

# Gorse Hill

## BAPTIST CHURCH

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Charity Registration No: 1127294

### Dear friends

*All together in one place ... on each of them .... all of them were filled.*

All of them.

The church began as a relational community and remains so today, even if the immediate context has changed beyond recognition. Despite living in unprecedented times, we are looking to engage with a “new normal” even if we don’t fully know what that looks like.

Now is a time to dream dreams, respond to visions and think big. Same old, same old, has been and gone.

We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to lay down some important markers about what we understand church to be and how we will get there (whatever or wherever “there” may be). Everything we do, all that we are, needs to be re-examined in the light of today, not yesterday or the more distant past.

The future is something the whole church must own. We also need to be ready to move quickly and cleanly when safety and opportunity allows.

It is not a time for endless circles of meetings and discussions - to do so would miss the opportunities we have and put us in danger of irrelevance as our immediate context will move further away from us.

A unified approach, reflecting our core Acts 2: 42 - 47 values, is more important than ever. This is especially relevant given the inevitable (and far reaching) changes that will be necessary following the recruitment of a Childrens’, Families and Youth Worker.

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Tough decisions will need to be made. We need to focus our public face to the world and strive not for excellence but for engagement (with God, one another and towards the community).

No doubt we’ll have big questions to ask, and many bridges to cross, if we are to build a church that goes far beyond “keeping in touch” but looks to build the Kingdom of God.



This is not a task for one person or even one church. At Pentecost, all played their part, all used their (newly found) gifts - and so it is with us.

We have recently been told that Swindon will be amongst the 10 worst affected areas in the UK, as a result of Covid 19. We are already talking to many agencies in the town, both Christian and secular, about how we can work together to bring hope.

In this update you’ll see some of the things we have been looking at in our Deacons’ meetings as well as discovering some of the ways in which everyone can get involved.

There’s also an update on GHBC’s Finances as well as some exciting plans for integrating our pastoral care and community engagement.

I commend all of this to you but above all, I commend you all to God as this time of change. May you know His peace and be led by His love

Every blessing in Christ

*Steve*

## OUR MOTTO TEXT FOR 2020

### 1 Timothy 4:12

... set an example for the believers  
in speech, in life, in love, in faith  
and in purity



### Bags of Hope

We've made up over 100 Bags of Hope over the last week. Many have now been delivered. The families that received them have been referred to us from many different people and organisations around the town and all recipients were very grateful, some overwhelmed, with the generosity of the gift.

We still have lots of families that require our help; one school that we have just spoken to today have many families that are in need and require a lot more bags. I was able to give them just 18 today but we still need many more as there are still many families in need.

This is just the tip of the iceberg and we expect the referrals to be coming in fast over the next few weeks. It has been a real blessing to be able to deliver the Bags of hope to these families and we have had some really interesting conversations with many of them.

Please continue to donate, you can either drop your donations straight into the Whiteman room at church or we can collect them from you. If you know of anyone who needs a Bag of Hope let us know. Contact me on <https://www.ghbc.org.uk/contact-us/13>.  
Thanks - Heather

### Pastoral care

We will be continuing the pastoral drop in sessions by Zoom for the foreseeable future. Anyone can join - the zoom details are in the weekly updates.

It's good to hear that the Home Group leaders and Care Group Co-ordinators are keeping in touch with you on a regular basis.

If you'd like to talk to someone in confidence about anything then please get in touch ([pastoral@ghbc.org.uk](mailto:pastoral@ghbc.org.uk)). You can also ring or text me (Steve) at any time on 075 0696 7163. I'll be happy to listen or to speak where we can (safely) do so.



### Training

To refresh our understanding of how we should be working - and to take account of recent changes - we will be running a series of training sessions for Group leaders and all those working with GHBC activities.

This training will cover such areas as Safeguarding, First Aid, Health and Safety, Core Vision/values amongst others.

More details will follow although we expect to do much of this online using Zoom.

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**Sunday Service**  
Currently meeting at 11am each week  
by Zoom and Facebook live  
Website [www.ghbc.org.uk](http://www.ghbc.org.uk)

## Community/social Impact

We've been thinking about we can best support our local community as lockdown eases.

One of the ways we are already doing this is through our bags of hope - there are, and will be many more, including supporting those who have found this time emotionally draining.

It's very hard to predict what the future might look like. Undoubtedly things will continue to move quickly and we must be ready to respond to needs as well as being proactive in sharing the gospel message of salvation, hope and justice.

People need to hear that they are valued, cared for and loved: the first step is often meeting a need with a conversation and further connection often following.

I've met with Ruth Rice, a Baptist Minister who has been instrumental in setting up wellbeing Cafés in churches across the UK. I believe that we can adapt and expand our Kettles On, Recreate and general church presence to embrace the many immediate needs of this local community and beyond.

I see this as a transition from what we are doing to embrace the changing needs of the town. This will allow us to create a "safe space" for people to be and then to address their concerns. Our wider pastoral support can be integrated with this.

A number of local agencies including CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau) are already seeing a rise in referrals from people seeking support for financial problems. Jonny has been looking at possibilities of extending our CAP provision, potentially moving into Job Clubs and support for those with addictions.

We are looking to partner with other groups and churches where it's appropriate to do so in light of the vision we believe God has given to us.

I am actively pursuing funding both from WEBA and from Stratton Green Baptist Church.

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I have submitted a paper for WEBA to consider at their next meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July: this details the immediate and expected needs of Swindon. Any funding we might receive would be used to support and extend the ministries I've mentioned above.

We are also working through the implications of the most recent announcements from Central Government (23<sup>rd</sup> June). We will consider how/when to reopen the building to worship and other meetings, whilst maintaining cleanliness and safety.

## Finance

We wanted to update you about our financial position as it is some time since we last met.

Thank you for your generosity in continuing to give. We have been able to meet all our financial commitments including continuing to support the mission causes we have committed to in our 2020 budget.

Although our costs have been reduced, we have also see a reduction in our income as we can't hire out the building and we have also not been taking our Sunday offering. The monthly shortfall is currently around £3000: although we do have significant reserves, we also have some commitments which include the recruitment of a Children's and Families worker.

Many in the fellowship give directly by standing order. Together with Gift Aid this is an efficient and effective way of giving towards God's work. If you'd like more information on this or how you can support us financially then please contact Ian, our Treasurer (finance@ghbc.org.uk).

## AGM

Although we continue to hold our Deacons' Meetings - and keep in regular contact with group leaders across the church - we haven't been able to hold our AGM.

There are some very important things to do; reflecting on the past year, electing new Deacons and receiving our accounts to name a few. We hope to be able to meet as soon as we (safely) can and will give you plenty of notice.

## Where will you help?

As you can see from what I have shared above, there's lots of opportunities for you to share your gifts in Christ's service through GHBC's ministries. The broad areas are represented by Children and Youth, Adults Outreach around CAP, assisting with Pastoral Care; practical help e.g. DIY, shopping; Admin and Support.

Please get in touch with Jonny Murphy if you'd like to get involved ([jmurphy@ghbc.org.uk](mailto:jmurphy@ghbc.org.uk))