

23RD MARCH 2025
ST BARNABAS GRANGE PARK

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 25

Let the deep waters of
let every mountain, ev
let all the fields make
for the Lord is





As I look back on 2024 and give thanks for all that God has done in and through our amazing church community, I am reminded of Psalm 46:8

This report offers us an opportunity to stop and look back to see all that He has done and to pray for the year ahead.

I hope that the stories within this report will encourage you as we give thanks for all the amazing things He has done.

**‘Come and see
what the Lord
has done, the
amazing things
he has done on
earth’** Psalm 46:8

Ben Gardner

CHURCH LEADERS REPORT

How you begin and end a year matters, it says something about the things that you value. I love the fact that we began and ended 2024 with sharing Jesus. The Alpha course kick-started 2024, as we explored the Christian faith. We concluded the year with a packed-out Carol service as we proclaimed the coming of Christ, the hope of the world, into our lives. What a year it has been!

Below are some of my highlights:

Alpha - It was such a joy to be a part of the Alpha Course at the Arc and eat lots of great puddings!

Baptisms - It is always a privilege to hear stories of individuals encountering Jesus and experiencing His transformation. I can't wait to see more baptisms over the coming years.

Trustees and Leadership Team Retreat - I could not do what I do without our amazing leadership team and trustees. This year we spent a day together praying and discerning the future. It was encouraging time away as we considered our desire to grow and plant again.

STB Kids 'Wake Up' Gathering - I continue to be inspired by our amazing Kids team as they creatively prepare our monthly Wake Up Gatherings. Seeing them share Jesus with young families who would not normally attend church reminds me of why we do what we do.

Loughborough Streets of Light Big Giveaway - This continues to be a fantastic opportunity to share something of the light of Jesus with our local community. This year we connected with 1000 people!

Grant Fund - it was great to launch the STB Grant Fund as we continue to be generous beyond ourselves. I look forward to seeing what projects we are able to support through this initiative.

Carol Service - it was great to see the Arc full of people from the local community hearing the truth and joy of the Christmas message. What a way to end 2024!

All this would not have happened without you, your support and prayers, thank you!

I would like to especially thank Jason Rowles, the leadership team and the trustees who work very hard behind the scenes, who support me and continue to be passionate about our vision. I would also like to thank Helen, Beth and Samuel who give so much to the life of STB and put up with me!

I can't wait to see what God does in 2025!

Ben Gardner

Welcome to STB

This gathering
being live-streamed.

At the 'Safe Zone' sign at the corner of the main hall, there is a QR code to scan. If you have any queries, please contact one of the leadership team.



PULL



Join Our STB WhatsApp Group

Scan Below QR Code To Join



STB WhatsApp

KEEP AN EYE ON: STB NEWS - ENGAGEMENT - STB UPDATES



SUNDAY GATHERINGS

During 2024 we covered a wide range of topics such as the Psalms, Conversations with Jesus and Galatians. As well as observing Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Advent and Christmas.

It was also great to welcome new people to the life of STB and see our kids grow in their faith and relationship with Jesus.

I would like to thank all those who make Sundays happen, without you Sunday Gatherings would not be able to take place. Thank you.

Average Sunday Attendance

	2022	2023	2024
10AM	65	60	63
Wake Up	60	63	58
Evening Gathering	18	23	24
Mid-week Communion at Woodthorpe Lodge Care Home	N/A	N/A	17
Online Views	24	6	14

Total Online Views (all STB Content - Sundays, Lent Reflections, etc)

2021	2022	2023	2024
4,300	3,003	1,900	2,070

Worshipping Community (those who call STB their 'home' and attend at least once a month)

2021	2022	2023	2024
60	95	107	128

STB Members (those who have signed-up online to become a voting member)

2023	2024
24	32

FOR MY LIFE
AND HOW I'M GONNA BE



WAKE UP

Wake-up is our monthly fun church for families. It is filled with games, songs, Bible stories and a sprinkling of chaos! We love having this time every month to dedicate to making church fun and the place to be on a Sunday morning! And while the gathering is focused on the youngest in our church, we also find that adults often hear God speaking to them too through the themes and stories we explore together.

We started the year continuing our series on the stories that Jesus told. We had a lot of fun hearing the parables of the camel and the eye of needle, the precious pearl, the sower, the talents, the wedding feast and the builders! And we still found time for an Easter special in April!

After the summer we began a new series looking at the Fruits of the Spirit exploring a new fruit each month and how God helps us to grow in these fruits and what that might look like in our own lives.

We are so blessed to have a wonderful team that continues to grow and embrace the mess, noise and sheer joy that comes with our wake-up gatherings! We are also so thankful for the families and friends that come along and make wake-up the beautiful church gathering it is.

We are praying that people continue to find joy in wake-up and that the fun continues to spread and grow. And as always, we pray God continues to lead and help us in all we do.

Helen Gardner





Wake Up



STB KIDS

2024 was an encouraging year. We are certainly blessed to have so many children in our Church Community, which in turn attract more to our growing groups and child-friendly activities.

We retain contact with 65 children and teenagers through our Birthday Card Scheme and a high percentage of these attend STB regularly. These numbers break down into 30 younger children 0-7yrs, 22 KS2 children 7-11yrs and 13 KS3 12-17yrs. Babies stay with their parents in the Service and on weeks 2,4,5 in the month the Younger and Middle ages go to their groups for age related activity and Christian teaching. The third Sunday in the month is All Age Worship and there is always a child related activity within that Service.

We are very fortunate that 15 volunteers have now stepped forward to work with our young people. We aim that volunteers serve just once a month allowing time for attending the service for their own Christian input. Volunteers are all DBS checked and have completed Safe Guarding Training. We are recognisable by our green STB Kids T-shirts when we are on duty.

Working with our children is so rewarding whether we are soaring like eagles or rockets with the youngest children, dropping protected eggs from a height with midway kids or sharing a talk or social with the teenagers.

My hope would be that our children deepen their relationship with God, come to know the love of Jesus and live their lives well. I hope that they will continue to share their Sunday teaching and activities with their families into the next week. I hope that the children see something of what it means to be a Christian from those that they meet at STB.

Pauline Anderson







Contact us
Call: 07562467356
Email: enquiries@arc-hub.org.uk
Facebook Instagram THE ARC

ALPHA COURSE

Alpha was something which I took an enormous amount of value from. Not just the videos themselves, but the conversations with my fellow church goers, and people who weren't frequent attendees to church but were curious, were invaluable.

I'd describe my approach towards faith and my own faith before Alpha as tension riddled verging on skepticism. I was always afraid of saying the wrong thing, asking the wrong questions, or appearing to lack knowledge. The Alpha course asked and answered a lot of questions I'd had about Jesus, God, and the Christian faith my whole life. Being able to ask questions, have open, non-judgemental discussions and be given things to think about all in a welcoming environment was the perfect foil for me to explore my faith further.

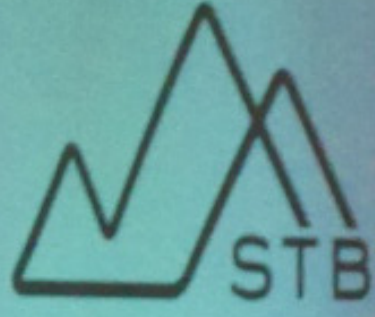
The Alpha course helped give much more depth and meaning as to why I attend church and what I hoped to get out of it each Sunday. It also helped give more context to my relationship with God, and God's relationship with me.

I pray that people just like me, who had, and still have so many questions about God and faith take up the Alpha course to better understand themselves, those around them and the Christian faith that millions choose to follow.

Ryan Conway







ST BARNABAS GRANGE PARK

Encountering

Jesus

Building

Community

Seeing

Transfo

PASTORAL REPORT

For us at STB, building community has always been about more than just Sunday mornings. We take our inspiration from the early church and the model set out in the Acts of the Apostles of sharing life together, not just worship. That means being there for one another in the challenges of life, as well as in the good times, which is what pastoral care is all about.

It has always been our intention that the majority of pastoral care at STB will take place within mid-week communities as this is where the closest relationships can be built and where need can be shared and supported most effectively. There are now a range of different groups who meet with varying degrees of regularity, ranging from weekly, to fortnightly, to monthly, to ad hoc social gatherings.

Our current midweek groups arose out of the Alpha course that ran in the early part of 2024. The group hosted by Ben & Helen Gardner meets on alternate Wednesday evenings and has a focus on Bible study. In the last year, this group has looked at Paul's letter to the Romans and is currently exploring the book of Exodus in the Old Testament. The evenings provide an opportunity to ask questions and learn from each other, seeking to go deeper as disciples of Jesus in the realities of day to day life.

The group hosted by Alex & Lisa Howlett meet fortnightly on Thursday evenings and share a meal together, as well as exploring the impact of our faith in daily life. They have recently been working through John Mark Comer's book, *Practicing the Way*.

The Wellbeing Group meets monthly and more details are shared in a separate report. There is also a Men's Social Group, a Women's Social Group and the STB Walking Group who meet to walk, chat and share tea and cake on the first Saturday of each month. All of these groups provide a further source of connection, friendship and pastoral support. If you are not yet connected to any of these important communities, please consider whether one or more may be right for you - we would love to see all who count STB as their church feeling connected through one of our groups beyond Sunday gatherings and if that means having to offer more groups, that's a challenge we'd love to rise to!

The WhatsApp prayer circle consists of 9 people who have committed to pray for pastoral needs among our community as and when they arise. With the permission of the person concerned, brief details of the issue are shared and individuals then pray. Over the course of 2024, we have continued to see some amazing answers to prayer and we faithfully expect to see more in the coming year! If you have a pastoral concern or a prayer request, please contact me and I will liaise with you to ensure that prayer requests are passed on and practical support is provided as needed.

My prayer this time last year was that we would see more new members of our church, that people would feel more connected, despite larger numbers, and that all would go deeper in their relationships with each other and with God. I see God at work to fulfil that each week and pray that He will continue to bless this area of our church life in 2025.

Katherine Craig

OPERATIONS MANAGERS' REPORT

Another fantastic year for our Church and I have so much to be thankful for. Being a 'pop-up' Church has its challenges, but we are so blessed to have such amazing volunteers who serve STB. From the teams that serve on Sundays, to families who open their homes or lead midweek groups and socials groups, others who serve as trustees and on our leadership team, those who serve behind the scenes at STB in administrative roles – a huge thank you. We have continued to grow our teams in the past year, as we grow as a Church, and encourage all who come to STB to serve in some way.

We continue to build excellent relationships with The Arc Community Hub, its staff and trustees. I know that Sue (Ops Manager) and David (Chair of Trustees) really value us as a 'user' and appreciate the care we take when using the Arc. As our Sunday gatherings continue to grow, we do need to consider a few things.

1. How we optimize space in the main hall when we are regularly getting over 70 people for most Sunday gatherings.
2. Breakout rooms for STB kids – space as we grow.
3. Outside storage (the shed we currently use is not a long term solution)

Ben, the leadership team and I will consider these things in the coming weeks and months. Please pray as we consider these things.

We had our 2nd Spring Social where we shared a fantastic selection of curries together, thanks to all who helped out! Summer socials are always a great way to stay connected during our time of abiding. Thank you so much to Paul and Anissa for hosting our Autumn social and for feeding us. It was fantastic to be able to run an alpha course in the early part of 2024, to introduce people to Jesus, chat and eat pudding together. Our carol service was a particular highlight with a packed main hall and so many visitors!

Jason Rowles







STREETS OF LIGHT

Streets of Light is a national festival which takes place at the end of October each year. It offers an alternative message of light, hope and love at a time when Halloween is celebrated. 2024 was the 5th year that STB has joined in and it continues to grow and reach more and more people.

During the last week of October houses take part by putting up beautiful window decorations that spread joy to the outside world on those early dark nights! One evening we take the children on the trail to spot windows and then collect sweets for every window they see! Postcodes that take part are marked with a lightbulb on a national interactive map and this year was by far the biggest year so far, as a wave of light spreads across the UK and beyond. It is wonderful that our church can be part of this beautiful project!

On the night of Halloween we do a big giveaway of hot chocolates, sweets and gifts. This year, in the weeks leading up to the night, people in the community started to ask if it was happening and to say they would be there! Because we had had so many people in the past we decided to offer two giveaway stations across our local area this year and it went down very well! It is such a wonderful opportunity to bless and serve those in our community. We love to be present on the night of Halloween but offer something distinctly different, with warmth, welcome and hot chocolate! We love to chat with, bless and feed hundreds of people and we always receive such positive feedback from the community too. We are so grateful for all those that join in the crafting side and also those who help with the giveaway!

We are already looking forward to what Streets of Light 2025 has in store! We pray it will continue to grow and be a blessing to our local community. And that those who come across the project will see something of the light, hope and love of Jesus.

Helen Gardner







GIVE TO GIVE AWAY (GTGA)

Jan: STB folk wrote a prayer, coupled with a Bible verse to give to to another person to inspire them at the start of the year.

Mar: GTGA raised a sum of £250 for a church plant at Eryes Monsell Community Church.

April: We had a collection of groceries for Your Store.

May: A collection was taken & raised £255, for GTGA & people took a brown envelope to give to others, to show STB being a generous church.

June: We raised a sum of money for Christian Aid of £250.

Sept: A sum over just over £320 was raised for a "traditional" GTGA on a baptism Sunday.

Oct: STB folk bought & brought in plants to improve the look of large plant pots outside the entrance to The Arc. GTGA to the community of The Arc.

Nov: Many new toys were given to Charnwood Toy Appeal as our GTGA this month.

Dec: The Carol Service Concert money was given to Rainbows Hospice.

Thanks to all that take part in GTGA.

Matthew 6:21 - For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Paul Anderson



www.stbgrangepark.org

STB
Grange Park



STB GRANT FUND

One of the core values of STB is generosity and through the generosity of our Church Family, the Trustees have been able to set aside an amount of our general tithed money to be used in supporting local missional and Kingdom-focused projects. This will be through our new Church initiative -The STB Grant Fund which was launched on Sunday 30th June. This gives us as Church the opportunity to connect with, support and encourage others based in Leicestershire and the privilege of learning a little about their projects, praying for them, and the encouragement of hearing what God is doing through them.

The Grant Fund is an online application located on the STB website and advertised through e-news.

All applicants need to be 16 years old and over, based in Leicestershire and their projects need to fulfill at least one of the following criteria -

1. That furthers the advancement of the Christian faith.
2. That contributes to the prevention and relief of hardship.
3. That invests in the growth and well-being of children and young people

There are three deadline dates during the year being: 1st February, 1st June and the 1st October after which the Grant Fund Committee will meet to prayerfully consider each application received.

If you have a project on your heart or know of someone who has, please be encouraged to go on line and read through the application form and it's requirements.

In 2025 we look forward with excitement to receive applications and to hear and see what God does through the STB Grant Fund. I pray that through it all God will be lifted up and glorified.

Shirley Whitlock





MEN'S GROUP

2024 was the second full year of the STB men's group. The group is there to have a space to talk about faith and form friendships.

We had a few meet ups including the driving range! Which is now infamous due to a driver head going further than the ball did! The group also has enjoyed several walks, trips to the pub, Euro 2024 and US election hang outs.

We pray for continued strength of our friendships and continued expansion of the group.

Chris Martin



WALKING GROUP

The STB Walking group generally meets on the first Saturday of the month at 1.30pm at the Arc. Most walks start from the Arc, but occasionally we have gone further afield. The walks tend to be around 5 miles, although recently we have had 2 alternative routes. One that is shorter and generally on level ground. The other is slightly longer and may go up and down hill. This year we have walked to places such as Quorn Central station, Charnwood Water, Barrow and Bradgate Park.

The conversations that you can have whilst walking are very special and it is great to get to know people within the STB community in this way. Other people outside STB are also welcome. We have people who go to other Churches and some who don't currently worship anywhere or have a faith but who enjoy the fellowship of a walk and chat. It feels as if this is a God given outreach opportunity, as once people know us, they may well be encouraged to come to other STB social activities or Church services.

On each walk we make sure that we visit a tearoom, for a well-deserved rest and brew. This is also a time to be together as a group and to make future plans. We make sure that these tearooms are dog friendly and serve gluten free and vegan cakes. On a few of our walks the dogs (small as they are) have nearly outnumbered the people.

One of our recent recruits has said, "I've enjoyed getting out into the local countryside, discovering different places and meeting new people".

A huge thank you to Claire for our wonderful Christmas afternoon tea. The weather had been so wet for many days, that we decided to just do the afternoon tea part of our usual get togethers. We had a lovely, relaxed afternoon and it was great to chat for longer as a group.

Our hopes and prayers for the coming year are that the weather will stay kind to us, that we will increase in number and stronger relationships will be formed. We pray that in time, people who meet with us in this way may come to explore other aspects of STB.

Debbie Wilson



WELLBEING GROUP

The STB Wellbeing Group was set up to support spiritual and emotional wellbeing within our Church community.

Lisa and I were co-leaders of the group until the summer, when Lisa needed to step down. Initially we didn't know whether this was for a short or longer period and so the group ran with a different co-leader each month up until Christmas. Since Christmas, Emily has come on board as the co-leader and is a huge asset to the planning and delivery of the evenings. We have chosen to take a chapter each month from the book *What Matters Most* by Brain Draper.

Wellbeing group is open to everyone. As we have got to know each other a little more, we have recognised that none of us have self-care sorted. We are all a bit broken and vulnerable, and we all appreciate support from one another. Some months people may turn up feeling good and that's wonderful and another month may come feeling low and exhausted. That's equally valuable.

Each evening, we start with a short activity to get to know each other better. We then explore the main theme before going into something more creative. This has sometimes involved an art or craft activity and at other times been a video or guided meditation. There is never any pressure to do the activity as some people prefer to spend the time quietly reflecting on the topic. This is a time to connect to self and to connect to God. We then come back together for a time a time of sharing and learning from one another.

The evening concludes with a time of prayer, where we share prayer requests specifically for ourselves. We want to ensure that we spend time considering our own and each other's needs. The following month we give thanks for prayers answered and continue to pray into ongoing or new concerns.

One highlight of the year was enjoying sparklers and parkin on bonfire night and will be having pancakes when we meet on Shrove Tuesday.

This is what one of our members has shared:

Our wellbeing group has become such an important part of my life, it has allowed me to connect with people from church on such a deeper level, we are there for one and other, whether we need someone to talk too or if we simply just want to be listened too. We explore different topics around 'wellbeing', and what that means individually to us, through fun simple activities, always ending with a time of quiet reflection and prayer for one another. Wellbeing feels like a safe space, a space where you can arrive as you are, and be who you are without judgement.

Our hopes and prayers for next year are that we may build a slightly bigger community and that we could spend a day or maybe longer on a Wellbeing retreat. We may explore Launde Abbey or maybe even Scotland once Emily moves.

Thank you to all who have made Wellbeing group such a wonderful group this year.

Please do get in touch if you would like to join us. We welcome you just as you are

Debbie Wilson



YOUR STORE

What is Your Store?

Millions of people in the UK struggle every year to afford food. Your Store is a social supermarket which aims to reduce the number of people & families experiencing food insecurity in Charnwood. This membership program is for families and individuals of Charnwood who aren't in crisis but could use a boost to cope with the cost of everything. They will find a wide range of surplus and purchased food to choose from at a fraction of the cost, meaning they can save money, help the environment and reduce food waste all in one.

Who runs it and how?

Your Store is a project originally set up by and now in partnership with John Storer House who act as the hub to feed the spoke stores in Mountsorrel and Shelthorpe. The fees collected from families each week are given to John Storer House as a contribution towards their orders with Fairshare from which they provide Your Store Shelthorpe with supplies as we need them. **Your Store Shelthorpe** is open every Saturday between 11am-12pm in the hall next to The Good Shepherd Church. The project was run by volunteers from STB, The Good Shepherd Church, and Emmanuel Church.

What have we done this year?

The donations from STB as part of Give to Give Away have made a huge impact this year, and the team and families are incredibly grateful. Without these donations we are reliant on what is available from the Fairshare orders and due to the national food poverty crisis, these are not always aligned with the needs of our families.

In the last year we saw a significant drop in the number of families coming on a Saturday, we also had notice from leaders and team members on the need to step down. With dwindling numbers in both attendees and volunteers the Good Shepherd PCC made the difficult decision to stop the Shelthorpe spoke store in January 2025. All families have been supported with the transition to other food provision services including Your Store at John Storer House & Mountsorrel as well as the Community Fridge hosted at the Beacon Academy.

What else can STB do?

Donations! In 2025 it would be great if we could continue to support food poverty groups in Loughborough and particularly Your Store at John Storer House so look out for requests as part of Give to Give Away. They would gladly accept donations at any other time as well so please do consider adding a few extra items to your weekly shop. The items that they struggle most to get from Fairshare are toiletries and household cleaning products so they will always welcome these. **Pray!** Pray for those families that been coming to Shelthorpe and that they can access services elsewhere. Pray for John Storer House and the Charnwood Food Poverty Network as they continue to support so many families in need.

We are incredibly thankful.

For our **AMAZING volunteers** - you all truly made a huge difference to so many families each Saturday morning. To all at STB for supporting this project either practically, with donations or with prayer it was great to be supported by so many. To God for always providing when needed, for giving us strength to continue, for having a plan and teaching us when to stop just as much as when to start things.

Claire Rowles





MEDIA REPORT

2024 was a year of many highlights for STB. It's been an honour to capture these moments and to see transformation in people's lives and how God is working in us all. Key events captured in photographs this year include, the Alpha course, STB Kids Wake Up, 5th Birthday Celebration, Social's throughout the year and STB at New Wine.

This year we've made a concerted effort to build our social media presence across various avenues including Facebook, Instagram & YouTube. These social media channels are really key for us to use as they enable us to reach those outside of our existing congregation and reflect the life and work of STB, we encourage all of you to share and like any of our posts so that they can reach more and more people. We are also using these channels to share upcoming activities and stories from within the church so please ensure you are following us so you don't miss out on any exciting updates.

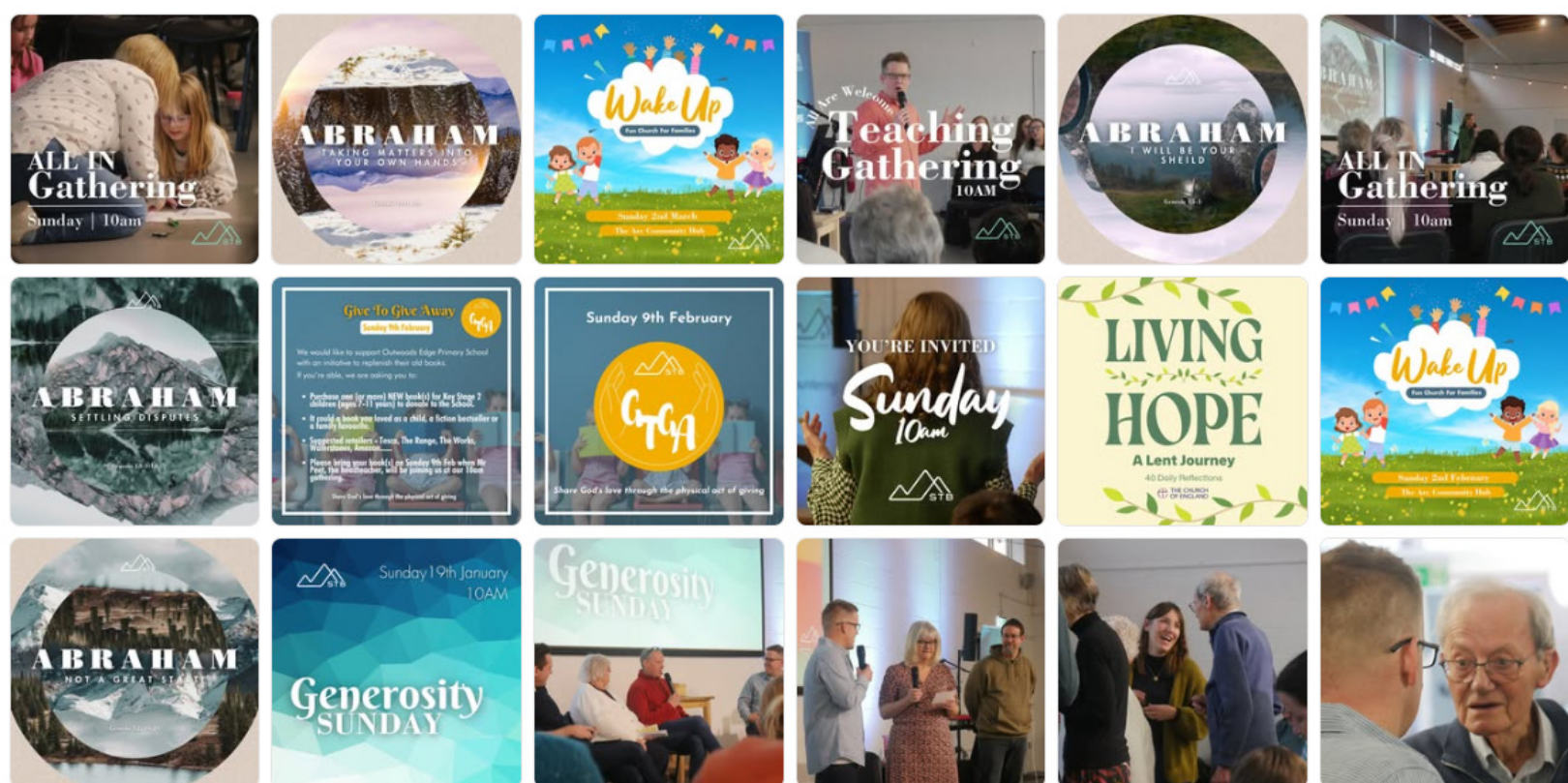
You will also notice this year that we have been more intentional in using the consistent STB branding in all elements of our media, this is really important to showcase our identity and be easily recognisable within the community.

We are really excited to share that in 2025 we will be launching a new website! We've been working in the background on building a new site for the last few months. This new site will be more dynamic, easier to navigate on mobile devices (which is how the majority of people access it) and overall have a better look and feel creating a welcoming window into the life and work of STB.

You can follow our pages by searching @STBGrangePark on any platform.

I pray for STB's growth and that our faith and community continue to strengthen throughout 2025 and beyond

Tori Swain



STB PODCAST

The STB podcast was established last year in order to provide another avenue of discipleship with the aim to bridge the gap between Mondays and Sundays.

Having a podcast for STB means that we're able to speak about topics that are relevant to the community and also expand on things going on at STB.

Timetabling issues have meant that recording the podcast and releasing them on a schedule have made it difficult to release podcasts on a regular basis. However, we have now started to prerecord multiple podcasts before releasing them so that we can release multiple episodes regularly with some continuity between them.

Previously we covered a multiple of different topics that felt relevant to the congregation and context such as reflecting on New Wine and Christianity in politics however for 2025 we have decided to change tack slightly and have a more Biblical focus. As a result of this we have now started to focus on different Biblical characters with a season on each one. We currently have a season recorded and awaiting release on Abraham and another on Joseph with the focus being on what lessons can be applied to our lives.

The aim throughout this is to continue to see how we can explore living faithfully as disciples of Christ. Hopefully you've found it useful in your own walk with Jesus and if you haven't heard of the podcast then please check it out on the STB website.

Alex Howlett



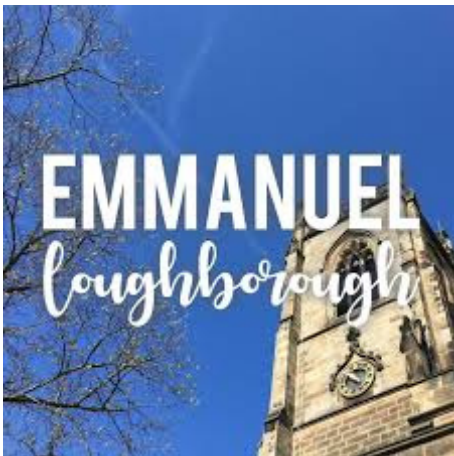


RESOURCING CHURCH PARTNERSHIP

The Resource Church Partnership consists of Emmanuel, the Good Shepherd and St Barnabas Grange Park. The most important question for us as a Resource Church Partnership is what next and where next? We had a wonderful church weekend led by Martyn Taylor who challenged us to think about the “Where Next”? The Resource Project Funding comes to an end in June 2027 however we need to continue to see how we can church plant as we move forwards. In February 2024 three families planted into the Good Shepherd from Emmanuel and have become part of the worshipping community. The Good Shepherd continues to grow and strengthen their ministry.

St Barnabas now has a congregation of 95 adults with 35 children. So, overall, we have the capacity and the resources to pray and discern where we plant next.

Michael Broadley



LOUGHBOROUGH CHURCHES PARTNERSHIP

Loughborough Churches Partnership (LCP) consists of 20+ churches committed to working together to see transformation in Loughborough.

"There is one Church in Loughborough, with multiple expressions, centred on Christ, to transform our community."

2024 was a year of proclamation as LCP continued to play its part in the ongoing transformation of Loughborough.

Below are my three of highlights from 2024:

United Service - 180+ people from across LCP gathered at the Loughborough Baptist Church to worship Jesus and pray for our amazing town. It was a joy to welcome Phil Knox from the Evangelical Alliance as he preached on the importance of relationship and evangelism.

The June Project 2024 - Similar to 2023, the June Project was an opportunity to serve Loughborough in practical ways. A team from STB transformed a community garden, multiple litter picks took place across the town, a team of decorators freshened-up a local charity community building and worship took place in the town centre.

LCP Church Leaders Prayer Walks - every month the LCP church leaders gather to pray and have breakfast together. During 2024 we also prayer walked various streets asking for God's Kingdom to come. These monthly gatherings continue to be significant as they reflect Jesus' call to be 'one' (John 17:20-21) and to support one another as we partner together for the Gospel

Ben Gardner.





SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Ian Craig is the Safeguarding officer, and Charlotte Faulconbridge is the Safer Recruiting lead for STB, Grange Park, Loughborough.

Volunteers/DBS checks:

All our youth and children's volunteers are required to follow the Safer Recruitment process, expertly overseen by Charlotte Falconbridge. Part of that process is the DBS review, to ensure all volunteers are thoroughly checked by a highly qualified independent external body. The role of the Safeguarding officer is to be the named person volunteers and church members would report any disclosures or child protection concerns to.

If you are more comfortable talking to a female you can also contact Charlotte.

The role of the Safer Recruitment lead is to ensure the recruitment process for our volunteers is followed. If required, the Safeguarding Officer will refer on any disclosures or child protection concerns to the Diocese Safeguarding team. Each November we have a dedicated Safeguarding Sunday. Information for the Safeguarding Officer can be found on the website, information banner visible at every service, and dedicated screen slide used during services.

Importance of Safer Recruiting and Safeguarding:

Safeguarding is regularly discussed at Senior Leadership team meetings, and a safeguarding report is produced for every Trustees meeting.

Latest position:

There have been no safeguarding concerns that required the involvement of the diocese safeguarding team this year

All our current volunteers working with children and youth have successfully completed the Safer Recruitment process, and all DBS checks are correct and in date. We currently have three new volunteers going through the process and hope to have these completed soon.

Please remember that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Many Thanks.

Ian Craig and Charlotte Faulconbridge



FINANCIAL REVIEW

Overall net income for the year reported in the Statement of Financial Activities is a net increase in funds of £5,887 (2023: £15,914). The table below shows a breakdown of this overall movement to provide a clearer view of the “ordinary” income and expenditure of the church.

Description	2024	2023
	£	£
Cash Flow from Operating Activities		
General Fund: Voluntary Income - Donations & Gift Aid (note 6.1)	56 289	48 084
General Fund: Expenditure on Charitable Activities (note 7.1)	51 365	49 391
General Fund: Expenditure on Support Costs (note 7.2)	4 878	5 797
Tithe Commitment: Transferred from General to tithe funds (note 11)	4 808	3 744
Total Expenditure and Commitments	61 051	58 932
Net Ordinary Income/Expenditure (ie. excluding grants and other income)	- 4 762	- 10 848
SDF Seed funding (note 6.2)	-	7 087
SDF expenses claimed (note 6.2)	5 015	7 999
Total SDF contributions	5 015	15 086
Net outcome after SDF Grant Funding	253	4 238
One-off sales of equipment (note 6.2)	-	1 120
Emmanual church refund (and other) - Flourish weekend for 2024	923	-
General (Unrestricted) Net outcome after other income	1 176	5 358
Adjustments to accounting for our tithe commitments:		
Reverse accruals from the 2022 accounts so tithe monies can be held in a separate fund	-	8 811
Tithe commitments: Received in the tithe funds	4 808	3 744
Tithe funds spent	-	-2 135
Net movement in Tithe Funds (note 11)	4 808	10 420
Net outcome after Tithe Funds Movements	5 984	15 778
Net movement on Restricted Funds (note 8)	-98	136
Overall net outcome - Statement of Financial Activities	5 886	15 914

Voluntary income for 2024 was £56,289 (2023: £48,084). This is a 17% increase from 2023. Thank you to our many generous givers.

Expenditure on charitable activities was £51,365 (2023: £49,391) similar cost per month with an increase in Community, Mission & Outreach Events mainly due to Alpha, Streets of light and STB's 5th birthday celebrations. Support costs (office, systems and admin) were £5,878 (2023: £5,797) similar in cost per month.

Therefore, we had a deficit of £4,762 (2023: £10,848) on ordinary income and expenditure.

We benefitted from the SDF grant for expenses £5,015 (£7,999) and other income of £923 (2023: £1,120). The benefit from the SDF seed funding grant (start-up grants) are now spent out and was £7,087 in the prior year from which we've benefited and used to balance to books year on year. We now need to stand substantially on our own to cover our operational cost whilst still hugely benefiting from the resourcing church program meeting most of our clergy costs. The general fund surplus for the year was therefore £1,176 (2023: £5,358).

Accounting for our Tithe commitments is changed to provide better visibility of the funds accrued and spend of those funds. The movement in funds for 2024 records our continuing commitment to accrue 10% of voluntary income for tithe projects set at £4,808 for 2024 available for distribution to various projects under the STB grand fund and our Church Plant commitments on an equal basis.

STB have been blessed with a steady increase year on year in giving thanks to the generosity of our church members. Thank you for your support and generosity.

In 2025 we now need to take another step in faith to fully recover our operational costs. Therefore, we've been careful in our commitments with a similar budget for 2025 to 2024 whilst still allowing the church to function well. We are faithfully trusting God to exceed our expectations for 2025. Can you pray and stand in faith with us to help us do that?

Highlight:

Alpha course –The Alpha course was one of our big expenses for 2024 and I have seen and experienced firsthand the huge spiritual reward and generosity to the church as a result thereof too. In the Alpha group I was part of 2 members who were not only baptised in the church but also became serving members (including myself) of STB. This is a confirmation of not only the generosity received but also the desire to give back and continuously being part of the vision of the church and church family.

Hopes and prayers for this next year:

God to exceed our expectations for 2025 through our generous givers and help STB become financially sustainable in order to help us achieve our vision as a church to plant again.

Charné van Jaarsveld

TRUSTEES REPORT

Witnessing the amazing things STB does as a church is always a privilege!

As trustees we are responsible for oversight, governance and accountability of the church, for safeguarding, supporting leaders and creating a financially sustainable future.

This year, Chris Martin and Lisa Howlett have joined us as trustees, and Charné Van Jaarsveld has joined us as treasurer. They are all fantastic additions to the team.

Finances: We continue to monitor our finances and are always encouraged by the significant generosity of our congregation. A huge thank you for all those who give! This enables so much of the work we do. We were delighted to see an increase in giving of 17% from 2023. As our seed funding has now come to an end, we have set the 2025 budget to fully cover our operational costs our prayer is that we see God exceed our expectations! — see treasurer's report.

Thank you again for all your generosity we are so grateful!

Policies: We regularly update and review our policies to ensure we are following best practices and keeping everyone safe. Most recently, we have been reviewing recommendations from the Pilavachi and Smyth reports regarding safeguarding and our processes. We are actively working to ensure STB is a safe place for all.

Minster Communities: Some will be aware the Diocese and the wider CofE are undertaking a restructuring process. Currently, the trustees are engaged in the process, attending meetings and starting to formulate what a Minster Community (larger group of churches in an area) might look like. It's important for us to hold to the values and biblical underpinning we live by as a church and create a Minster Community focused on planting more churches and reaching those who don't know Jesus. More information will likely emerge in 2025 as this process continues.

Living in Love and Faith: There have been many discussions in the wider CofE around a report titled Living in Love and Faith concerning same-sex marriage and issues of human sexuality. Various resources have been published, and debates within General Synod have taken place and are ongoing. Revd. Ben Gardner has kept the trustees informed of the process and has also stated his position (see below), which the trustees support.

Ben Gardner makes the following statement on our position: "I continue to believe that the Church of England's current position on human sexuality (marriage between one man and one woman) is built on the teaching of scripture and is therefore good for individuals and society as a whole. Whilst acknowledging that there will be others within STB who do not hold this position, I believe that we can be a church that welcomes everyone, offering the grace and love that Jesus showed all of us, whilst holding confidently to the teaching of Scripture, our historic tradition and commonly held view across the worldwide Church. "Finally, thank you so much for everything, everyone does at STB to make this a truly special church.

Tim Whitehead



Charity No. 1195102