that's ok because you didn't read it did you.



# CRAFT AND SHARING

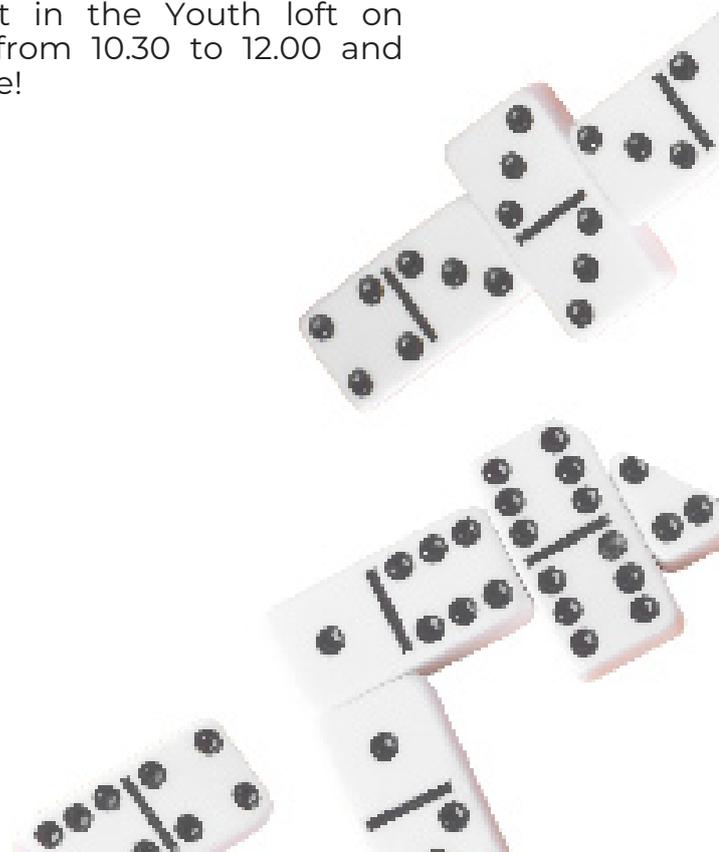
By Gill Taylor

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This group was instigated in March 2019, by Dee Dick who felt that there was a need for ladies, who enjoyed crafting, to meet together and socialise with some Christian content. Over the years, the idea has developed and we quickly made the morning open to anyone.

Our activities include making cards, knitting, crocheting, calligraphy, weaving, doing jigsaws, and playing games such as chess and dominoes. However, if you are not 'crafty' but just enjoy a good chat and a cup of coffee, you would be most welcome to join us. We close our time together with a short Reflection and prayer.

We are sorry to see Dee leave us for her new adventures, but glad that Heather Skee has agreed to help me in organising this group. We meet in the Youth loft on alternate Fridays in term-time from 10.30 to 12.00 and we would love to see you there!



# ENGLISH CLASSES

By Jeremy & Jean Wood

The main aim or purpose of the ministry is to help people who have English as their second language to improve their skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The ministry is run by Jean and Jeremy Wood. Jeremy's class is online at 7pm on a Thursday and Jean's class is on Fridays 10.30am at HBC.

Pre- covid Jean and Jeremy met with a group of students each week at HBC, assisted by two volunteers. Since then, Jeremy has been giving lessons to two students from Brazil online.

Originally the students were in Brazil, but now they live in Newcastle, but for convenience we still use Skype.

More recently, Jean has been teaching three students at HBC. From Hong Kong, China, and Turkey.

It has been nice, with the new way of teaching, to get to know the students a lot better.

The Brazilian students are both keen cyclists and sometimes ride on Wednesdays with the HBC Velos.



# GREEN TEAM

By Tim Knight

As a church, we are increasingly aware of the detrimental impacts of human activities on the climate, on the environment and on our local & global neighbours. We recognise that climate change is likely to have a catastrophic effect on our own and other species if global temperature rises are not kept below 1.5 degrees. Those who are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change have often contributed least to global warming; for some the crisis has come already.

Trusting in Jesus as the source of, the sustainer of, and the saviour of creation, we want to encourage and challenge one another to reduce the damage we do to the environment and to live more sustainably. The team aims to do this by encouraging change as individuals and as a church, offering practical ideas and implementing change.

The team came together in Spring 2021. It is led by Tim Knight and every couple of months we meet on-line to organise initiatives and review progress. The main work of the group happens

between meetings with individuals involved in initiatives such as

- Undertaking the Eco Church audit,
- Assessment of the carbon footprint of the church and its activities.
- Taking steps to reduce our carbon footprint and our impact on other species.
- Promoting ideas to reduce our impact on the environment in our Sunday service.
- Services focussing on our relationship with the planet.

Have a look at happened over the last year:

- April & May: Sunday Green slot - examples of things we are doing to reduce our impact on the planet.
- July: climate service and Eco-Church bronze award
- October: carbon footprint assessment completed
- November: Declared climate emergency and committed to reducing carbon footprint
- March: members agree in principle to solar panels on church.
- March & April: #LiveLent reflections & challenges.

Thanks to all those in the Team who each brings their individual skills and passions to the task. In no particular order: Kath & Esther Moffitt, Jacq & Tim Howell, Rachel Rai, Graham Sexton, Marie Borthwick, Karon Alderman, Lauren Fletcher. Thanks also to all those who are taking up the challenge by making changes in their own lives and lifestyles, and encouraging others to do likewise.

# HBC KIDS

## By Heather Rogers

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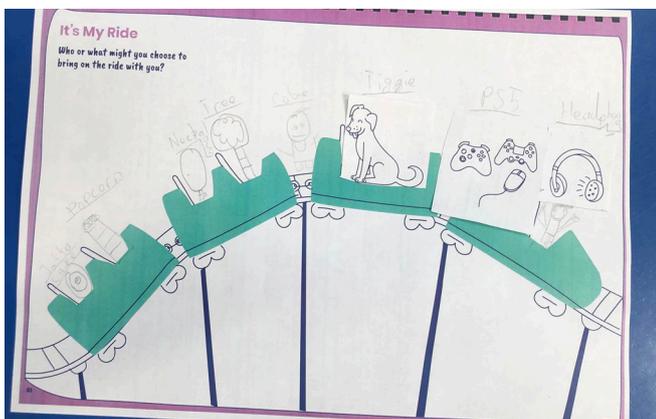
The purpose of HBC Kids is to work with the Junior Church leader, and aid in the mission that all children would know that they are welcome, loved and part of the church family at HBC; to facilitate outreach initiatives in the community, local schools and to partner with local organisations; to create resources that aid the wellbeing and the spiritual growth of children, both in the church family and in the community.

Heather Rogers is our Children's Ministry Team Leader, and oversees HBC Kids as a whole. HBC Kids is the wider umbrella which covers community outreach events and initiatives, partnerships with local schools, etc.

Currently, the HBC "umbrella" covers our work with local primary schools including St Teresa's Primary, Hotspur and Chillingham Road; outreach programmes like Growbaby; as well as anything else for children aged 0-11, outside of the Sunday Morning service.

Growbaby was born in February 2022, in the HBC building: this is a provision of free, good quality toys, clothes and equipment for families with children aged 0-5 in the local community. The group runs on the first and third Wednesday of each month, and has had a brilliant start - our team has loved having the opportunity to meet and serve families, and the provision has been a great way to bless. Since February, we have met around 65 individual families through Growbaby, with many returning on a regular basis.

Heather has had a fantastic opportunity to go into St Teresa's Primary School regularly, to facilitate various groups and activities: this has included some "transitions" work with year 6 students as they prepare to go to secondary school; the "Emotional Rollercoaster" course with year 4 and year



5 classes, which focuses on emotional wellbeing; assemblies and a lunch club for year 5 girls, to talk about friendships and to do some mentoring. She has loved the chance to get to know the staff and students at the school, and has fostered some wonderful relationships there.

Dave has also had the chance to work with the staff at Chillingham Road this year: he has focused on being a listening ear for the team, and on providing pastoral care as they faced some challenges.

A year one class from both Chillingham Road Primary and Hotspur Primary have also visited Dave and Heather in the HBC building as part of their RE curriculum, for a talk and a tour; and as a result, Heather has been able to continue to offer support to Hotspur school.

A huge thank you to the spectacular Growbaby team, who have worked hard to get the provision up and running: Paul and Alison Knight, Audrey Gladstone, Viv Weatherley, Heather Skee, Tom Bird and everyone else who has come to support, to organise donations or to chat to parents.

Thank you to Hannah Rai for her fabulous help in running our first Emotional Rollercoaster group at St Teresas.



# HBC PLACES OF WELCOME COMMUNITY CAFE

By Viv Davies

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We aim to provide a place of welcome, community and safety where everyone, no matter what their income or circumstances, has someone to talk to and to enjoy a light lunch of soup, bread and cheese and a hot drink and biscuits. There is no charge for this service and it is open to anyone in the community or is part of our church.

Aileen Innes heads up the volunteer team with Viv Davies who organises the catering. The team set up tables, make soup, serve at tables, chat to customers and generally create a welcoming atmosphere. The Community Café meets every Thursday lunchtime between the hours of 12-2pm.

Numbers have grown over the last few months and the group is a thriving and vibrant place to be, providing support and friendship to those that come. Regulars have started to play dominoes in small groups which is creating friendships between each other. Also, the Social Prescriber Key Worker from a local Doctor's Surgery has started bringing along a small group who enjoy the safe social atmosphere.

Sandra Cowie, Elaine Lord, Viv and Mike Davies, Mo Amirbaroot Kobian, Ellie Friend, Heather Skee, Helen Darlington, Margaret and Michael Stobbs.

# iCONNECT

By Andy & Hannah Clarke  
and Heather O'Neill

iConnect is a community of people from all around the world. We love to celebrate our different cultures, faiths, traditions and backgrounds (including those from the UK!)

Our community is made up of people of all ages, families, individuals, students, those in work, those seeking asylum and refugees.

Our aim is to be a welcoming community at HBC, in Heaton and in Newcastle; to share God's love by eating and meeting together in various ways. It is about forming friendships, having fun and supporting each other.

Andy and Hannah Clarke and Heather O'Neill currently co-lead iConnect. We also have a great team of helpers consisting of: Priya Daniel, Viv Weatherly, Jeremy Wood, Adele Boakye, Vera Franklin, Heather Skee, Shotti and Rachel Rai, Ligia Martir, Dan Brown, Mandy Watson.

Last year, once we were able to meet together again, our activities remained outside initially and we started off with a picnic in Heaton Park over the May bank holiday with some glorious sunshine.

We weren't so fortunate with our next activity which was a cycle on the quayside which was a bit of a washout and sadly most people cancelled... however, the sun shone again for our trip to Cullercoats on what felt like the hottest day of the year!

In August, we tried again with a quayside cycle with more success, followed up in September with a treasure hunt in Heaton Park and then finally when we were able to meet indoors again, we had our first event back in HBC and had great fun (not success) trying our hand on a potter's wheel.

We have continued to meet monthly in HBC with a meal and activities such as the Christmas party, pancakes and a wonderful Iranian evening.

Many people in our iConnect community have left behind close family and cultures where they enjoy large family gatherings, so they miss that when they come to the UK; our monthly meetings try to offer some sense of that.

We are also trying to continue with



more events in the community such as playing badminton, walks/picnics and meals out together which helps to deepen friendships.

Sometimes practical help is required, given that people may have recently moved to Newcastle and don't have good connections or support and consequently don't know who to ask or where to start when seeking help. This can be as simple as helping someone with a phone call to a GP, reading letters from utilities companies or putting flat pack furniture together (less simple!)

Our team is made up of a wide range of people from HBC with varying levels of involvement.

If you are interested in joining our team, becoming a part of an international community, making new friends and eating delicious food, then please get in touch.

We would love to see you at our next event! For more details, contact Andy and Hannah Clarke or Heather O'Neill.

Special thanks go to Tim Knight and Sandra Cowie who have been a great addition to the team but have stepped down in the last year.



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# JUNIOR CHURCH

By Heather Rogers

Junior Church provides weekly provision for children aged 0-11 on Sunday mornings, including worship, teaching, prayer and play; to enable our children to feel welcome, loved, and a part of the church family, and to help them build strong, meaningful relationships with their peers, with leaders and with the wider church family.

Jacq Howells is our Junior Church leader, overseeing the Junior Church groups on a Sunday morning and co-ordinating the teams for this. Our Junior Church groups meet on a weekly basis: Lasers (school years 5 and 6); Livewires (school years 3 and 4); All Stars (school years 1 and 2); Beginners (Nursery and Reception); and the Creche, for babies and toddlers. We have a great team of Junior Church leaders and helpers, who facilitate the sessions for the children.

After a break from meeting with our groups in person due to covid, Junior Church returned in September 2021. It has been fantastic to see the children settle back in to their old groups and friendships, as well as make new friends, and for new families come into the church family.

We have celebrated with families as they have dedicated their children; we have welcomed new arrivals into the congregation and we have seen children bringing their friends to church and to various trips, which has been fantastic.

Our Kids-Led services have been an opportunity for the Junior Church children to step up and lead various parts of the



service, and these have been received well and blessed the congregation greatly. We've seen the children speak; pray from the front and behind the scenes; join in with the worship group; steward, serve and join in with lots of other areas of church life.

Thanks to Jacq Howell, for her spectacular leading of the Junior Church. Also, big thanks to our Junior Church volunteers: James Girling, Ross McCall, Dan Brown, Mattie Richetto, Gordon Innes, Anna McCall, Kath and Geoff Moffitt, Hannah Rai, Travers Blair, Grace Bretnall, Helen Darlington, Lauren Fletcher, Steph Wallace, Hannah Wilkin, Karon Alderman, Priya Daniel, Viv Weatherley, Helen Middleton, Jayne Bird, Amanda Cowie, Karen Dews, Sheila Fletcher, Sian Blair, Tim Knight and Helen MacFarlane.



# LIFEGROUPS

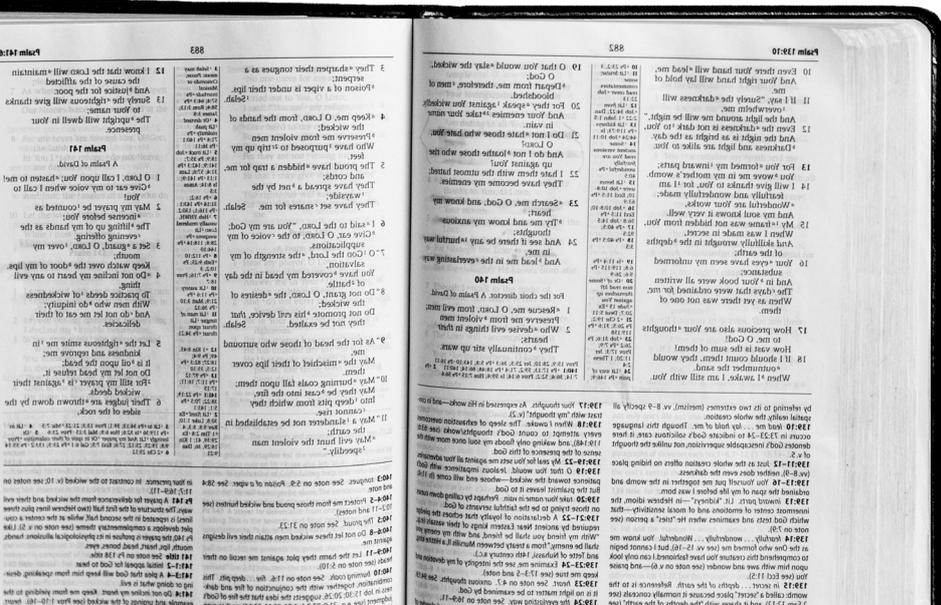
By Aileen Innes

Lifegroups are our small groups, which meet in people's homes with the intention of drawing people closer to Jesus through Bible study, prayer, friendship and support (and lots more too). As the last report was written we were just beginning to emerge out of the pandemic, and most groups were still meeting on zoom. Over the past year the groups have transitioned from zoom, some via 'garden gatherings' and back to 'in person' meetings, although some are still continuing to utilise the positive benefits of zoom on occasion. I am so grateful to all the groups for the fantastic care and support given to each other during the pandemic, and for the ways I continue to hear about lifegroups looking out for one another and providing practical and spiritual support.

Some groups engaged with our 'Vision and Values' questions this year and their feedback has been really helpful.

I (Aileen) have been directing my focus elsewhere over the past few months and will be laying down oversight of the groups. We are actively seeking someone to coordinate this ministry and hope to be able to communicate who that is very soon. In the meantime, if anyone has any questions about Lifegroups, or wishes to join one, please get in touch with any of the Elders.

Many thanks to our Lifegroup leaders and facilitators - Jeremy Wood, Graham and Hilary Sexton, Jacqui and Tim Howell, Tim and Sheila Fletcher, Lorna Davidson, Jack and Kristin Barraclough, Tom and Jan Pinder, Steph and Rob Wallace. You all do a fantastic job in this very important ministry.



# MEETING POINT

By Michael & Margaret Stobbs

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Aim: to provide a social/spiritual meeting place open for all, both HBC members attendees and guests.

We meet on the 2nd Thursday in each month, at 12-30pm for communion, 1pm for refreshments.

Followed at 1-30pm with a guest speaker or other activity.

As with other areas of ministry we have been challenged by the covid pandemic, meaning that we have met with a mixture of zoom and in person meetings, while this is not ideal it has enabled us to keep in touch with our friends.

Of course like all organisations we could not function with out our loyal band of helpers including Sandra Cowie, Audrey Gladstone, Gill Taylor, and Dee Dick.



# MINISTER-IN-TRAINING

By Aileen Innes

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It is so good to be reflecting on the year that has been and giving thanks to God that we have been able to gather together and bring our community back together after what has been a really challenging time. A particular highlight for me this year, was the Church Weekend at the beginning of April. It felt extra special to be spending time together as a Church family, after the restrictions of the last couple of years. It was great to worship together, eat together and have fun together. Thank you to the team who made it happen.

Another highlight this year has been being released to spend time pioneering in Chopwell and encouraging and supporting those within HBC who feel called to pioneer. My time in Chopwell (2-3 hours per week) has involved prayer walking (or 'wandering and wondering with God' as I like to call it!), developing relationships on my estate, getting to know local businesses and organisations and spending time with local clergy thinking about the future. There is a real sense of excitement about what God might be saying, and I've been really encouraged by the number of people who have been brought together with a heart for the area. It's also been fantastic to get out and meet with people from this church who are actively trying to pioneer new initiatives in their local area. It really feels like God is on the move, as people push into new areas and follow Gods leading.

My training at Northern Baptist College seems to be flying over! I am coming to the end of my second year (year 2 of 3). The range of training is diverse, and this past year, asides from my placement at Heaton, I have enjoyed the training weekends in Leeds and deepening relationships with the 4 other Ministers-In-Training in the North East.

I am continuing to enjoy and be stretched by my studies at Cranmer Hall, Durham (2nd year of MA in Theology and Ministry). I have loved the range of modules I have taken this year, which has included Preaching in the Old Testament, Spiritual Direction, Death Dying and the Christian Hope, Christian Doctrine and Old Testament Studies.

I continue to be extremely grateful to the Church for the support they have given me, to allow me to undertake this training and study.

# PASTORAL CARE

By Gill Taylor

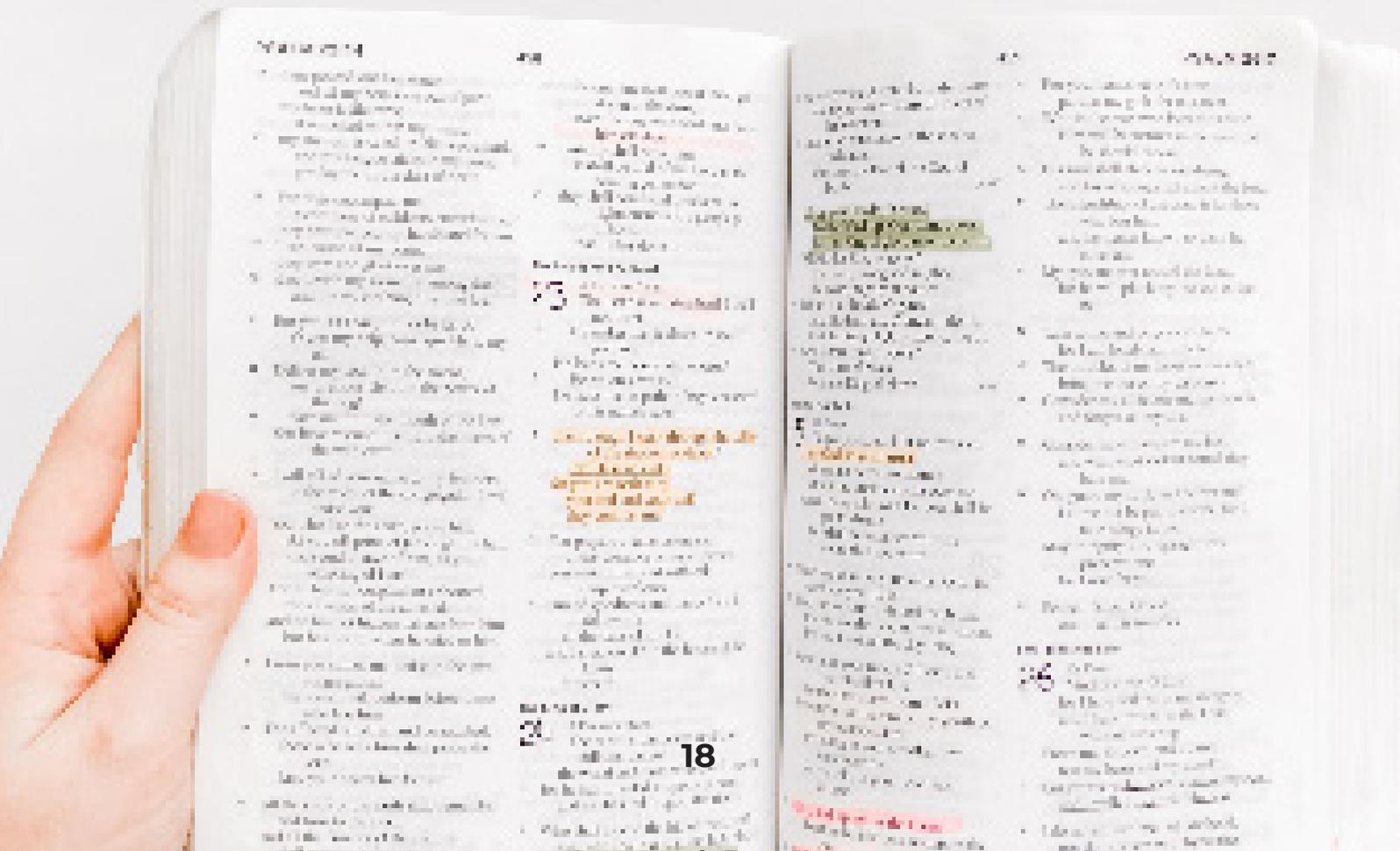
Now that we are emerging from Covid, we have been able to support people in a more personal way. We have continued to keep in touch by telephone, messaging, sending cards and remembering individuals in prayer. People have been transported to medical appointments and visited both in hospital and at home.

During the year, we have welcomed Emma to the team. On the other hand, we are sad to say goodbye to Dee as she has been an active and valued member of the group.

We are glad to see so many new people coming to our services. This gives the whole church, as well as the Pastoral team, the opportunity to engage with and welcome them into our church family.

Please feel free to contact any of us to refer people who need the support of the team :-

Dave Tubby, Aileen Innes, Vera Franklin, Bill and Maureen Hayton, Sandra Cowie, Elaine Lord, Debbie Scarr, Brian and Carol Tweddle, Emma Foster, Gill Taylor, (Dee Dick)



# PRAYER MINISTRY

By Tim & Sheila Fletcher

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The prayer ministry team provides prayer support for those who would like to receive this ministry after the Sunday morning service. It could be as a result of the service or others may come forward to receive prayer about ongoing issues of concern.

During most of the past year the team has led by Tim and Sheila Fletcher, who have been very ably supported by all the volunteers who have remained available to assist with prayer. The team of volunteers are available to pray with people about a variety of issues, keeping all of it as confidential as is possible. Only if there is a risk of harm would any information be discussed further. The person coming forward can share as much or as little as they want with the team before receiving prayer.

This ministry has resumed since September last year and it has been a privilege to pray with people to seek God's help and guidance into situations and in response to the promptings of the Spirit. It is difficult to give any specific details without the permission of those who come forward for prayer. We often do not know the outcome of our prayers with others but we seek to respond to the encouragement to pray continually on all occasions as we acknowledge our reliance on God in our lives. 'Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.' Eph 6v18 (NIV)

We would like to say a huge thank you to all of those who have supported the prayer ministry team during the past year. The service which the team provides for the church is greatly appreciated by ourselves and by those who come forward for prayer. Those who have been involved regularly in serving on the prayer ministry team during the past year include:

Kirsten Bird, Sally Foster, Ed Foster, Bill Hayton, Maureen Hayton, Daniel Jegatheesan, Shotty Rai, Paul Smith, Debbie Webster, Miriam Potts, Emma Foster and Stewart Watts.

We are looking forward to serving the church with Prayer Ministry in the next 12 months. We hope also to have a team half-day together in order to encourage those who provide this ministry to you all, the church.



# Toddlers

| By Sheila Fletcher

I'd like to start my report by saying a big thank you to Sarah Walton, Sandra Cowie, Heather Skee, Vera Franklin, Helen Macfarlane and Kath Liddell for their hard work on a Monday or Tuesday morning, and in some cases both mornings. Thank you too to Audrey Gladstone, Debbie Scarr and Karen Richardson, they step into help when one of the regulars is unavailable. They are a great team of people to work with.

It was so good to be able to reopen Toddlers last September, our families have been so pleased to be able to return. Once again the toddler groups are thriving, on our quietest week so far we had 66 adults and children, then our busiest week was in March when we had 91. The mornings follow the same format, toys on tables and mats, bike time in the youth loft, snack time, craft time then ending with singing. Kath comes upstairs to help once the families have arrived, one little boy asked his mum 'what is Kath doing upstairs?'

# WELCOME TEAM

By Chimdia KeChi-Okafor

The welcome team is usually the first point of contact during church services whether on Sundays or any other day their service is required. They welcome both members and non-members of the church, directing and giving required information. They endeavour to make people feel welcomed especially those attending for the first time.

This ministry is co-ordinated by me, Chimdia KeChi-Okafor. Since September 2021 I started on this role, no formal meeting of all members have been held. This is in part due to the challenges that was faced with meeting in person as a result of covid restrictions. There are currently no meeting days. However, we had our first formal fellowship/meeting on the 8th of May 2022 where it was decided that we would endeavour to be meeting more regularly at least once a month to fellowship and pray.

So far, volunteers have been involved in meeting and welcoming in congregants to church on Sunday mornings and other special days as needed e.g. Christmas day. They endeavour to identify first time visitors to church and provide them with relevant information regarding the church. They prepare to resolve issues with people who may be disruptive or difficult.

Thank you to the members of the Welcome Team: Alison Knight, Brayan Tajik, Dee Dick, Ed Foster, Gill Smith, Hilary Sexton, John Weatherly, Karen Richardson, Keith Wearn, Kristin Barraclough, Neil Cowie, Paul Knight, Paul Smith, Simon Nichols, Virginie Kalou, Vivienne Weatherley. Thank you also to the following 3, who are not currently members of the team but have helped out when there was a need: Jenny Kollapudi, Jonny Potts and Miriam Potts.

# WORSHIP TEAM

By Rachel Tubby

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The worship team is made up of a fantastic group of musicians and singers, who lead the church in sung worship Sunday by Sunday and at other services and occasions throughout the year. We meet to rehearse and prepare together on Sunday mornings before the service in addition to a midweek rehearsal.

The team is now led by Rachel Tubby, following on from Hannah Coffey who led the team until very recently. Our grateful thanks go to Hannah for all of her work in this role, particularly during the challenging circumstances of Covid and Zoom church.

After beginning the year with Zoom services, we were able to transition back to in-person worship from the summer onwards. This enabled us to come together as a band again to lead the church in worship, making the most of the opportunity to be physically together once more praising God in song and music. The sound has been enhanced by the new PA system and we really appreciate all the work and expertise provided by the PA team in relation to this.



# YOUTH

## By Caz Onions

This year we said goodbye to Anna as Youth coordinator – we are so grateful for everything she has invested in the youth and the way she led us as a team. We have been a bit short on the ground in terms of leaders and have felt Anna's absence but the team are pulling together well to enable youth provision to continue.

Youth continues to be an area of church filled with lots of fun, community, brilliant discussion and there's always food!

In Grid (11-14s) this past year we have looked at Jesus' "I AM" statements, subjects such as thankfulness, body, mind, soul and forgiveness as well as Big Breakfasts and one-off specials. At Christmas we had to change our plans and moved our Christmas party plans onto Zoom with home delivery Christmas dinners and lots of fun for everyone!

At ID (15-18s) this term we have had quite a small group. Some of the older youth haven't been back since we started meeting in person again. Those that are coming to the group are really engaged and it has been great to see them exploring and developing in their faith. As with the younger group, we have been looking at the "I AM"s of Jesus and have had lots of thought-provoking discussions. There's some really deep thinking going on.

Youth Lifegroup has been brilliant this year, we have built a real feeling of community within the group, this has been seen with our regular attenders growing in

confidence in sharing openly with one another. We have had great fun together and eaten lots of tasty snacks! Over the last few terms we have been thinking about our 'rules of life'; principles and values which we live by which shape the way we live and that we think are worth sharing with each other! The leaders have each brought theirs which included: 'The Bible is your lifeline', 'You don't need to be impressive' and 'Humility is everything'. We have explored our rules and they have brought challenge and encouragement to all of us. A highlight was the week we encouraged the young people to bring their top 'rule of life' and the young people brought some absolute wisdom and all shared so brilliantly! This was really encouraging to see the young people share so openly and honestly about what they see as important and that God is clearly so central in their lives. This term we are looking forward to being inspired by the stories and testimonies of people in the church as we invite 'guests of honour' into the Lifegroup space to share with us!

Our current youth team are: Jonny & Kirsten Bird, James Girling, Tom & Caz Onions, Neil & Lorna Davidson, Jon & Rachel McNaughton, Emma Foster, Ben Foster, Tim Howell, and Jack Barraclough.

We would appreciate prayer for reengagement of older youth and for the team, who are small in number and who are all carrying quite a lot of responsibility since Anna moved on to Safe Families.



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