

# Annual Report 2021/22

## Gateway Church Abergavenny

Monk Street, Abergavenny NP7 5ND

Registered in England & Wales 7842926

Registered Charity No. 1146530

### 1.0 Introduction

It is with immense gratitude again to God, that the pastor, trustees and elders present this annual report for 2021/22, outlining how the charity's key objectives have been pursued during the year, significant outcomes that have resulted, future planning and financial statements.

### 1.1 COVID

Throughout the year the church operated in accordance with national guidance and legislation. All risk assessments were continuously updated and reported by the Operations Coordinator and the Pastor to the trustees and elders. The church participated in the national Furlough scheme to support employed staff during the lock down periods, with all staff eventually returning to work in person.

### 2.0 The vision and mission of the charity

This can be articulated in three strap lines:

***"To know God and to make Him known"***

***"To be a relational people"***

***"To make room for the Holy Spirit"***

2.1 To share the life-giving and life-transforming message of Jesus Christ to everyone in our immediate and surrounding communities (***Preach the Gospel***).

2.2 To assist members of the fellowship in every way possible to develop and grow in the faith they have chosen to follow (***Make Disciples***).

2.3 To model a Biblical pattern of local fellowship, where members don't exist in isolation but thrive as a vibrant spiritual family, bound by genuine relationships, caring for one another, serving together and collectively pursuing Kingdom objectives (***Love One Another***).

2.4 To be a powerful witness of the love and power of Christ to the community we live in, on a day to day basis, by caring for the sick, providing for the needy, comforting the hurting, healing

the broken hearted, giving hope to the hopeless, befriending the lonely, embracing the rejected, and offering support to those who cannot manage on their own. **(Serve the Community)**.

### **3.0 Making the vision and mission a reality**

#### **3.1 Employed staff**

Chris Vaz: Pastor. Full-time.

Lyra Vaz: Church Care Coordinator Part-time.

Aled Williams: Operations Coordinator. Full time w.e.f 01/04/2022.

Kerrie Wilson: Treasurer. Part-time.

Aaron Foley: Community Coordinator. Part-time.

Chenise Fenwick: Young Adults & Youth Leader. (On maternity leave 2021/22).

Laurianne McKenzie: Young Adults & Youth Leader. (Maternity Cover 2021/22).

Helen Cox: Young Families & Children Leader (Part-time).

Rhys Jones: Caretaker. (Part-time).

Natalie Jones: Cleaner. (Part-time)

In addition the trustees and elders have committed in 2022/23 to the appointment of an Assistant Pastor - further details to be confirmed in due course.

#### **3.2 Volunteers**

##### **3.2.1 Elders**

Phil Hopkins, Steve Thomas, Haydn Dwyer, Phillip Johnson, Stewart Clark.

##### **3.2.2 Trustees**

Lawrence Wilson (Chair, Safeguarding, Finance) , Sue Hopkins (Human Resources), Kath Mallord (Without portfolio), Aled Williams (Co-opted: Buildings, IT, Health & Safety, Risk), Helen Cox (Co-opted: Funding), Chris Vaz (Observer), Huw Medlicott (Legal advice).

##### **3.2.3 Team leaders**

**Sunday Services:** Chris Vaz

**Media:** Aled Williams

**Worship:** Rob Westall

**Kids' Club:** Helen Cox, Lyra Vaz

**Community Pastors:** Lyra Vaz and Aaron Foley

**Community Cafe:** Aaron Foley

**School Assemblies:** Lyra Vaz

**Men:** Ken Barwise

**Women:** Lyra Vaz

**Crèche:** Helen Cox

**Ministry Team:** Kath Mallord & Steve Thomas

**Prayer Hubs:** Phil Johnson,

**Prayer for the persecuted church:** Linda Perkins

**Connect groups:** Stewart & Apryl Clark

**Pastoral Care Team:** Lyra Vaz Haydn Dwyer

**Welcome Team:** Val Hardwick, Lyra Vaz

**Bible School:** Chris Vaz

**Bible journaling:** Louise Ingle

**Registrar:** Belinda Dwyer

**H'art:** Jennie Burge

**Online Bible Study:** Phillip & Angela Johnson

**Street Team:** John Hardwick

**Holiday Club:** Helen Cox

### **3.4 Core Implementation Team**

The Core Implementation team seeks to coordinate and implement some of the activities that make the vision and mission of the church a daily reality.

Members include: Chris Vaz (Pastor) , Stewart Clark (Connect groups) Phillip Johnson (Prayer), Aaron Foley and Lyra Vaz (Community), Lawrence Wilson (Trustees), Aled Williams (Operations), Helen Cox (Young families and children), Chenise Fenwick/Laurianne McKenzie (Young adults and Youth), Kerrie Wilson (Treasurer), Haydn Dwyer (Pastoral Care).

### **3.4.1 Connect groups (formerly Lifegroups) (Stewart Clark)**

In March 2022 we re-branded Lifegroups and launched Connect Groups. The motivation behind the new Connect Groups is to adopt the “small and wide” approach of building relationships in smaller gatherings across the Body, recognising that Gateway attracts people living across several nearby counties. Our Life Group Pastors have been absolute heroes given the last 2 years of lockdown where despite the challenges, our Life Groups continued to grow and thrive. Now with a total of 22 Connect Groups, we have the opportunity to draw people into vital relationships, helping them feel connected and providing opportunity for everyone to exercise their gifts and talents for the building up of the Body. If you're not yet part of a Connect Group, we encourage you to get in touch with Stewart or Apryl Clark who will make sure your details are registered on Church Suite so we can “connect” you.

### **3.4.2 Community Cafe (Aaron Foley)**

Our community cafe restarted at the end of September after being closed for 18 months due to the pandemic. It has been great serving our community again and between 30-60 people visit each day (Tuesday to Thursday). We serve between 30-40 hot meals and hot drinks, sandwiches and lots of cake is enjoyed by all. We gratefully receive donations from shops, such as Morrisons, Tesco, Waitrose, Greggs and Angel bakery in Abergavenny, to enable us to run the cafe totally free of charge. In addition to this we also receive donations from various online companies. During Easter week 2022 we are going to bless the people who come to the cafe with a Easter egg. We are also planning to launch a Baby bank where families who need it can have access to nappies, books, toys, baby clothes etc. We offer support and advice to people who come into the cafe and have worked with other charities e.g. Mind, Gavo and Llamau as well as working with local agencies such as the Police, Monmouthshire County Council and Monmouthshire Housing Association.

### **3.4.3 Prayer (Phillip Johnson)**

We managed to maintain regular ‘Prayer Bursts’ online.. Since returning to relative normality, our monthly corporate prayer meetings have resumed with two main emphases: intercession and growing in the prophetic. Our first meeting of 2022, ably led by Steve Thomas, was well-attended with many able to participate and learn how to hear from God.

Everyone is now encouraged to become a member of a ‘Prayer Hub’, a group of two to five people meeting as and when they are able. There are now several faithful groups who are seeing God move in answer to their prayers. The aim is for them to ‘adopt’ specific individuals and ministries to pray for on a regular basis as well as praying over topics of the week.

Persecuted believers are forever on our hearts. Prayer Hubs are urged to remember them regularly, but there is also a meeting each month specifically for the Persecuted Church, convened by Linda Perkins.

It is encouraging that more people are now able to engage consistently in prayer via the Prayer Hubs and/ or the new Connect groups. In his keynote speech at the beginning of 2002 the pastor pointed out that one major feature of the early church was that they ‘devoted themselves...to prayer’ (Acts 2:42).

### **3.4.4 Apologetics (Phillip Johnson)**

The apologetics ministry has been largely concerned with building resources for believers and enquirers. There are now several short and easy-to-read articles on the church website, comprising: 'Where Does the Bible come from?', 'Are the Bible Documents reliable?', 'Is the Bible inspired by God?'. 'The Problem of Suffering', 'Science and Faith', 'What about Other Religions', and 'Easter – Fact of Fiction?'. These articles also contain recommended resources in video and written form for those who require a more in-depth consideration of these topics.

### **3.4.5 Growing in the Bible (Phillip Johnson)**

During the pandemic, we began online Bible Studies which are now available online. The first of these in 2020 was a series of three on the subject of end-times prophecy. This was followed by studies in the early chapters of Genesis. Here we avoided the science-faith debate but concentrated on the importance of these chapters in establishing a Biblical worldview with regard to race, gender, government and globalism, environmentalism, multiculturalism, and the sanctity of life (abortion and euthanasia).

In 2022 we began a series from the Acts of the Apostles called 'Faith and Fire'. We focused on the importance of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and drew life-lessons from the different characters involved: Peter, Stephen, Philip and Paul.

Huge thanks are due to John Hardwick for recording, editing and presenting them in a more professional manner. We look to improve further hope to include some more teaching from The Acts of the Apostles and possibly some background material on both Old and New Testaments.

### **3.4.6 New Christians (Phillip Johnson)**

Discipling of new Christians has been arranged largely on an informal basis. Lyra Vaz has taken a number of ladies under her wing and helped them in their Christian walk.

In addition, we now have ten illustrated videos for new believers under the title of 'Go with God'. In order these are: 'How Can I Know God?', 'Power for Living' (The Holy Spirit), 'The Road Ahead' (An introduction to the Bible), 'How Do I Pray?', 'The Enemies We Face' (Dealing with the World, the Flesh and the Devil)', 'Belonging' (Church fellowship & Baptism), 'How It All Began' (understanding Genesis, the fall and salvation), 'Relationships' ('The Sex Factor' - and dealing with past sexual ties), 'Can We Trust the Bible?', and 'Science and the Bible'. Hopefully, these will become more widely know and used as the need arises.

### **3.4.7 Operation Gateway Relief (Chris Vaz)**

Over the Christmas 2021 period, 1443 individuals in the community were presented with various hampers - including all the fabulous NHS night staff at Nevill Hall hospital, with whom we were honoured to present a cooked Christmas Dinner on Christmas eve, as our token of appreciation

on behalf of us all for all they do. The 1443 gifts distributed included meal kits, children's bags, cooked meals, 'Thinking of You' hampers as well as a Christmas gift bag for every resident of every care home, their staff, and every Community Carer.

#### **3.4.8 Children's home in the Philippines (Chris Vaz)**

During the year the church committed to financially and prayerfully supporting a Children's home in the Philippines, despite some technical difficulties with the transfer of funds we expect this activity to grow and fully develop over the next 12 months.

#### **3.4.9 YWAM hosting (Apryl Clark)**

We hosted a group of four Youth with a Mission individuals who worked in the cafe, met Connect groups and church members and were generally a blessing to all those they encountered.

#### **3.4.10 Re-focussing children and youth work (Lawrence Wilson)**

As part of the ongoing practice of reviewing all our activities, the trustees unanimously agreed to creating two new part-time posts of Young Families & Children Leader and Young Adults and Youth Leader. This has enabled greater financial investment into these areas of ministry and given new focus on the needs of young families and young adults.

#### **3.4.11 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (Lawrence Wilson)**

In response to recommendations of best practice from the Charities Commission, the trustees and elders have met and worked through a range of issues relating to the work of the church and equality, diversity and inclusion. Some changes are now in place e.g. Cafe church at Rehoboth for those wishing to avoid large crowds as a result of COVID, those for whom dark rooms create anxiety and for those maybe seeking a more informal gathering via our online broadcasting of the service from the Gateway building.

#### **3.4.12 Training (Lawrence Wilson/Aled Williams)**

Employees and volunteers have participated in professional training sessions in relation to safeguarding, first aid and food handling and preparation.

#### **3.4.13 Refurbishing Rehoboth (Aled Williams)**

During the year much work has been undertaken to refurbish Rehoboth in terms of decoration, IT support and the toilets.

#### **3.4.14 Updating Gateway Centre (Aled Williams)**

During the year much work has been undertaken to improve the Gateway building in terms of space, with the building of a separate storage facility at the rear and a repainting of the front of the premises..

### **3.4.15 Pastoral Care (Haydn Dwyer & Lyra Vaz)**

First of all we want to acknowledge the invaluable work done by Life Group Pastors in caring for individuals in their groups over the last two years of lockdown when we were unable to meet together. The primary focus for pastoral care is through Life Groups (now Connect Groups) where we want to continue to promote a culture of care. Alongside the Connect Group Pastor, we recognise that each one of us has a responsibility to care for, watch out for, and where possible, meet the individual needs of those we are connecting with, whether spiritual or practical. Just one of the many ways in which we have provided care over the last year is in providing daily, quality hot meals for those who have moved house, come home from hospital after surgery, or after an addition to the family. We have an awesome team of volunteers. We also have a Central Core Team who are on hand to help out if a group cannot fulfil a request.

The Pastoral Care team is headed up by Haydn and Lyra

### **3.4.16 Young families and children (Helen Cox)**

I began working as the Children & Young Families Leader in October 2021.

My first priority was to restart GC Kids (5-11s) and GC Tots (preschoolers) on a Sunday morning which also involved finding an almost brand new team of volunteers for each of these. In GC Kids there are usually 18-20 children on a Sunday morning, and in GC Tots it varies from 4 up to 10. The teams of volunteers have been fantastic, showing a commitment to the work and a passion for the vision to disciple the children so that they will build a lasting faith in God.

In February we started a Parent and Toddler group on a Friday morning at Rehoboth. This has already grown to about 20 families attending regularly and an amazing team of volunteers who are committed to building relationships with the mums, dads and grandparents who attend each week with their children. These are largely families from the local community (with a few of our Gateway families) which provides a fantastic outreach opportunity.

Finally, the Young Families at Gateway recently had a Social Evening at Rehoboth, and there is an Easter Trail at Linda Vista Gardens planned for next Saturday. We are planning to meet up regularly for social evenings, afternoons in the park etc throughout the year to build strong relationships to support each other in the rewarding but often challenging role of bringing up children, strong in their faith, who will be the church leaders of the future.

### **3.4.17 Young adults and youth (Laurianne McKenzie)**

It has been a busy few months since Chenise started her maternity leave. Youth club has been running weekly with around 16 young people regularly attending. We have been visited by the

Police, and MIND in addition we have visited the Fire station. We have a new youth club launching in April 2022 headed up by Denika, Vicki and Keith. It will be geared much more to some of the young people from the community whose needs are a little different. Thursday club will now have a greater faith element mixed in with fun and fellowship. Thursday will now be known as Youth Connect and Friday will take on the GC Youth title.

Young Adults have a full programme set out for the year. We have already had games night, bowling and a 3 course French dinner. We will be having a murder mystery next. We regularly have around 15 young adults attending.

Sunday mornings have been going well. We have been looking at people of the Bible and have now moved into identity and goodness of God. Attendance fluctuates from around 8 or 9 to around 14.

#### **3.4.18 Communion Services (Chris Vaz)**

The intention in 2022/23 is to offer gluten free bread or wafers and non-alcoholic liquids at all Sunday morning communion services.

#### **3.4.19 Supporting the hearing impaired (Aled Williams)**

The intention in 2022/23 is to introduce loop systems into both buildings and to investigate the use of auto-translating sub-titles for Sunday services. If occasions arise require the employment of professional signers e.g. hosting a larger national conference.

#### **3.4.20 Greater diversity of refreshments on Sunday mornings (Aled Williams)**

The church is committed to maintaining its provision of free refreshments at Sunday services and occasional mid-week gatherings and including decaffeinated coffee, tea and to introduce alternatives to cows' milk.

#### **3.4.21 Trustees (Lawrence Wilson)**

The trustees have met all the requirements of the Charities Commission and Companies House in terms of its financial and legal activities as a registered charity. Particular developments include the trademarking of the name and logo of Gateway Church Abergavenny, reviewing and renewing the church insurance policy, monitoring and quality assuring practices relating to GDPR, health and safety, safeguarding, recruitment and human resources as well as our booking keeping and accounting methods. The risk assessments relating to COVID are ongoing and reviewed constantly.

#### **3.4.22 The bigger picture (Chris Vaz)**

We have always recognised our role with the wider Body of Christ, and our mandate of being a pioneering, resourcing, and apostolic church, hence the term 'Regional Church' started to be used 3 years ago. Whilst we have not been able to meet physically this year, we continue to inspire and encourage the wider Church Body both in Wales as well as the UK.



I continue to be serve in various roles – Area Leader for AOG South Wales, part of the New Wine Wales National Leadership Team, part of the Leadership Development team for AOG GB, as well as offering spiritual support and input to various church leaders and leadership teams.

### **3.5 Other events and media coverage**

**3.5.1** We had another successful **Carol Service** in 2022. There was a great community involvement this time, and we were delighted to have Cath Woolridge lead worship for us live in-person, and Dai Woolridge host the evening for us.

**3.5.2 Gateway Community Awards** - as with each year, we recognise individuals in the community who have served and made a difference, and this year was no different. We appreciated and awarded a number of individuals, and the prestige of these awards has taken on a following on it's own, with the local newspaper Abergavenny Chronicle as well as South Wales Argus covering the awards.

**3.5.3 Operation Gateway Relief** grabbed the fascination and appreciation of people far and wide. Again, Abergavenny Chronicle, South Wales Argus, BBC Radio Wales, churches locally and nationally, AOG UK, and several other groups ran articles, interviews and reports on what we did.

**3.5.4** We had a very moving **Remembrance Day 2022 service**, with contributions and involvement from a number of people, including a serving RAF personnel and two ex-servicemen,

**3.5.6** We continue to run an **International Lifegroup** with members based in South Africa, Sweden, USA and various parts of the United Kingdom.

**3.5.7** We hosted two **Assemblies of God South Wales meetings** and three **New Wine Cymru** meetings during the year.

**3.5.8** In August we ran an online **Holiday Club** which incorporated engagement with all the family via a daily online broadcast.

**3.5.9** John Hardwick continued to develop and improve the quality of our **Online broadcasting** of services, bible studies and other events.

### **4.0 Reviewing last year's future plans**

Below is an update on those ventures minuted in last year's annual report

**4.1 Pioneer the 'Hybrid Model'** as well as the '**Global Model**' of church life and ministry God is taking His global church into.

Response: See **3.4.22**.

**4.2 Develop our "Regional Church"**: To embrace the wider role God is taking us into, to increase our resourcing and support towards other local churches, ministries, leaders and

organisations as we work as in a more collaborated manner to see our towns, cities and villages impacted with the power and love of Christ.

Response: See **3.4.22**.

**4.3 Lifegroup membership:** To see at least 92% of our members become part of Lifegroups. This will only help us serve each one better.

Response: See **3.4.1**.

**4.4 Increased outreach to our community:** To be an even greater “prophetic voice” in our community. Develop stronger strategies to reach out and minister to the homeless and underprivileged people, as well as addicts, who are coming to us even more than ever before. Target newer areas in town to see an increase in our Kids Club reach.

Response: See **3.4.2, 3.4.7, 3.4.10, 3.5.2, 3.5.3, and 3.5.8**.

**4.5 Infrastructure:** With our Rehoboth facility becoming even more strategic to our Children’s & Youth Ministries, the need to update Rehoboth, just like we did to Gateway is essential, and we hope to give it an uplift soon, hopefully before lockdown comes to an end fully.

Response: See **3.4.13 and 3.4.19**.

**4.6 Spirit of excellence:** With each passing year, we want to develop better structures and protocols for better communication, resource management, and visitor experience. A church must be able to demonstrate a spirit on excellence in all that we do, reflecting the excellent God we serve.

Response: See **3.4.10, 3.4.11, 3.4.12, 3.4.13, 3.4.14, 3.4.19, 3.4.21**.

**4.7 Training & Equipping:** Provide better training and equipping to all our staff and volunteers to be able to serve more effectively.

Response: See **3.4.1, 3.4.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.5, 3.4.6 and 3.4.12**.

## **5.0 Looking forward, relating to the vision and mission of the church (Chris Vaz)**

There is no doubt we are moving into what we call a 'post covid' world, which will be different in several ways from the pre-covid world in which we were all currently operating.

People's priorities, values, habits and mindsets have changed. Working patterns are changing, the way people are meeting and interacting is changing. The church has to take into account this changing global landscape, and assess it's operations accordingly, so as to still be effective and strategic.

Gateway has always adopted this approach of reevaluating our strategies and workings, and so will use 2022-23 to learn and prepare for this new post covid landscape.

**5.1** Continue to develop the ‘**Hybrid Model**’ as well as the ‘**Global Model**’ of church life and ministry God is taking His global church into. (*Preach the Gospel*). (*Love One Another*)

**5.2 Develop our “Regional Church”:** To take further the wider role God is taking us into, to increase our resourcing and support towards other local churches, ministries, leaders and organisations as we work as in a more collaborated manner to see our towns, cities and villages impacted with the power and love of Christ. *(Preach the Gospel). (Love One Another)*

**5.3 Establish Connect groups:** To see the successful transition from the Lifegroup into the Connect model, establishing active membership as a core activity and commitment by all those who consider themselves as part of Gateway. *(Preach the Gospel). (Make Disciples) (Love One Another)*

**5.4 Increase further our outreach to the community:** To be an even greater “prophetic voice” in our community. Develop stronger strategies to reach out and minister to the homeless and underprivileged people, as well as addicts, who are coming to us even more than ever before. Target newer areas in town to see an increase in our Kids Club outreach. *(Preach the Gospel). (Love One Another) (Serve the Community)*

**5.5 Infrastructure:** To establish the new employed position of Assistant Pastor with a focus on nurturing church growth through a variety of strategies to support the growth of hybrid and global church models, the regional church development and the outreach into all ages of the community. *(Preach the Gospel) (Make Disciples) (Love One Another) (Serve the Community)*

**5.6 Buildings, money and people:** To review our footprint in Abergavenny and consider how best to invest financially, pragmatically and spiritually in our premises, our people and our community.

The budget breakdowns for 2021/22 and 2022/23 show the following developments:

The end of the government Furlough scheme payments; the increase in the National Living Wage (NLW); the cost of living pay increase to employees not on the NLW; the draft costs for the appointment of a 25 hour Assistant Pastor w.e.r. 01/09/2022; significant increases in utilities' bills; significant increases in buildings' costs (a review of the letting and hiring of premises procedures and costs is underway) and the merging of kingdom kids, creche, young families and parent and toddler into one budget to facilitate expeditious expenditure.

Additionally the pastor, trustees and elders have unanimously agreed to revise the designated Gateway Building Fund to a Vision Fund with the aim of investing further in staffing levels and church buildings. *(Love One Another) (Serve the Community)*

**5.7 Prayer and theology:** To encourage the fellowship at all ages and stages in life to deepen their prayer lives, their bible knowledge and their faith. *(Preach the Gospel). (Make Disciples)*

**Christopher Vaz**

**Gateway Church Abergavenny**

**April 2022**

