

Walmer Baptist Church

**A Christian Community
For The Community
In the Community**



**Annual Report
on our Ministry and Mission 2023**

**Introduction – our Moderator,
Revd. Simon Robertson**

In the later part of Isaiah 43:12 we read these words - “You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “that I am God.” A witness is defined as ‘one who can give a firsthand account of something seen, heard, or experienced.’ In the next few pages you will read of those who have worked hard throughout the past year to make WBC happen week by week. I wish as your moderator to say thank you to all those involved in witnessing to the Kingdom in this community. But this is not, just a job for the few.

We are all called to be witnesses and to go into the community and share our experience of Jesus.....

Peace and blessings

Simon

Audio Visual Ministry – Colin

Every week, where possible, we video the service and try to make a DVD available. There is a rack in the vestibule with recent services on for you to borrow. The most important thing we do is to make the service available for those who are unable to attend. We are also happy to provide copies for anyone who has missed a service, wants to hear one again or share a blessing with a friend. We also have an archive of services stretching back over several years. If you have any questions, please do ask.

Badminton – Rose

Our faithful band continues to gather every Monday to play. We are a friendly, informal group who play for the pleasure of each other's company and a little exercise. If you or anyone you know are interested, new members are always welcome; our subs of £1.50 for our two hour meeting are very modest and we think, well worth it.

Banner Ministry – Lyn

We do not currently have a team who can create new banners, but we have inherited a wonderful collection of banners both from here and from Victoria Baptist Church. We do try and rotate them throughout the year to enrich the sanctuary,

Our thanks go to Celia who served faithfully for many years but has had to step down for health reasons.

BMS Birthday Scheme - Truida

A sincere thank you to everyone who participated in our BMS Birthday Scheme this year! For those who may not be familiar with the scheme, it allows you to turn your special day into an opportunity to do some good. In addition to receiving a birthday card, inside you'll find a bulletin with updates on news and projects your donation could support, along with a gift envelope for your contribution to life-saving medical treatment and care for the vulnerable in our global community.

This year, together, we raised an impressive £435 for the Birthday Scheme! A big thanks to all who took part in making a difference. If you haven't joined the Scheme yet and would like to, speak to Truida (Scheme Coordinator).

Catering - Pat

Another year has gone so quickly with increased use of our facilities. My thanks go to all who have helped faithfully in so many ways from regular cuppas to running and catering events. Thank you for ensuring we had no ants this summer, long may it continue, as our facilities are used as we try to witness God's love in the community.

Coffee Morning Charity Fundraisers - Anne

After discussion with the Deacons it was agreed that we could trial a fun centred coffee morning bi-monthly. The first was held on November 18. Kate manned the beverages, Glenys the cakes and I ran the table games. There was no charge but a central contributions box for donations to Parkinson's UK was used.

It was well attended, a good time had and new friends made. We raised just under £200 on the day. A further £60 was given after the Sunday service by people who couldn't come on the day. When I rang my brother to tell him that the amount had increased to £260 he generously made it up to £300 pounds.

With the aims being met we will be running our next Fun Coffee Morning on 16th of January. The cakes will be provided by Lydia, who supports

Brain Tumour Research and our church generously will provide the hall etc and beverages as our part of community outreach and support.

Fabric Steward – Peter.

A building the age of ours always needs plenty of love. Due to my health problems I have had to delay some jobs until 2024. However much was still done.

Tasks included: fitting a wooden donation box in the hall; fitting a shelf in the accessible toilet to aid in baby changing; several pictures were hung; repairing a banner fitting in the sanctuary and refixing the banner; varnishing various outside doors; painting outside railings and gates (though this has yet to be finished when we get decent dry weather). The Deacons have been overseeing much needed redecoration, refurbishment and repairs to the Manse.

I must also thank those who helped sort issues with the building through the year. We are also grateful to a member of the Knitting Group who shares time and talent to ensure the church organ remains playable and cared for.

FareShare Table - Danielle

As a church, we have forged a wonderful partnership with Coop in the spirit of compassion and sustainability. We are fortunate to receive surplus bakery items from Coop daily, ensuring that perfectly good items don't go to waste. FareShare's mission to fight hunger aligns with our church's values of caring and sharing.

Please do not hesitate to take advantage of this opportunity, as something is available daily, whether a roll for a comforting bowl of soup, a sweet treat, or to help a friend in need.

We also want to sincerely thank The Salvation Army, with whom we share surplus items on Wednesdays and Fridays. Due to limited activities on these days at WBC, this collaboration ensures that the food does not go to waste and continues to serve those in need.

We thank Coop for their generosity and unwavering commitment to making our community a better place. This partnership is a testament to our dedication to serving others and our planet.

Financial Report - Truida

Considering the challenges faced by many churches, it is heartening to note that our finances have remained relatively robust. Glory to God!

Concluding the year, our bank balance stands at £53,554.71, showcasing a commendable financial position. However, it is essential to acknowledge the impact of the ongoing maintenance work on the manse. Nevertheless, we express our gratitude for the benefit of Gift Aid, which significantly aids our financial resilience.

A comprehensive balance sheet detailing the financial status will be presented at the upcoming Annual General Church Meeting scheduled for March. Our thanks go out to the independent examiners who diligently audit our financial figures, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Balance Sheet:

<i>B/F 2022</i>	<i>£61,306.93</i>
<i>Income</i>	<i>£47,105.95</i>
<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>£54,858.17</i>
<i>C/F</i>	<i>£53,554.71</i>

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to the well-being of our church community.

Flowers - Josie

Everyone loves flowers and to see them displayed in the church sanctuary reminds us of the garden that God created for us all to enjoy. Many people spend hours tending their own gardens for the joy of producing plants and flowers. There are so many varieties to choose from maybe a particular colour or scent there is no limit. One tends to have a favourite, mine are Dahlias. What a dull world it would be without them.

I must thank you all for your contribution towards the purchasing of the flowers week by week and also those who arrange them, also, it is an added blessing to pass them on to people of our fellowship to enjoy.

Friday Prayers - Seyan

A faithful, small group meets regularly online, using Zoom, on Fridays to share a brief time of fellowship (about half an hour) together. This affords the opportunity to share pastoral concerns and issues in the church and the wider world and to bring them to God in prayer. Anyone is welcome to join us; if you need help getting started please speak to Guy.

Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride - Pat

Last September our strider with her companion and the recording team raised £350 the highest in the Deal area where the total of £2,210-50 was our regions contribution to the Kent total of £111,861-98. My thanks to all who supported this financial effort towards the architectural maintenance of Kent Churches. The date for this year is Saturday 14th September.

Grounds - Peter

Firstly my thanks to the following, Harry for keeping the Hedges tidy and clipped. Josie for the flower displays in the wall tub's and concrete containers either side of the entrance door. Arthur for the spring summer bulb and annual flower displays in the two wooden and large concrete containers by the entrance to the hall and by the gate. Jonathan for keeping all the plants watered during the year. Chris for taking on the Memorial garden, clearing and planting. Barrie and Jennie for the lavender plants in the border under the clock and for the flowers in the containers on the trellis.

In an effort to make the grounds more manageable and bindweed free, to the left of the pond all plants have been dug up, soil dug over and bindweed roots cleared, two bags filled: the area to be grassed. To the right of the pond ground that has been cleared of weeds, replanted with saved perennials. The top section of the north facing border, all plants and shrubs have been taken out and the bindweed, this will be turned to grass. The thorny Pyracantha bushes which had become very large and unmanageable have been taken out. All grassed areas have been regularly mowed.

As in the new year the garden waste 12 bags are to be replaced with just one wheelie bin, less garden waste will be needed.

Adopting a planter, flowerbed or border, pulling out the odd weed or deadheading can help the Team and maintain the recognition of the Walmer in Bloom judges.

Hire of Premises - Janet

Once again 2023 saw our suite of rooms being used regularly by our own functions and those of our community, including keep-fit, Living Lively (singing for the over 50's) and the Rosamond Club. The poetry writing group continue to use the lounge fortnightly, along with the gentleman who continues to use the lounge regularly for 1-1 counselling. Deal Music & Arts used the hall in October for a music workshop, which proved successful. The hire of premises has proved a good source of income for the fellowship.

Housekeeping Report - Kate

The housekeeping really comprises a team of people each playing their part in keeping the diverse areas of the premises clean and tidy. Anything well cared for shows it is loved, which is a fine achievement. Thank you to all concerned.

Ins and Outs - Seyan

There were 31 members of the church at the end of 2023. In the past year one member transferred their membership to Mongeham Baptist Church. There were two baptisms during 2023.

Knitting Group: Rita B and Di

Another year has passed so quickly and as usual the Knitting Group have been very busy producing items to sell or give to Charity. The Charity we supported during 2023 was 'The Friends of Deal Hospital'. A lot of effort was made during the year into accruing the amount we gave at the presentation on Tuesday 16th January 2024:

Table Top Sales, St Georges Hall, The Scouts Hut and even holding a stall at the Gun Park in Eastry, plus holding a sale at the Church Hall the first Tuesday of every month. This was all very demanding on the ones that helped out at these venues but it was well worth the effort. We presented £2,000 to 'The Friends of Deal Hospital'.

Pat and Doris representing the hospital visited us for the presentation and were absolutely amazed! They never dreamt that they'd receive such an amount! Pat will in turn inform Di by letter of how the money will be used and she couldn't stress enough how utterly taken aback she was! Very pleasing for everyone to hear this!

As Rita fell ill prior to Christmas, Di has taken on the role of running the Group for the foreseeable future. We all wish Rita a very speedy recovery. She can now give updates on herself, which I for one, will pass onto the Group.

This coming year, we've decided not to do a 'Charity of the Year' but will support local Charities in our immediate community. This is all to be arranged during the coming weeks/months as being a new endeavour for all the Group to participate in. We will also try and attempt to supply what is requested by Charities in need, such as hats, socks, blankets etc.

We thank Kate for being our 'life line' with the tea and coffee! So very much appreciated! We'd like to pass on to everyone all best wishes and a 'Hale and Hearty' New Year. We'd also like to express Rita's thoughts from last year once again, in thanking our Lord for giving us talents to share, that can benefit others.

Leadership Team - Seyan

Guided by our Moderator and supported by our Church Elder, the Church Leadership Team have been diligent in their attention to the affairs of the church and their discernment of the future mission and ministry. The practical and administrative support given by our Ministry Assistant ensures compliance with statutory requirements, oversight of contractors and the preparation of paper and electronic materials. The Leadership Team recognises the time and talents committed by the Acting Treasurer to the management of the Church Finances. Without the support and commitment of Church Members and friends, many of whom give unstintingly of time and talents, the Leadership Team would not have confidence to move forward into 2024.

Ministerial Search Committee - Seyan

There have been no enquiries made to the Ministerial Search Committee during 2023. Our Church Profile has been available on the Baptist Union Ministerial Settlement List throughout. Our Moderator indicated that a review the profile might be appropriate and guidance from our Regional Minister was to be sought.

Ministry Assistant - Guy

This report would not be long enough to list the various things I have done over the year. As I have said before, the work finds me and I am never short of things to do. I count myself privileged that I love what I do and that my time here has been a blessing.

I am also in the privileged position to see all those who come in and labour on behalf of the Church humbly (and often anonymously) serving, enriching the life of our Church. I feel I must thank them on all our behalf. I must also thank those over the year who have directly assisted me; you know who you are.

I would especially like to thank the fellowship for their support in what has been a difficult year for my family. Your love and consideration helped greatly as I tried to balance my duties with unfolding events. The prayers and well wishes of the fellowship were a light and a blessing in a dark time.

Mission Report - Barrie

We have had several interesting missionary presentations through the year. However, the committee feels that having heard from the same 10 organisations repeating over the years that we should include speakers from other missionary organisations.

The church would continue to financially support the same societies, but the pew envelopes will go to the speaker's organisation. As requested, this year the speakers were asked to include a biblical content to their address, with excellent results.

Please continue to support and pray for the organisations which we support.

Mission Giving 2023

Various Causes:

LCM	£150.00
Hope Now	£851.00
Willing & Abel	£300.00
Christian Concern	£ 114.20
Shiloh	£ 525.00
Barnabas	£ 675.00
MAF	£ 125.00
Operation Agri	£ 250.00
	£2,990.20

Baptist Causes:

Home Mission	£ 425.00
BMS	£ 1,500.00
	£1,925.00

Mission Giving Total: £4,915.20

Music Group – Amy

We continue to be a trio of piano, guitar and bass. Because of Amy's responsibility with a baby rehearsal time has been a problem at the moment, but fortunately we work well together. Do sing up as that encourages us; we love to hear you.

Pulpit - Janet

As we continue in Pastoral vacancy we say thank you to our own folk who faithfully are willing to bring to us Gods word. Arthur , Guy, Colin, Barrie, Seyan and Danielle.

Our thanks go to the Revd. Ewart Graham, Revd. Helen Matthews who have helped during 2023 also our friend Rosie Davis who is a regular visitor to the church. We are also blessed with the retired clergy of our community, the Revd. John Lines, Roger North and Alan Spence (Methodists) also Father Stephen Young (Anglican) who faithfully continue to bring their unique style, we are so very blessed by their ministry. They have all become very good friends of us here at Walmer and we give thanks to God for their faithfulness and willingness to come along regularly to bring us God's word

Safeguarding - Seyan

There were no safeguarding concerns during 2023. The Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults was reviewed and the latest BU model policy was adopted; the Policy Statement was read at the Annual General Church Meeting.

Shepherds and Shepherdesses - Seyan

Pastoral Care continues to be overseen by a network of Shepherds and Shepherdesses who keep in touch with small 'flocks' of members and friends, particularly those who are housebound or struggling with long term health issues.

Through these networks we can inform our prayers for individuals in times of need and with a phone call, email, greeting card, visit or practical help we can express God's love to one another.

Table Top Sales - Anne

Last year after discussion and guidance from Seyan it was decided to reinstate the monthly table sales- which since Covid had ceased. The reinstatement came out of a church membership meeting whereupon I had volunteered to head up the events.

We commenced in May running the usual format with Rita running the knitters stall, Glenys on the cake stall and Kate offering teas and coffees. A few church members took a stall but otherwise there were three regular past stall holders who returned.

Throughout all three monthly table sales the foot fall for the stalls was low with far more money being raised for the refreshments and cake stall and many visitors enjoying the coffee and chat element.

After the third event I spoke with the stall holders who said they loved the atmosphere but weren't making enough to make it worth the effort. Therefore we decided to call it a day due to the lack of footfall and put our effort into a coffee morning instead.

Welcomers Report - Kate


The first people who are met upon coming to our church services are the Welcomers, so it cannot be understated how important the friendly and informative nature of this short encounter can be. It is a joyful and rewarding few minutes for all concerned. Thanks to those involved.

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Our Bible Verse for 2023:

***'In all your ways
acknowledge Him, and He
will make straight your
paths.'* Proverbs 3.6**

A wooden cross stands on a rocky peak, silhouetted against a sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow behind the cross and casting long shadows across the landscape. The background shows rolling hills and a valley.

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