

# Walmer Baptist Church

a Christian community, for the community, in the community

## Annual Report of our Ministry and Mission 2021

### **Minister**

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(until August 2021)

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(from September 2021)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This Annual Report of our Ministry and Mission 2021, Is once again a reflection of God's faithfulness to His people in spite of the challenges faced as a result of the continuing Coronavirus Pandemic and the untimely, early retirement of our Minister.

Despite these challenges, we remain thankful to God and rest in the knowledge that He gives us hope and a future.

## **CHURCH TEXT 2021**

**For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD.**

**Plans to prosper you and not to harm you.**

**Plans to give you HOPE and a FUTURE.**

*(Jeremiah 29.11)*

## **CONTENTS**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Housekeeping</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Church Text 2021</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Ins and Outs</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Contents</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Knitting for the Needy</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Badminton</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Leadership Team</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Baptist Family</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Library</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Banner Ministry</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Ministry Assistant</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>BMS World Mission</b>		<b>Missions</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Birthday Scheme</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Music Ministry</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Stamp Bureau</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Pastoral Search Comm.</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Catering Team</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Pulpit Supply</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Community Connections</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Shepherds and</b>	
<b>Fabric Report</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Shepherdesses</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Flower Ministry</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Sounds/Video Ministry</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>FKC Ride and Stride</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Welcomers</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Finances</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Xchange Scheme</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Friday Prayers</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>... and Finally!</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Grounds Report</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Church Text 2022</b>	<b>15</b>

# REPORTS

## **Badminton**

Here we are again, playing badminton after being suspended because of Covid restrictions since March 2020 till September 2021. We have been glad to see all our players back and even welcomed someone new. Playing is different because we have to wear masks and we keep our distance when off court but hopefully things will get back to near normal soon.

We are still playing on Monday afternoon from 2 till 4 o'clock; let's hope and pray that 2022 will be better all round.

## **Baptist Family**

Staff of the Support Teams at the Baptist House, Didcot, have ensured that churches have been kept fully informed of the Covid 19 regulations, restrictions and the guidance which HM Government have frequently changed throughout the year.

Baptist Assembly was held on Zoom.

The SEBA Team also offered practical Covid support including online Safeguarding training to ensure churches remained compliant with statutory obligations.

The ministers of the South Kent Network met regularly on Zoom to pray and offer one another mutual encouragement and support. As part of the SEBA restructuring the local ministers have nominated The Revd Chris Ruddle to serve as Network Minister.

It is worth noting that, as the year ended, the following churches in our Network were in Pastoral Vacancy: Brabourne, Dover, Smarden, South Ashford and ourselves. (Canterbury in the East Kent Network is in Pastoral Vacancy too.)

## **Banner Ministry**

Sadly, the continuing presence of Covid 19 has meant that worship in the Sanctuary has not been possible, except for a few occasions and at Christmas. Consequently, our banners have not been changed as regularly as in previous years. Our thanks go to those folk who have helped change them whenever an opportunity for Sanctuary worship was possible and an appropriate banner could be displayed. We pray that the banners will continue to be an inspiration to those folk who take the time to look at them.

## **BMS World Mission Birthday Scheme**

Thank you, all supporters of the scheme, especially those who make an extra effort to return the envelopes to me. The idea is to make a small gift to God in celebration of your birthday on receiving a card sent by the Church. The scheme is working smoothly.

Three people have gone home to our Father and three have joined. This keeps the number at 36. New members would be very welcome.

## **BMS World Mission Stamp Bureau**

The best report on the impact of the stamp collections etc. on BMS world Mission can be shown by the letter of thanks received from them:

*Your support is invaluable. Now the restrictions have eased our Stamp Bureau volunteers are starting to travel and collect the stamps from the Didcot office. Let me take this opportunity to thank you for your continuing support of BMS World Mission.*

Although stamp usage may be reduced it can be seen it is still a vital resource, so do please keep collecting them.

## **Catering Team**

Another quiet year for the catering team thanks to the pandemic. We were able to go into the Victoria Kitchen for a deep clean in August prior to being able once again serve teas and coffees from September, albeit with everything disposable and wrapped.

It was good that we were able to serve Strawberry Teas following the celebration service for Pastor's retirement on 18 September and a jacket potato lunch for the grounds working party on 6 November.

We pray 2022 will once again see our kitchen able to be used to its full potential and enable us to reach out to the community with fellowship around the table.

## **Community Connections**

It has proved very difficult to maintain our connections within the community, particularly under Covid restriction and regulation. Especially, our long-established links with our local primary school, The Downs, have proved challenging. From afar we have taken an interest in their activities and we remember them as the Headship is in a period of transition.

Once again, the maintenance of our church grounds has attracted the attention of our local "Town Council" who awarded us a commendation certificate for the annual Walmer in Bloom competition.

We maintain contact with our ecumenical partners, Walmer Parish Churches and Walmer Chapel.

As normality has begun to return as Covid restrictions and regulations have been lifted so, once again, it has been good to welcome back into our building the Tuesday Keep Fit Class, the Walmer Warblers – Living Lively Singers and ladies of the Rosamond Club.

## **Fabric Report**

Our Fabric Officer writes: Firstly, I must say that due to the Covid virus and a few personal problems it has been a difficult year but I have still kept on top of things. Also, my thanks go to Pastor and our Ministry Assistant. Locks and hinges have all been kept oiled which is an ongoing job. I was able to repair The Manse front door lock and move a power cable under the floor in the sanctuary for safety in the music area. Light fittings in The Manse have been replaced, pipes in the hall have been painted. The flat roof above the hall entrance needed clearing of debris on top of the rainwater outlet pipes which was attracting seagulls – it was like a lake up there – I don't think they liked me! The old notice board at the front of the Church building was removed due to age and decay and has been replaced with custom made new board. We used outside contractors to sand the hall floor by machine, revarnish and also to paint new badminton court lines.

Many other little bits and pieces were done as needed. Ongoing, there are quite a few jobs waiting for when the weather is warmer.

## **Flower Ministry**

At the beginning of lockdown, we were working from home and not allowed to visit friends or family. The world stood still. We may not have been able to meet in the Church building but that did not mean that we missed out on enjoying God's wonderful display of flowers. So, we looked for other ways to spend our time; this resulted in a lot of activity in our gardens; there was hedge cutting, and planting going on. We had weeks of fine weather and by the summer we were able to spend our time relaxing and enjoying the results of our labour. At last, we came back to the Church and it is lovely to see everyone again where we belong.

I'm very grateful for those people who have signed up again to be on the flower rota; it has been a way of remembering a significant date or anniversary and sharing our oneness with Lord and then being able to pass on the flowers to folk of our Church family. Thank you to all who take part it is a valuable ministry.

## **Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride**

With the easing of some of the Covid restrictions by September, it was once again possible to open the church to welcome riders and striders taking part in the annual fundraising event. Although our ability to offer refreshments was curtailed many participants including have recorded were pleased to share face-to-face contact.

Our small group of participants raised £247 in sponsorship half of which was returned for our church coffers. We remain high up on the local league table of participating local churches!

## **Finances**

Compared to the challenges faced by many churches, our finances remain in a relatively healthy position. At the year end we held in the bank £ .

However, with the prospect of settling a new Pastor (and their family?) in The Manse will necessitate some expenses both inside and out. We must also ensure we can fully sustain our financial obligations towards the costs in supporting a Minister.

Quinquennial, electrical inspections in 2022 will doubtless add additional financial burdens upon us as, increasingly, our wiring falls below the legal standard.

We give thanks for the generosity of individuals who have remembered the Lord's work here in their wills and to those who have responded to particular appeals made throughout the year.

A detailed balance sheet will be presented at the annual general church meeting and we remain grateful to our independent examiners who have conscientiously audited the figures.

### **Financial Summary**

<i>Brought Forward 1 January 2021</i>	<i>£ 51502.06</i>
<i>Income for year 2021</i>	<i>£ 46133.14</i>
<i>Expenditure for year 2021</i>	<i>£ 48664.70</i>
<i>Carried forward 31 December 2021</i>	<i>£48872.70</i>

Going into 2022, the not insignificant challenge that faces us is that of replacing our long serving Treasurer who has had to relinquish his responsibility on health grounds. Finding a replacement (or recruiting a Treasury Team) is a priority and a matter earnestly to be commended for prayer.

### **Friday Prayers**

Throughout the year a small but committed number of friends have gathered virtually, at noon every Friday, on Zoom, to share pastoral news of friends and family. These along with petitions for global and national events were brought before God in prayer.

### **Grounds Report**

We are blessed by having a large area of grounds and garden, which bring with them the responsibility to care for them. We are grateful to those who work in the grounds mowing, cutting hedges and tending the beds, borders and planters.

In 2021 two of our garden team have given up working in our garden. We are grateful for the work they have done but now, with none of us getting any younger, we cannot cultivate all the beds and borders we have done in the past. As a consequence, part of the grounds became very overgrown. As no one could commit to regularly coming to work in the garden, it was thought that if we had a one-off work day, friends may feel they could commit to that. This proved to be so and a good number came along one Saturday morning to work hard and happily together. Some brought along useful pieces of kit which helped the clearance no end.



Although we did a lot, we did not get everything done that needed doing. A lot was accomplished and it seemed everyone had a good time and enjoyed the fellowship. Welcome cups of tea and coffee and an excellent lunch were served by the leaders of our catering team and much appreciated. It has been suggested by two of the volunteers that we might do this from time to time to keep the vegetation under control. The clearance made a great deal of green waste and one of the volunteers filled her car with some and took it to the tip.

We are grateful to those who have adopted or sponsored a planter or two or a flower bed. One of our most faithful sponsors has been called home; it is thanks to him that we have blooming primroses around the hall door during these dull winter days. If you wanted to adopt or sponsor, a planter, planters or a flower bed do not feel you have to water it, as the good news is we have a new recruit who is willing to do the watering. Just remember ours is a wildlife friendly garden and bee friendly so blooms need to have plenty of pollen.

## **Housekeeping**

It is fitting to start with a sincere thank you to the 'Henry and Ray' partnership, which due to health considerations has ended this year. Fortunately, 'Henry' has found a new friend and together they ensure the sanctuary remains beautifully clean. Volunteers have undertaken to help keep our other rooms clean which again presents a well-cared for premises, for which we are very grateful.

It often causes me some wonder when I consider the number of toilets we have on the premises, perhaps it is something to do with being Baptists!

The new hall varnishing is a delight too and pleasing on the eye. All in all, we are fortunate to have so many facilities to use which enable us to invite people to God's house in many ways.

## **Ins and Outs**

We were blessed to witness the baptism of a regular worshipper who had chosen to profess her faith through the waters and who was welcomed as a church member in October.

The 'home call' of two faithful members, including our Life Deacon on Christmas morning, at the year end and membership roll stood at 31.

As Covid restrictions have eased, so it has been good to welcome regular worshippers in person although we are aware of and sensitive to those who remain cautious about joining us and we seek to remain our contact with them.

## **Knitting for the Needy**

Well, it has been another strange year, with the Covid Restrictions. We were unable to meet in person so our Pastor set up Zoom. Six ladies joined each Tuesday from their own living rooms, knitting, chatting, meeting the cats or dog, having to make their own cups of tea. We were there for each other when sadness and sorrow decided to join us.

At the beginning of September, the group met up in the hall, pleasantly surprised as to how many came back. We were also able to hold a sale of knitwear in the hall on 27 November, the first for nearly two years; our total for the day was £382, unbelievable as the weather was atrocious.

Our last day for the year was 14 December, forgoing a party; we had hoped to start back with a party on 4 January, but decided against it.

We will be having a charity of the year in 2022, supporting 'Holding On, Letting Go' which is a little-known Kent based charity that helps children cope with the death of someone close to them.

We don't know what the year will bring us but with prayer and guidance from God may we be able to help those less fortunate than ourselves. My Prayer is that everyone who meets with us feels safe in our surroundings.

## **Leadership Team**

The burden of responsibility placed upon our Leadership Team has been great, once again, this year, as they have sought to ensure our compliance with the Covid restrictions and regulations. Their due diligence and efforts to communicate the guidance from the Baptist Union is commended.

Statutory, legal, obligations across areas of Health and Safety, Catering and Environmental Health, Safeguarding, Data Protection, Copyright, Privacy, First-Aid challenge the old, dated, perceptions of their responsibilities which is now theirs as Managing Charity Trustees.

They are grateful for the benefit that comes from the support they receive from our Ministry Assistant who ensures the Church's legal compliance.

Guided by our Regional Minister, the Leadership Team nominated a Moderator be appointed and that Pastor be made a Church Elder on his retirement - Church Meeting agreed.

The 'home call' of our Life Deacon and the incapacity of our Treasurer as the year ends presents an additional burden of responsibility on this small team. Church Members are all encouraged to prayerfully consider nominations for the position of Deacon which will be brought to the Annual General Church Meeting.

## **Library**

The Library is now available to all in the Primary Room. The new shelves are in use and the books have been put in some order. They are mainly Christian reference books with some on Christian living, but there is also some Christian fiction and a small range of secular books, both reference and fiction. So long as borrowed books come back, there will be no loan record. All it needs now is to be used.

## **Ministry Assistant**

The past year has been a year of changes for me, as we have moved from lockdown, to opening up, then returning, at least in part, to me working from home where possible - If I were dizzy, I would have a good excuse.

Pastor's retirement has also been a big change, but I am grateful that he remains as a Church Elder making much valued contributions to our worship and administration. I am also grateful for the support of our Moderator and the Deacons. Being at the Church daily, I witness and am always impressed by willing volunteers who come in and do so much for the fellowship that would soon be noticed if not done.

I often remark 'the work finds me' as I have supported different situations in the Church's work and witness. My morning's work is varied, which I enjoy, often filled by working through a 'shopping list' of differing tasks. Working among you has been a blessing and I find much joy in what I do.

## **Missions**

This year, we have approached our mission causes in a different way, by using what was known as the 'first word slot' in the service for an address by a representative of one of the causes we support as a Church: Baptist Home and World Missions, Operation Agri and TWAM plus MAF, LCM, Barnabas, Willing & Abel and the Christian Institute/CSW.

We have found some of these 'sermons' very instructive and helpful. We would like to remind you that there is free literature to take home on the table in the North Transept, plus regular updates on the hall notice board.

**Mission Giving** in support of our nominated causes was as follows\*:

Barnabas Fund           £2000.00

Hope Now               £200.00

Operation Agri         £211.00

Tools with a Mission tool collection was held

\*Baptist Home and World Mission giving to be shown in 2022 accounts.

## **Music Ministry**

We have been faithfully served by our musicians who have accompanied our worship whilst on Zoom, which was not without technical challenges. Returning to in-person worship they have continued to flourish despite the health issues that have limited the full participation of the team.

## **Pastoral Search Committee**

Under the guidance of our Moderator, a small representative group of members and friends have begun meeting as the Pastoral Search Committee. Charged with the compilation of a Church Profile, which is offered to prospective Ministers seeking settlement, the process of discerning whom God has chosen to lead His flock here in Walmer has begun.

## **Pulpit Supply**

With Pastor's failing health and his decision to retire early, we are thankful to God for those who have generously responded to an invitation to wait upon God for a Word to share with us as we have gathered together for worship.

From the fellowship, we thank: Barrie Bray, Guy Platts, Colin Spicer and The Revds. Arthur Glinn and Helen Matthews.

From the community, we thank: The Revds. John Lines, Roger North and Stephen Young.

We were particularly pleased to welcome The Revd Eric Skinner and his wife, who joined us for Church Anniversary at Pentecost. It was 40 years since he had begun his pastorate here Walmer.

## **Shepherds and Shepherdesses**

The commitment of our Pastoral Care Team, our Shepherds and Shepherdesses, to maintain personal contact with their respective flocks has played a significant part in keeping the fellowship connected. The regular phone call, email, text message and even the traditional greetings card or note has done much to encourage and support all who have felt isolated.

From time to time the flocks have been adjusted to take into account changes in need and support and to balance them when new shepherds and shepherdesses are recruited.

## **Sound/Video Ministry**

While the primary purpose of our video recordings is to make our services available to those unable to attend them, they have proved useful in other ways. During Covid they were used to provide music recordings for use in our online services and were also edited down for use on YouTube. Another interesting outcome is that our services have been seen by people in many locations across the world. The older discs are archived so that we have a record of many of our services which are available in the Church Library.

## **Welcomers**

Thank you to those who act as welcomers throughout the year. On every occasion when people come to the Church, not only on Sundays., the welcome they receive is first impression they get. So, a seemingly humble act is very significant and not to be under estimated. An informative and cheerful welcome is more than appreciated.

May we continue to share this joyful greeting to all who pass through our doors.

## **Xchange Scheme**

Our latest effort is the exchange scheme, which is just beginning to take off (very slowly). Items are coming in but few are being taken.

Whilst the long-term idea is Gospel outreach, in the short term, it is the recycling of items to prevent polluting our world by dumping/ burning serviceable goods. It does not suggest that God has not given us enough to buy new, but that we respect our world!

For the idea to work we need our Church users to use the scheme by taking items from the stand or requesting the listed items that are too big to store on our premises.

At the moment amongst others, we are handling a motor engineer's workshop, which will go to tools with a mission and a deceased person's household which will go to necessary furniture, whose aim is to furnish homes for those with little resources at low cost. We hope eventually to do this direct in the Lord's name.

### **...And finally!**

There is always the danger that coming to the end of the report that there are contributions which have been inadvertently overlooked. For any oversight, please accept our apologies.

### **CHURCH TEXT 2022**

**The earth is the Lord's and everything in it,  
the world and all who live in it.**

*(Psalm 24.1)*