



Grove Free Evangelical Church

'Building a community of people who live out God's purposes'

Annual Reports

2014-2015

www.gfec.org.uk

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From the Elders

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.
Ephesians 3:20-21

As I sit at my computer compiling this Report, I'm very conscious that it will be my last. I will be leaving GFEC at the end of November, concluding a 10 year period as your Pastor. Despite the many challenges in church life during this time, GFEC will always have a special place in my heart. It has been a privilege to serve God and the GFEC family. There are many positive memories that I will always cherish.

As I reflect on the last year, there have again been changes in leadership. Ian kindly agreed to extend his period as an Elder, while Andy resigned from the Eldership in October after almost 10 years in this role. I'd like to place on record my thanks to Andy for his contribution to the Eldership during this time.

After Ken Hayward resigned from the Deaconate and membership of GFEC, Stephanie Brown was appointed as a Deacon in January 2015 joining Adrian & Fiona. We are blessed to have a group of Deacons who work tirelessly in the background to support and enhance the life of the church.

Debbie Hooker's contract as Administrator finished at the end of March. She performed her duties with grace, diligence and dedication. She agreed to retain some tasks whilst others had been distributed among the Deacons and Sarah Tippett who kindly agreed to take over several discrete tasks including the compilation and production of an updated Prayer Diary, Family & Friends and this Annual Report.

A revised Leadership model was introduced during the year. Several Ministry Leaders (MLs) were appointed to take responsibility for various ministries in church life. The model delegates responsibility to MLs and provides a mechanism for a decision or change without the Elders being a 'bottle neck'. Part of this model enables training and preparation for leadership. This model has released the Elders to 'pastor' and has given MLs a greater sense of ownership within their sphere of ministry. It will also enable an incoming Pastor to meet with MLs to understand their specific roles from the outset of his ministry.

We have once again sought to provide a balanced diet of practical and relevant teaching for everyone. In our Sunday morning services we have covered several series including 'Discipleship – Follow my Leader', 'Developing a faith that works' (James), 'Serving God with our whole body', 'A beauty that's more than skin deep' (Esther), 'The Songs of Advent' and 'Life behind the lyrics of the Psalms.' Ian has shared in the teaching with me and others have stepped in at other times. Ray Massie has also spoken on several occasions and this has helped to spread the teaching load. I'd like to express my gratitude to them and all those involved in leading, playing, singing, 'Power Pointing' and 'PA-ing' at these services.

At Christmas, we sought to engage with the community as we again sang carols in the Bay Tree pub with the help of some of the locals. The Christmas Services were well attended with many new faces present although few people return to attend regularly.

We continue to partner with other churches, exemplified by our involvement in many local ministries including Cornerstone, Street Pastors, W & G Foodbank, Prayer Spaces, etc. I continued to meet with other local Ministers in Grove and also the W & G Partnership for times of fellowship. I was privileged to speak at St John Vianney in January.

Although we only produced one issue of 'Hope Unlimited' during the year, we arranged a visitation to a number of houses in the community to assess how residents responded to this Community Newsletter.

During the year we had the joy of witnessing two weddings - Lee & Julia and Dan & Sarah. Although Teresa was very unwell, we are grateful to God that she was able to attend both ceremonies at St John's Church.

Although not strictly within the past year, I must mention that both Gwenda Lucas and Teresa Dickie went to be with the Lord. Both Thanksgiving Services were held at St John's Church. Again the Ministry Leaders expertly mobilised their Teams and worked together to provide a fitting tribute for Gwenda and Teresa. Both families were extremely grateful and we continue to remember Ray & his family and Teresa's family as they continue to adjust to life without Gwenda and Teresa.

Prayer continues to be a key feature of life at GFEC. This past year we have again used Old Mill Hall for the monthly prayer meetings. In giving the opportunity for different people to lead, we have experienced imaginative and innovative times of praise and prayer. The 'Building Vision' Prayer Breakfasts have also been a source of real encouragement as we continue to seek God's will for a building on the new development and building our vision for what God wants to do among us and the community during our time at OMH.

The main challenge that faces GFEC is attracting new families with children and young people. Whilst the airfield development will happen at some point, there has already been a substantial amount of new housing built in smaller developments especially in the Letcombe Fields area. During my remaining time at GFEC, we will be visiting these new residents and giving them information about our church and its activities.

None of the varied ministries at GFEC would exist if it weren't for the selfless dedication of people voluntarily giving of their time and energy to serve God. We thank Him for each of you and trust that you will be fulfilled and also fruitful in your particular sphere of service. Some ministries are more public, others take place in the background. All are important as we seek to *'build a community of people who live out God's purposes'*.

As I draw to a close, I want to especially thank you for your expressions of love, loyalty and support to Julie and myself during the past year and also during my tenure as Pastor. We will continue to pray that the Lord will clearly guide the church as you seek a new Pastor.

My prayer for GFEC is that you will move forward in faith being totally assured that God *'is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.'*

Paul John

From the Deacons

This report covers the period from April 2014 to March 2015.

The Deacons continue to support the work, vision and leadership of the Elders, and remain responsible for oversight of the finances, administration, accommodation, equipment, health and safety, all practical aspects required for Sunday and other services and events, seeking through these ways to serve the needs of folk within the fellowship.

This year has seen Steph joining the team and Ken leaving. To assist with the Sunday workload, Debbie, Erika and Margaret B have joined the Deacons in a team known as Duty Officers. This role is fundamentally what has been done by Deacons for many years. This larger team spreads the load and allows more time in other “Sunday duties” (such as Music Rota, and technical). The Deacons would like to express their appreciation for Ken and the Duty Officers and everything done in the name of the LORD by these folk whilst fellowshipping at GFEC.

Another workload initiative has seen Lesley arranging the counting of the offerings at the end of services. Although the Treasurer still holds the ultimate responsibility for this, Lesley has performed this task exceptionally well and has organised her own little team to manage this effort. It is no small thing, and the Treasurer is appreciative of all those involved.

We are disappointed at the slow progress being made by Old Mill Hall to refurbish the heating, sound and video facilities. It is hoped that by the next report, this will have been completed.

A number of people have received both practical and financial assistance during the year, and we continue to remember them in our prayers.

As Deacons we aim to serve the Lord and His church, particularly the group of people that come together as GFEC. Please continue to pray that the Lord will give us the necessary wisdom, insight and skills to perform our duties well for His glory.

Adrian Kerr, Stephanie Brown and Fiona Massie

The Mission at East Challow

During the past year, GFEC has continued to extend its outreach beyond Grove, to strengthen, support and encourage the struggling church at The Mission in East Challow.

Sunday Afternoon Services @ The Mission

Family services have been held on the first Sunday afternoon of each month during 2014, changed to the second Sunday afternoon during 2015. There have been several teaching programmes, with talks from Paul, Ian, Andy and Richard Brown from Lambourn:

“*Christianity today – learning from the life of Daniel*”, as we looked at the exciting life of Daniel and how we also can live as Christians in a secular society.

“*Introducing Jesus*”, as we looked at the “*I AM*” statements that Jesus made about Himself in the gospel of John.

“*A whale of a tale*”, as we looked at the story and lessons of Jonah in the Bible.

There was a Carol Service in December entitled: “*A Christmas Songs of Praise*”, with a good turnout of local people and some continuing to attend in the New Year. Sunday services have been led by Barbie and Andy, supported by Katrina leading the singing, which have been encouraging times as we’ve enjoyed Christian fellowship, with each other and with God. A particular highlight of the family services has been the participation by the children. In February, we held The Mission AGM for church members and friends of The Mission, to review the year and thank God for His goodness.

Sunday Socials @ The Mission

During the 2014 summer, we enjoyed fellowship together as we had a cream tea, a church walk and a BBQ, activities we hope to repeat during the 2015 summer. During January, we showed the film, “*Heaven is for real*”, and held a games evening in March.

Outreach Opportunities

Sunday services are advertised in the monthly “*Challow News*” publication, and A5 publicity programmes are professionally printed and delivered to houses in Challow. Thank you to those who give up their time to deliver these. An exciting new outreach opportunity has been the many new houses being built in Challow. Christian literature and invitations have been delivered to these new houses and their new occupants.

Building Works

Praise is given to God for the provision of £1,500 to replace the three large, aging and damaged windows. Chris Wiggins has been engaged to do this repair work. It is also hoped to begin refurbishing the kitchen during the late summer.

Thank you to the members of GFEC who faithfully support the work at The Mission, through encouragement and active participation. The strengthening and development of The Mission is still very much at an early stage. Please pray that The Mission will continue to be “salt and light” to the people of East and West Challow and the surrounding area.

Andy & Debbie Hooker

Youth Group

The YP doubled in size in September when Rebecca moved to secondary school and joined Hannah in 'The Grid'.

Naomi and Julie continue to lead the group on Sunday mornings (with Debbie very kindly stepping in if neither of us are available due to other Church commitments).

We have looked at a number of different series' throughout the past year, from the Old and New Testament as well as character studies on Ruth, David and Esther.

We also started a prayer journal and it has been fantastic to look back over this and see where God has been working in our lives. Another exciting first was starting a YP Bible Commentary...writing our own! We have tried to keep track of all the passages and special verses we have looked at.

We had a Christmas meal together (including Naomi's dog) and we've also done a number of craft sessions, kindly facilitated by Jean McVeigh.

We just hope that Hannah and Rebecca enjoy it as much as Naomi and Julie! Hannah and Rebecca are a valuable part of the GFEC family and they can always be seen helping out. Sadly, we will both be stepping down from teaching at the end of July, as Naomi moves to Norfolk and as Julie prepares to move on soon too.

Naomi & Julie

Worship Ministry

The Worship ministry team was set up within the revised leadership model. Its purpose is “to provide a vision for creative, relevant, inclusive and Biblical worship for a Sunday service and any other events where required”. The team - comprising of Judy Middlebrook, Naomi Power, Josh Kerr and me – has the responsibility of “seeing the vision become a reality”.

The team first met in September 2014. We began by looking at our vision for worship. We quickly realised that in order to lead others into worship, we needed to ‘worship together’, and we felt this would be better achieved by firstly getting to know each other better! What better way than meeting over food! So on Friday 26th September we had a ‘Safari’ meal (known as ‘progressive supper’ by some!) Another of our aims is to meet for music practice where we seek to ‘worship together’, learn new songs and listen to each other. However, we do meet prior to the morning service to prepare for the morning’s worship. We are very blessed to have some very talented musicians and vocalists – Brian Thomas, Roger, Judy, Katrina, Josh and Abi Kerr (recently moved to another church to fellowship with people of her own age), Naomi, Andy Hooker. Andy Orchard was part of our team until he moved churches. Fiona King occasionally also plays her brass instrument. Very recently, Jess Dancy has joined the team. We’re grateful to Brian for organising us into teams each Sunday.

Service leaders – Andy Hooker (until December 2014), Paul, Julie, Fiona Massie and me, and more recently Roger, and occasionally Pauline Selhi and Gerald Belcher – prepare us to meet with God during our meetings by selecting appropriate songs, readings, video clips and thoughts. Sometimes they bring us new songs to encourage us in our worship. To help us each week with the growing number of songs we use, Roger has put together music folders, to which are added as more songs are chosen. This reduces the need to juggle up to five music books on the music stand during a service!

We are ably supported by the sound team - Adrian Kerr, Julie and Andrew Harwood (until he moved to St Johns’ Church) – to make sure we get a good balance of sound from the instruments and singers and that the leader and speaker can be heard! The projection team - Sarah Tippett, Pauline, Julie and Charlotte Middlebrook (until recently) make sure we have the visual aids for our services – songs, readings, video clips, etc.

At Christmas, as well as leading the songs for the Christmas Carol Celebration, the musicians and singers shared the Christmas story through the eyes of the shepherds and angels by singing “*Glory in the highest*”. Judy is our ‘music director’ as we prepare for such events.

This year, we have had the privilege of providing musicians and singers for the weddings of Teresa Dickie’s daughters - Julia and Lee, Sarah and Dan as well as for two funerals – Teresa’s and Gwenda Lucas. We received positive feedback on these events, as to the blessing this was to those involved.

As we go forward, with significant changes that will affect our worship ministry, we seek God’s guidance for the future in terms of service leading and the ‘worship team’.

Barbie Margetts

OASIS Housegroup

I suppose being an Oasis indicates a place where people come and go, hopefully, refreshed. Some do remain of course but this year we seem to be quite a different group to that of last year. Geoff. and Angela plus Yvonne have joined us and regularly share what the Lord is saying to them at the time. We've had plenty of opportunity to consider the future steps for the house group and the church as a whole as we are all faced with change. The most significant change for the group has been Teresa going to be with the Lord. To be an Oasis and able to participate in the preparations of those final steps along the way has been a blessing and a privilege. She is missed, it feels quite strange that she isn't with us on a Wednesday evening, but we all have gained from sharing her experience. It was amazing to watch the Lord being in control at every step along her pathway to him. It has helped us to grow in confidence and assurance that Jesus is indeed in control of our future, both as individuals and as a church.

SAFARI Housegroup

Mid way through the year (a good place to start, I feel!) we looked at how our Housegroup fulfils the 5 purposes of the GFEC mission statement. This was, of course, part of Ian's Housegroup review and was an interesting challenge for us all to see how we were meeting these aims as a small group.

Worship: Debbie led us through a wonderful, hands-on evening guiding us through the Prayer Space that is used at school.

Fellowship: an easy one, we all feel for Safari due to our love of meals! I can't count how many slices of cake or pizza have been eaten whilst we have spent time enjoying one another's company and sharing through difficult times, as well as celebrating the good times together. It was particularly special to see Andrew, Helen and Lois complete the process of welcoming Kia into their family; we had all been on this journey with them for a long time and it was very sad to see them leave the group, but for understandable reasons. On returning from Malaysia, Geoff and Angela felt that it was right to move to Ian's group. Abi joined us for a short time on returning from Soul-61, but she has since found a Housegroup with a younger vibe that will bless her in many ways I am sure.

Discipleship: we have worked through a number of series' many of which ran alongside the Sunday morning themes.

Ministry: during Lent, rather than giving something up, we decided to follow 40 Acts of Kindness. This was an amazing opportunity to serve others at home, in the workplace and in our communities by performing a simple task each day. It was great to encourage one another on this journey and we would recommend it to everyone for next year!

Evangelism: this was the most challenging aspect for us, but we really wanted to show people that they are missing out on so much by not being in a housegroup. We've had a number of events such as BBQs, a safari supper and meals out to encourage others to join us.

Thanks to everyone who has led the group and who opens up their home on a regular basis. Sadly this will be my last Annual Report; Safari Housegroup has been a tremendous support and source of laughter and tea and I really will miss it!

Naomi

Gerald and Erika's Housegroup

Our Bible Studies for 2014/2015 included James, Doctrine of the Cross (with Pauline) and a closer focus on sermons at GFEC. From September to early December, and from January to March 2015, we had a series of sharing our favourite Psalm (or if not a favourite, then a Psalm that we found challenging). The Doctrine of the Cross was carried forward from 2013/2014. As usual the various studies were shared by the members of our Group. Our Communion and Praise evenings were as ever times of contemplation and an opportunity to reflect on the love and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus.

In November 2014 letters were written and sent to the missionaries we support.

Other activities: we celebrated several birthdays and joined with other groups for social evenings during August 2014. We also spent time preparing MAG group meetings and the two 'altogether' Prayer Meetings for which we were responsible.

We have been very pleased to welcome Megan and Andy to our meetings.

Members of the group have been well involved supporting various needs and people over the year.

However, we still have some way to go in reaching out beyond the church in sharing the good news of that amazing love and forgiveness that Jesus offers to all who believe.

Gerald & Erika

Julie's Housegroup

Our group is currently made up of Denise, Lynn, Glenys (who attends the Community Church on Sundays) and myself. Unfortunately, due to other commitments, Rachel has not been able to meet with us very often this year.

The Group continues to provide a place for healing, support and encouragement. We aim to build up each other's faith using scripture and allowing the Spirit freedom in prayer. It is non-judgemental and non-threatening and we all are therefore able to be very open when sharing.

We continue to use Bible Study material as a guide for our discussion but we would say we are 'need' driven rather than program driven. For example, some weeks we have been a listening and praying group for a member who is going through a tough time. At the beginning of the year we looked in more depth at the work of the Spirit and Gifts at the request of a member. We all felt challenged to display more of the Fruit of the Spirit as well as examining ourselves to discover and use the Gifts the Spirit has given us as individuals for the building up of God's kingdom. During Lent we went 'high tech' and all downloaded an online study book which we used for daily devotions and then fed back our thoughts for discussion and encouragement. More recently we have watched some YouTube videos of Bible teaching for women by women, which we have all thoroughly enjoyed.

Each of us would say that our Group has been an invaluable part of our walk with the Lord this year as we have studied, prayed, laughed and wept together. On a personal note, I am really going to miss this group and its caring special friendships as I move on to pastures new later in the year.

Julie

Terry and Andrea's Housegroup

The housegroup continues much as usual but we are pleased that Lillian Taylor has joined us and is a regular attendee. We continue to share the leading of the sessions between those willing to do it and these consists mainly of bible studies and follow ups to the topics covered on Sunday church meetings. We have social evenings, which are in one of the homes or further afield. The housegroup serves as a valuable communications forum and an opportunity to try to understand and support one another.

Terry and Andrea

CoffeePlus Report 2014 - 2015

Praise God for another year of encouragement with very good speakers, bible studies and DVDs helping us grow in our faith. Difficult situations have drawn us closer to God and each other. Sarah Tippett continues to extend her role as co-leader, bringing wisdom, technical experience and care.

We have been blessed by the following speakers: Paul John - 'Where there is hope there is life', and 'Looking at Lent'; Abi Kerr - 'Soul 61 Catch up'; Pauline Selhi - 'How to deal with negative thoughts', 'In the Wilderness' and 'Epiphany'; Bernice White - 'Memories ours and God's.' 'The life of Moody and Sankey' and 'You have been Chosen'; John Willemsen - 'Noah's Ark in Holland'; Margaret Willemsen - 'Update on Romania'.

DVD's we have watched: Battles Christians Face: part 2 'Guilt' and part 4 'Lust' led by Bernice, part 3 'Doubt' led by June, Beyond the Next Mountain, The Amish – A People of Preservation and Behind the Easter Story .

There have been sessions of 'Prayer and Share' for: 'Holiday Bible Club and Sunday Club' with Debbie Hooker and Erika Belcher, 'Families' and 'Praise and Share for Holiday Bible Club and Friday Fun Club'. We also spent a morning at Jean McVeigh's preparing craft for the holiday club which we enjoyed.

On other mornings we have had 'Share a Book', 'Share a Scripture' x 2, 'Share an Encouragement', 'Fellowship and Prayer' x 2, 'What's in My Memory Box?' by Bernice White, 'Focus on Christmas' and 'Focus on Easter with Communion' led by Ian Reynolds.

At the end of each half term we have a shared meal. Special events; a visit to Yarnton Garden Centre, a lunch at the Railway Inn in Culham for June Dyers 80th birthday, a meal at the Fox Inn for Muriel Beavis 90th birthday and a birthday cake for Margaret Bowra's 90th Birthday. In December our meeting was held at Framland as it was Gwenda Lucas' birthday. We felt she recognised us as the CoffeePlus group. Another visit was planned in April 2015, but Gwenda was too unwell. Sadly at the end of that week she went to be with the Lord. Gwenda will always be remembered as a very special lady who started the Coffee Morning in 1980. Her priorities were a strong spiritual foundation, the importance of Bible study, along with compassion and care for the members. The best way we can honour is to continue in this way, which we aim to do.

Teresa Dickie also went to be with the Lord in May 2015, joined CoffeePlus when no longer able to work full time. Through difficult periods personally and health wise she found love, prayer and practical support. Her increasing faith and positive attitude in the final months were an encouragement to us all. We shall miss her greatly, but thank the Lord that she is now with Him and free from pain and suffering

Many members have special responsibilities; June Dyer, Bernice and Margaret Willemsen lead the mornings, Sarah leads prayer time, Greta Beckett for pastoral care, flowers and cards, and Lilian Taylor provides birthday cards for group members and missionary families. In August we had 'open house' at Cornerstone and Margaret Willemsen's home. Again we have seen God's faithfulness in many situations and praise Him for this.

Lesley Baker

The Monday Evening Prayer Group

“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” James 5 v 16

This Monday evening prayer meeting was started as a group to pray for the Alpha Course over eight years ago. It has continued until now because it meets a need, and there are those committed to it, and available on a Monday evening at 7.30pm. The format consists of a reading from God’s word, a short time of focussing on God and praising Him, and then a longer time praying for various subjects until 8.30pm.

The group moves around four or five different homes according to the subjects for prayer, the growth of the Church, (it’s leaders, members, services etc), the outreach of the Church, (all the evangelism of the Church including Cornerstone), our nation, (it’s leaders, society, churches, etc & for revival), and missions and the suffering Church. (We pray especially for the missionaries whom our church supports.) We normally concentrate mainly on the subject for the week but also pray for current needs or emergencies in the Church. We have been roughly about four or five in number in a meeting. The total number of all who have taken part in the year is eleven.

There have been many answers to prayer for people’s health. The preaching and teaching of God’s word continues to be blessed and courses too. The Holiday Bible Club was packed out. A new one this summer will be prayed for. Some new faces have been welcomed in the congregation and also some in the leadership team. Weddings and Funerals recently have been truly impressive demonstrating love and unity. East Challow Mission is being renewed. People from our church have gone for specialised training or on mission trips to Africa and India. Josh and Cathie’s health is better. The Brixey’s have progressed in their new situation. Carlos and Nancy’s new discipleship programmes carry on and they have a new car and home. We have been cheered in God’s presence and strengthened by many wonderful times of prayer, and as we all consider the future of GFEC we need to pray to guide us right.

John 14 v 14, 15 v 7, 8, Hebrews 11 v 6.

We purpose to continue praying. Come and join us if you can.

Maurice Glover

Prayer Chain

Many of the Apostle Paul's letters include a reminder to the readers of the way he frequently prays for them, 'We always thank God for you, remembering you in our prayers' (1 Thess v2), this reminds us that we are all able to serve each other by praying, especially in times of need.

The frequency of requests for the prayer chain indicates its value. Thankfully there are many in GFEC who follow up these requests with faithful prayer. It is therefore especially helpful to have updates as prayers are answered or new needs occur.

When the Prayer Chain was original set up (in a less technical age) requests were received between 6pm and 7 pm, and the telephone chain was started immediately after that. With the use of email requests can be sent at any time and sent out frequently during the day. Not everyone will read the request immediately but I trust someone(s) will and the need can be brought before God.

As Teresa went through a long period of illness and frequent visits to hospital she greatly valued being able to contact us during the day as the situation changed or if there were delays. Several people have spoken of the peace and confidence they experience when they know they are being prayed for.

As well as prompting people to pray, a request frequently encourages people to take action, maybe sending an email, offering help, making a visit, so increasing the value of this ministry.

My thanks go to all who have used and supported the prayer chain and to Sarah Tippett who deputises as needed.

Lesley Baker

PAT (Pastoral Action Team)

During this year a new leadership model was introduced in GFEC. PAT was already a team but now became formalised as one of the Ministries, with me as leader, the rest of the team being Gerald and Erika Belcher, Ray and Fiona Massie. Our aim is to ensure a response to the pastoral, practical and financial needs of the Fellowship. It is not intended that this is necessarily carried out by the team themselves but rather referred to the appropriate person(s) who can give the help or support needed.

A great deal of spontaneous support in GFEC is carried out by individuals, Housegroup, CoffeePlus, which is very pleasing, but at times there is a need for more coordinated support or financial help. Special support has been needed for Teresa Dickie and her family, as she had a long illness involving many visits to hospital. Teresa needed practical help, activities to help her through very difficult times and much prayer support. The wedding of her two daughters was supported practically and financially giving opportunity to show Christian love to all involved.

Lesley and I experienced amazing support as we found ourselves in difficult circumstances, Lesley having had a stroke and then I broke my wrist. Immediately there were so many spontaneous offers of practical help and actions showing loving concern. Not only was this a 'life line' for three months, a tremendous encouragement reminding us of God's wonderful provision, also an opportunity for neighbours and friends to see the Christian family in action.

As a church family we also like to celebrate special birthdays, anniversaries, and all these making stronger bonds in the church. We are very thankful to MEET who provide delicious food, especially when we had a special meal to jointly celebrate Muriel's 90th and June's 80th.

For the past months we have not had a Support Coordinator, as already said much support is carried out informally as people become aware of needs, but there are times when we need to advertise for help - we are pleased that Ernie Harford has agreed to take on this role. He will aim to link those who have a need, with those offering help in that area.

A caring church like GFEC is very special, for which we thank God, and pray that this same spirit will continue. Thank you to all who have been involved in so many ways. Special thanks to Fiona, Ray, Erika and Gerald for their valuable contribution to PAT.

Margaret Barber

Holiday Bible Club - Friday Funday Club – FEET

Due to increasing family commitments, Helen Harwood stepped down from leading Friday Funday Club at the end of March 2014. Debbie Hooker ‘caretaker managed’ the three remaining sessions for the academic year, May – July. These included a picnic and games in the park evening, and an evening looking forward to the summer Holiday Bible Club and the launch of ‘FEET’ in the autumn.

In 2014 our ‘Space Academy’ Holiday Bible Club was held in Millbrook School at the end of July and the venue worked really well. The club was fully subscribed, 55 children registered and attended at some point during the week. As the name suggests, the club had a space theme and the teaching explored the early chapters of Daniel. The children heard how Daniel and his friends stood up for their faith, despite opposition and how God was faithful to them.

This year we also included two morning adult activities in an area away from the children and invited the parents to stay on after dropping their children off to enjoy a drink, a chat and ‘hand pampering’ or ‘chocolate tasting’. We were pleased that these were attended and appreciated by the parents.

We are thankful to God that the week went well, good relationships were made with the children and parents, and we were all kept safe and well. Many thanks for the help and support of many GFEC folk in preparing for, praying for and helping at the Holiday Club – it really was a team effort, the body of Christ, with each bit doing its part, in action.

Friday Funday Club met monthly in Cornerstone until the summer holiday break last year. To start the new term a fresh focus on families having fun together saw a change of name to FEET (families eating and exploring the bible together) and the transfer of the venue to Old Mill Hall to make more of a link with the Church’s meeting place.

Our band of merry helpers consists of Debbie, Erika, Gerald, Ian, Janet, Bernice and probably the most important, Katrina the cook. Paul has kept close contact and provided a short epilogue on several occasions and Jean McVeigh has been a guide and inspiration with many of our crafts.

We have had much fun over the past months basing games, stories, crafts and food on bible themes. On one occasion Margaret and John Willemsen gallantly walked the streets of Grove in wedding attire to enact the wedding at Cana.

The FEET barn dance in October replacing the traditional light party was well attended and much enjoyed by all.

We have seen a wide variance of numbers attending the monthly feet evenings from 2 to 18, and although there is much interest and support invariably there have been other clubs, school interests and family commitments that made attending patchy. It has been a concern to us that most of the families are already regular attendees of other churches in Grove and Wantage and although it’s good to encourage learning to know God through these ventures we have not really seen growth in the group from outside the churches, however we have enjoyed building relationships with the wider Christians family.

Debbie & Erika

Missionary Action Group

The Missionary Action Group met four times during the year to discuss and plan missionary related events. The five current members of the Missionary Action Group are Bernice White, Amanda Thomas, Ray and Fiona Massie and Gerald Belcher.

The Church currently supports the following missionaries:

Adrian and Antonia Brixey (European Christian Mission)	<i>Contact: Bernice White</i>
Josh & Cathy Hooker (Namibia)	<i>Contact: Andy & Debbie Hooker</i>
Carlos & Nancy Bernal (Colombia)	<i>Contact: Amanda Thomas</i>

We also had the following missionary interests in 2014/2015:

Kenya	<i>Contact: Ray & Fiona Massie</i>
Romania (shoe boxes etc)	<i>Contact: John & Margaret Willemsen</i>
Viva (Oxford-based charity working with children at risk, with projects worldwide)	<i>Contact: Fiona Massie and Amanda Thomas</i>
Praying for the Persecuted Church	<i>Contact: Any MAG member</i>

Events and speakers during the year:

- Shoe Box Sunday
- Worldwide Day of Prayer for Children at Risk: Service focusing on prayer, including a short film made by, and featuring, church members, showing that children in our own country can also be at risk.
- Persecuted Church Sunday: service focused on prayer.
- MAG also led two joint housegroups to pray for mission

Support Decisions:

During the year Adrian and Antonia Brixey left OMF and returned to the UK, subsequently joining the European Christian Mission (ECM) to reach out to the Muslim communities in Europe. MAG recommended that we continue to support Adrian & Antonia in their new role.

MAG also reviewed GFEC support for Carlos and Nancy and decided to continue their support.

The Missionary Action Group will endeavour to continue to bring relevant missionary activities to the attention of GFEC during 2015/2016.

For further information on any of the missionaries or mission interests mentioned above, don't hesitate to speak to the relevant contact, or any member of MAG.

We thank you for your support for Mission over the past year.

MAG

MEET Team

'Meals and Events to Enhance Togetherness'

Earlier this year saw the formation of a MEET team, which currently consists of Megan Boyle, Shelley Dancy, Abi Kerr, Katrina Kerr and Fiona Massie.

Whilst overtly practical, I believe this team performs a spiritual function too. We are exhorted to practise hospitality in the Scriptures and hopefully this team will enhance GFEC's ability to be hospitable, not only to each other but as we continue together, hospitality to others in the wider community.

As a team, in February we provided a lunch to celebrate the joint birthdays of two of our members, June Dyer and Muriel Beavis. In addition we were able to support Teresa and her daughters, Julia and Sarah Dickie respectively by providing a Mexican Fiesta in March and a Mediterranean Feast in April at their wedding receptions. We wish them well in their married lives and continue to remember them in our prayers. It has been a privilege to support our members and pray that the Lord will use our willing hands and hearts to encourage, and bless those we serve in this way.

The team has gelled together very well in the short time we have existed and we look forward to offering our services at other events and occasions, whether happy or sad as a ministry to the fellowship.

Our next event will probably be a Harvest Supper and Auction on September 26th to which members of the community will be invited. Megan has kindly offered to organise this.

We are frequently supported by Erika Belcher, Angela Girling and Amanda Thomas in all things catering - usually behind the scenes- and are very appreciative, knowing we can ask them for help. Of course, lots of other people pitch in on the day and we do rely on such kind cooperation.

Please pray with us that our brief (that of enhancing togetherness) will become evident during the coming year and that folk will be blessed as a result of our efforts.

NB: Whilst GFEC is not a registered food business and therefore current laws are not applicable we seek to adopt a best practise approach where possible. Katrina and Fiona both have the basic Food Hygiene Certificates and as team we are aware of the importance of hand washing, safe food storage etc and think through the food choices we supply bearing in mind our kitchen environments. The recent (December 2014) Food Allergy laws are not enforceable for us but again, we wish to provide food that is safe for everyone including your visitors and guests so if you have any concerns regarding allergies or ingredients used, please speak to Fiona. We have information should you wish to find out more and if requested will always supply alternatives for those with dietary requirements or allergies.

When bringing food for shared lunches etc, please consider basic hygiene principles ie hand washing frequently, correct storage especially for food containing dairy and protein (use cool bags etc) and only bring food 'in date'. Once again please speak to Fiona if you require clarification on any of these issues. Common sense and good practise by all will minimize our risks!

Fiona Massie

Wantage Nursing Home Worship Service

We hold a service once a month, usually on the first Sunday of each month. About eight to ten residents, and sometimes more, attend. We sing several well-known hymns on a relevant theme where possible, pray and read a short Scripture with a brief talk. A story or visual aid helps enliven the theme.

In the past year GFEC gave a generous gift to the Home which has meant we could set up a permanent prayer corner with large print New Testament and Psalms, a cross and a beautiful folder, made by Jean McVeigh, for residents to put in their prayers, thoughts and pictures. This has also helped us in being more warmly welcomed by the Home and helped by the activities coordinator, without whom it would be impossible to bring the folks together into one of the smaller and quieter sitting rooms.

Challenges are to maintain the prayer corner so that it remains attractive and people (staff as well as residents) will want to seek to be still and conscious of God's loving presence. Secondly to be able to communicate the Good News of Jesus with freshness and love every time.

I (Pauline) have been very grateful to Bernice who joins me when she can and is brilliant at putting people at ease, as well as helping them find their place on the hymn sheets etc.

Please continue to pray. Only God can make himself known in all his grace and glory.
“...I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you come to me ...” Matt 25:36.

Pauline Selhi and Bernice White

Open the Book

There was a surge in support for the '*Open the Book*' project during the year covered by this report. New members have joined the team of presenters at North Drive C of E School and our regular participation has become rather less than the previous year.

The number of children attending the School has grown to such an extent that the word 'sardines' comes to mind.

The presentation of incidents from the Bible has continued to engage the children some of whom are involved in dressing up and playing a part in the story. Margaret, our prop designer, has again excelled in her production and artistic values. Dressing up can be fun and does help to gain the attention of the children what a great way of sharing the Bible with around 100 children.

With the additional members being added to the team there is talk of extending 'Open the Book' to other schools in the area.

Gerald Belcher

Cornerstone Christian Centre

In July 2014 I attended my first Board meeting as the GFEC Representative, replacing John Willemsen who retired from the Board after, I believe, his second stint on the Board and we're grateful for his input still on some matters.

My 'desire' to become our representative came from being a regular Saturday volunteer which, since 2014, has consisted of 6 'colour' teams from all the four churches involved with Cornerstone. It's been a great way to meet other Christians (I thoroughly recommend it!) and I 'happened' to be in the same team as Colin Moulds, the Chairman! Having enjoyed working with him serving at Cornerstone, I felt I would like to get more involved at Board level.

Many of us volunteer on a regular basis, either on the counter, in the utility or on the till – Geoff and Angela Girling, Ian and Janet Reynolds, Gerald and Erika Belcher, Denise Collins, Katrina and Adrian Kerr, Bernice White, John and Margaret Willemsen, June Dyer, Yvonne Cavanagh and Pauline Selhi, as well as past members – Teresa Dickie (until her passing to glory in May 2015), Russell Dyer (and Anita who is a cook there), Michael Elliott (who is the Company Secretary) and Ruth Pepler. A 4-week rota has been introduced and has helped with staff but the Saturday team remains stretched.

There has been a stable staff team over the last year and the coffee shop has recently been inspected and retained its 5-star Food Hygiene rating.

Acting as a 'Beacon', a new venture was launched in February (with a little encouragement from me!) – Dementia Drop In mornings which now take place twice a month. Although take-up is small, it's been beneficial for those who drop in.

Acting as a 'Gateway', some have been involved in Scrabble and Rummikub afternoons.

Acting as an 'Oasis', Cornerstone is used on Saturday afternoons for church tea parties – ourselves included – an hour of fellowship together over tea and cake.

Cornerstone is now in its 20th year, having been set up as a partnership of four churches in Grove to reach out in Christ's Mission to the local community. It is not self-funding (we made a deficit of nearly £7,000 this year compared to a deficit of about £2,000 last year) and is reliant on donations (about £23,000) which make up just under 20% of total income; about half are regular donations and half from churches and one-offs. Thanks to all those who sponsored me in the London Marathon – over £800 was raised, which went towards the new dishwasher (kitchen equipment maintenance is one of the biggest costs). Its aim is to serve the community and not to make a profit; it's a resource that all churches can use.

We meet monthly for a Prayer Breakfast and many of our members support this. This is a vital part of our ministry; a time when we give thanks for God's blessings through Cornerstone and a time for calling on Him to guide us and provide for us as we move forward with His Mission for Cornerstone.

Barbie Margetts

Wantage and Grove Foodbank

I must begin by saying a huge thank you to GFEC folk for their generous support for the Wantage and Grove Foodbank and regularly giving donations of food and money. The Foodbank would not be able to function without such support and it is greatly appreciated.

This year has seen a reduction in requests for food parcels for the first time since the Foodbank started back in 2010. Following increases in demand of 70% and 90% in 2012 and 2013 respectively, there was a 20% decrease in 2014. It remains to be seen as to whether this is a new trend or a temporary blip. Having said that, the Foodbank still gave out 213 parcels to needy families over the year, and at the time of writing, continues to give out an average of 3-4 parcels a week.

There have been some volunteer changes but the Foodbank continues to be well supported with manpower and there are people available most days of the week to prepare and deliver food parcels if needed. As part of her Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, Hannah has spent some time volunteering with the Foodbank.

In previous years the Foodbank has given out special Christmas parcels to local people who are struggling. In 2014, they did things slightly differently and added Christmas treats to ordinary food parcels which were given out between the middle of November and Christmas. It is thought that they will still be helping the most desperate. This will be reviewed and we may see the return of the Christmas hamper idea in future years.

Currently, due to the wonderful generosity of supporters, and many schools and other organisations donating their Harvest collections to the Foodbank, the store cupboard and bank account are well stocked. This coupled with a reduction in demand means there is an abundant supply of food and money, so for the time being, no further donations are required.

In partnership with GFEC and other local churches, and with the support of other local community organisations, the Foodbank is able to show God's loving care to some of the most needy and vulnerable people in Wantage and Grove.

Debbie Hooker

Framland

Framland exists to provide loving Christian care and support to Christian older people, many of whom have been on active service for the Lord in earlier years. In a day when older people are not always valued in our society, Framland is a shining example of how these dear residents can feel secure, loved and supported by their dedicated staff.

The Margetts family are well represented with Chris and Esther working at the Home and Barbie engaged in a more wide-ranging managerial role with Pilgrims Friend Society (PFS).

Pauline & I have had the privilege of regularly visiting Framland to bring short devotional talks to the residents and the staff, some of whom are not yet Christians.

During the year, local Church Leaders were invited to spend an afternoon praying for the ministry. Ian, Janet and I were present at an encouraging time as we praised the Lord for His goodness and prayed about the challenges facing Framland and PFS in the future.

Gwenda Lucas spent her final months at Framland and I know that Ray was very impressed by the way in which she was cared for by the management and staff.

We look forward to a continued involvement in this valuable ministry on our doorstep in the coming year.

Paul John

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

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Trustees Report
Independent Examiners Report
Statement of Financial Activities
Balance Sheet
Notes to the Accounts

TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

The trustees have pleasure in presenting their report and the Financial Statements of the Church for the year ended 31 March 2015.

Reference and Administrative Details

The Church is a Registered Charity no. 283079. The address is: Grove Free Evangelical Church, c/o 67 Mably Grove, Wantage, Oxon. OX12 9XW.

The charity trustees for the purpose of these accounts comprise the Elders and Deacons of the Church. The Elders and Deacons during the year were as follows:

Mr Paul John (Elder)
Dr Andy Hooker (Elder) (resigned 16/10/14)
Mr Adrian Kerr (Deacon)
Mr Ken Hayward (Deacon) (resigned 18/8/14)
Mrs Fiona Massie (Deacon)
Mr Ian Reynolds (Elder)
Mrs Steph Brown (Deacon) (appointed 21/1/15)

Structure, Governance and Management

The Church is governed by its Constitution, which was last amended and issued to members in October 2008. The Elders and Deacons are elected by the Church Meeting, and are responsible for leadership of the church. The Elders and Deacons meet regularly to effect proper control of all arrangements for the running of the church.

Objectives and Activities

The Church's aims are to spread the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to edify the congregation through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, and the circulation of good Christian literature. The Church's vision is to build a community of people who live out God's purposes.

Achievements and Performance

The Church's main work is carried out through its own Sunday services, mid-week Bible study and prayer meeting. Other meetings were convened for individual groups such as young teenagers, women, men and young adults.

Public Benefit

In carrying out its activities in the year under review, the trustees have had regard to the public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission, and are satisfied that the activities mentioned above have all been for the public benefit.

Financial Review

Funds are used to pay the Pastor's and Administrator's salaries, to pay the rent for the buildings the Church uses for meetings, to support Missionary organisations, to provide literature and to fund various projects.

As shown in the Statement of Financial Activities, there was a net surplus of resources of just under £500 spread across the funds. Overall, the state of affairs of the Church is considered to be satisfactory.

The Church has a policy of retaining a Reserve of at least £15,000, and this sum is shown in a separate Reserve Fund.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF GROVE FREE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

I report on the accounts of the Church for the year ended 31 March 2015.

Respective responsibilities of directors and independent examiner

The Church's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under section 145 of the Act);
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145 (5) (b) of the Act); and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

David Cooke MA (Oxon) FCA FCIE

David Cooke and Co.

Chartered Accountants

5 Briar Close

Banbury, Oxon.

OX16 9DS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

		Unrestricted	Restricted	2015	2014
		Funds	Funds	Total	Total
	Note	£	£	£	£
<u>Incoming Resources</u>					
Voluntary income		58,070	11,296	69,366	67,036
Investment income		-	151	151	286
Total incoming resources		58,070	11,447	69,517	67,322
<u>Resources expended</u>					
Cost of Generating Funds	2	505	-	505	500
Charitable Activities	3	61,154	7,167	68,321	69,391
Governance Costs	5	200	-	200	140
Total Resources Expended		61,859	7,167	69,026	70,031
Net Movement of Resources		(3,789)	4,280	491	(2,709)
Transfers between Funds		-	-	-	-
		(3,789)	4,280	491	(2,709)
Total Funds brought forward		58,986	10,950	69,936	72,645
Total Funds carried forward		55,197	15,230	70,427	69,936

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2015

		Unrestricted	Restricted	2015	2014
		Funds	Funds	Total	Total
	Note	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS	7	769	-	769	1,026
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtor - Tax repayment due		9,125	-	9,125	7,453
Cash at Bank & in hand		45,503	15,230	60,733	61,607
		54,628	15,230	69,858	69,060
TOTAL ASSETS		55,397	15,230	70,627	70,086
LESS: CREDITORS:					
Due within one year		(200)	-	(200)	(150)
NET ASSETS		55,197	15,230	70,427	69,936
Financed by:					
RESERVES					
Accumulated Income Fund	8	55,197	15,230	70,427	69,936

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

1. Accounting Policies

The following accounting policies have been used consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the Church's Financial Statements.

(a) Accounting Convention.

The Financial Statements are prepared under the Historical Cost Convention, and in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting by Charities, published by the Charity Commission in March 2005.

(b) Income.

Donations represent cash received during the year, including tax repayments receivable.

Charitable Activities Income comprises the sale of Christian books and other materials.

Investment income comprises interest received from money in deposit accounts.

(c) Expenditure.

The cost of generating funds are costs incurred in promoting the Church and its work.

Charitable Activities Expenditure comprises all expenditure directly related to the Church's objects.

Governance costs are costs incurred in complying with constitutional and statutory requirements.

(d) Fixed Assets.

Depreciation has been provided at the following annual rate on a reducing balance basis in order to write off fixed assets over their expected useful lives:

Equipment 25%

Small items of equipment costing less than £500 are written off in the year of purchase.

2. Costs of Generating Funds

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2015 Total	2014 Total
	£	£	£	£
Advertising & Publicity	505	-	505	500

3. Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted	Mission	2015	2014
	Funds	Funds	Total	Total
Note	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	6 44,181	-	44,181	41,381
Visiting speakers' fees	100	-	100	275
Other Ministry/Missions	4 9,598	7,167	16,765	19,376
Accommodation	4,356	-	4,356	5,429
Insurance	320	-	320	340
Administration expenses	305	-	305	415
Equipment	1,220	-	1,220	458
Miscellaneous expenses	817	-	817	1,375
Depreciation	257	-	257	-
	61,154	7,167	68,321	69,049

4. Other Ministry and Missions

Missions expenses	5,846	2,321	8,167	17,689
Donations	675	4,846	-	-
Outreach	-	-	-	1,124
Cornerstone Christian Centre	2,465	-	2,465	-
House groups expenses	20	-	20	18
Fellowship Fund	25	-	25	17
Sunday Bible Club	43	-	43	27
Youth Group	-	-	-	426
Catering	389	-	389	-
CoffeePlus	135	-	135	75
	9,598	7,167	11,244	19,376

5. Governance Costs

Independent Examination	200	-	200	140
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6. Employees	Unrestricted Funds	Mission Funds	2015 Total	2014 Total
Wages	42,412	-	42,412	39,361
Pastor's expenses	1,019	-	1,019	1,270
Training costs	750	-	750	750
	44,181	-	44,181	41,381

The average number of persons employed during the year was 1 (2014: 2). No employee received remuneration in excess of £60,000 p.a. No trustee received any remuneration, apart from Mr John for his work as the pastor of the church.

7. Fixed Assets	Equipment	Total
Cost brought forward	2,317	2,317
Additions in the year	-	-
Cost carried forward	2,317	2,317
Depreciation brought forward	1,291	1,291
Charge for the year	257	257
Depreciation carried forward	1,548	1,548
Net book value (31/03/15)	769	769
Net book value (31/03/14)	1,026	1,026

8. Funds	Brought forward	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Carried Forward
<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>				
General Fund	43,986	58,070	(61,859)	40,197
Church Reserve Fund	15,000	-	-	15,000
	58,986	58,070	(61,859)	55,197
<u>Restricted Funds</u>				
Designated Giving	2,288	11,447	(7,167)	6,568
Building Fund	1,823	-	-	1,823
Church Development Fund	6,839	-	-	6,839
	10,950	11,447	(7,167)	15,230
Total Funds	69,936	69,517	(69,026)	70,427