

Pastor's report on 2020

I'm going to keep my report this evening short, because you can read the bullet point summary of activities on the 1-page report which has been circulated, and I want us mainly to look forwards not backwards this evening.

But just briefly....2020 will go down in history when everything changed- working practices, schooling, haircuts, technology. But as Jon reminded us in a sermon from Hebrews 13 at the start of this academic year, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

And in one way, we haven't really done anything that different this year. We've continued to do what our church tagline says. Loving Jesus, Loving One another, Loving Huntingdon- slide 14.

1) Loving Jesus. Do you remember the first livestream from Jonathan's house on Mother's Day 22 March 2020? As we finished off in Nehemiah we thought of the sunflower who turns her face towards the sun even as dark clouds come. Praise God for turning us to think about Jesus- during this time: The Rock of Refuge (as we saw in the Psalms), the firstborn from among the dead (Colossians), the giver of the Spirit, (Acts 1-8), and the Welcomer of sinners (The summer's Luke 15 prodigal son series). I've seen people grow during this time in faith and godliness (because through trials our faith of more worth than gold is refined), even though sadly some have also drifted away.

2) Loving One another. Zoom bible study groups are not easy, but praise God that we've been able to keep in touch with one another through them. Thanks to all who have been life group leaders, including Alice who has restarted the women's group and David who has tirelessly led two groups. Matt who has been such a wonderful addition to our church has started the CCHY. The Monday morning prayer meeting has been a wonderful joy to me, and we've seen loads of answers to prayer. One of the most practical ways has been the Freecycle Whatsapp! I love it!

3) Loving Huntingdon. This is where the biggest surprises have come for me. We may have been in lockdown, but God's word hasn't been. We ran the take a look course with talks by me, Matt and Becca and James. Guests came from Somerset and Cornwall, but they came! And then we probably had our greatest attendance ever at a CCH event if you count youtube hits. 218 views for our Inflatabounce hybrid carol service, and 381 views on our kids carols with 2 local schools. And the furniture and friendship ministry led by Jean and Rob in partnership with the local council has been a real miracle, praise God- he is the great Evangelist! It all started with a throwaway line at the school gate!

So 2020- loving Christ, Loving one another, Loving Huntingdon. God takes the credit where we got things right, he's been gracious when we've got things wrong. Great **joys**- 4 births (all beginning with J!), 3 marriages. But there were **sorrows** too. Dearly loved parents and grandparents dying, sometimes Covid related, sometimes to other causes. No-one in our church was hospitalised, thank God, but we've all been impacted one way or the other.

2020 was hard, and none of us will forget it. But we talked about a "year of encouragement" at our last ACM. Thank you for all your encouragement of me and for being a part of CCH. As I have said before, there's no other church I'd rather be. Keep loving Christ, Keep loving one another, and Keep loving Huntingdon.

Do remind me afterwards what I've missed, but for now, let's look forward.

Launch of Direction process

Charlie shared the shape of a process for the next few years to discern where God might be leading us in our outreach and inreach. This involves a period (Apr-Aug 21) named "**dream**" including a survey and consultations within the church to share our ideas. Then a period (Sep 21-Sep 22) of "**discern**" to priorities and shape up a few trial ministries "in the greenhouse"). This will be followed by "**deploy**" (Sep 22-Aug 25) as we seek to reorganise our ministry map (including potentially paid staff) to enable the ministries we would love to offer. All of this must be undergirded by prayer and reading God's word in "**dependence**" on him. Of course this process of discernment goes on all the time, and in practice isn't as clearly demarcated as this but it's helpful to have a focus. More in the central meetings on 27th and 28th April.

Charlie Newcombe