

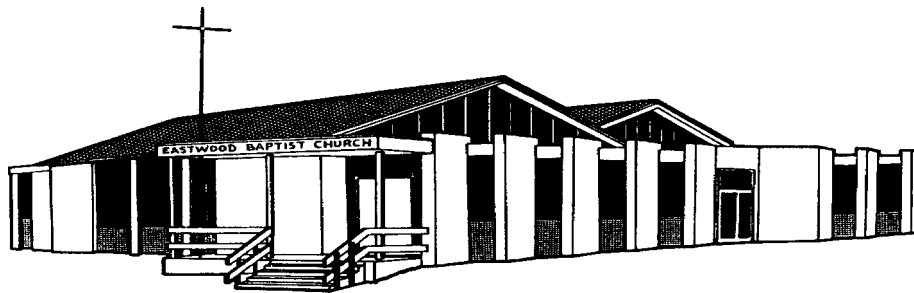
# A Profile of



## EASTWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

*.....a place for you*

Rayleigh Road, Eastwood, Leigh on Sea, Essex, SS9 5PY



[www.eastwoodbaptist.org.uk](http://www.eastwoodbaptist.org.uk)

## **CONTENTS**

**Introduction**

**Who We Are?**

**What We Do?**

**Where Are We?**

**How Are We Financed?**

**What are our Plans to Maintain and our Opportunities to Improve our Church Accommodation?**

**Where Do We Believe God Is Leading Us?**

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### **Introduction**

This Profile is a snapshot of Eastwood Baptist Church. It is not intended to be a comprehensive picture but, rather, a 'flavour' of who we are, what we do and what we stand for. It gives an insight into our past, present and future. Within this Profile we have asked individual group leaders to write pen portraits of our activities to reflect our individualism and our many diverse talents.

For almost a century, EBC has stood proudly on the corner of Rayleigh Road and Nobles Green Road, proclaiming the Christian message and responding to needs of both congregation and community.

Like every other church it has faced many challenges, and will continue to do so as it seeks to provide an unchanged and unchangeable witness in a changing world.

## Who We Are?

### This Is Eastwood Baptist Church

We see ourselves as being a typical Baptist church. By that we mean we are Bible-based and believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. We trust that all we do is led by the Word and by His Spirit.

We are situated in primarily a residential area of Southend-on-Sea. Eastwood is a rambling community approximately 3 miles long by three-quarters of a mile wide.

We currently have 100 people in Sunday attendance, of whom more than 61% are aged over 60. Most live in Eastwood, but a substantial percentage travels from nearby areas. Our Diaconate is 9-strong, comprising 6 men and 3 women. It has a track record in being wholly supportive of the Pastor and encouraging in the exploration of new opportunities.

The age profile of our membership is a source of concern to us. We have few teenagers and few adults in the 20-40 age range. In recent years we have specifically targeted younger families through Parent and Toddler Group (Pinocchio) and very successful Ladies Events. These have been encouraging and very much offer a major opportunity for the church. Opportunities to outreach to men are being explored and we were very much encouraged by our previous Golf Day.

Given that previous Alpha Courses were delivering a diminishing return, we have sought to follow up outreach with more innovative in-house designed nurturing courses which have had some success, but we recognise that our strategy in this area is in its relative infancy.

Our young people's groups that meet on a Friday night reflect that we have a demand in the community that could be further stimulated if our current human resources can be increased. Due to limited resources our leaders and helpers are having to work across groups which increases demands on individuals and potentially limits effectiveness.

We practice Believers' Baptism by full immersion, at the same time seeking to be very inclusive by welcoming all believers to the Communion table. In addition to our Sunday services, we hold three different styles of weekly Prayer and Bible Study meetings that seek to accommodate and encourage different learning styles.

During our Ministerial Vacancy we rely on visiting speakers, but at the same time we are richly blessed with 9 members of the Fellowship who are capable to fully lead our Sunday services.

We consider ourselves to be a welcoming and caring body of God's people, ever-ready to provide support, assistance and encouragement when it is required.

We are a busy church and numerous events are staged, some of these are devotional and others provide fellowship and recreation.

The church buildings are modern and well maintained, comprising the main church plus upper and lower halls. There is a well appointed kitchen as well as several small rooms and a crèche. However we have a vision to be a living hub in our community and our building offers scope for considerable redesign within its existing footprint. So we have ambitions some of them maintenance, some to improve our carbon footprint and some radical to offer increased outreach opportunities.

The church owns a modern, 4 bedroom house that includes a separate study which is accessed without intrusion upon the family living area.

### Our History

Eastwood Baptist Church first opened its doors in 1911, in an age when the pace of life was much slower and the pressures less demanding. Our founder was Rev. Thomas Edwards, a missionary to India who retired to Eastwood.

Eastwood has changed greatly over the years, transforming from a leafy backwater to a busy suburb of Southend, the second most populous town in Essex. Our church building has also changed greatly and the original small chapel is now a sizeable modern building incorporating a number of function rooms.

Styles of ministry have varied over the years, from pulpit thumping preachers to sensitive pastoral-focused moderators and charismatic leaders. With each ministry has come different issues and different congregations. Our last Pastor, Reverend Barrie Thompson, resigned for personal domestic reasons in September 2008 after 3 years with us. What can be said for all our Pastors, past and present, is that they were faithful to their calling.

In 2011 we will be celebrating our centenary year and we hope use this as an opportunity to remember our past but more so to look to the many opportunities that we trust God will place before us on our future journey together.

## Membership & Attendance Information:

*(Mike Reeve)*

The following table was compiled over the month of May 2009

### **Age Ranges of Fellowship**

**m = attending member**

**a = attending non-member**

**(Sunday attendance only)**

	Age Range	Male (m)	Male (a)	Female (m)	Female (a)	Total
a	0-5 years	0	3	0	4	7
b	6-13 years	0	3	0	5	8
c	14-18 years	0	0	0	0	0
d	19-25 years	0	0	0	0	0
e	26-40 years	4	2	3	1	10
f	41-50 years	0	2	3	1	6
g	51-60 years	8	0	8	1	17
h	61-70 years	4	0	7	0	11
i	71-80 years	7	2	12	5	26
j	81 + years	3	2	7	3	15
	Totals	26	14	40	20	100

## **What We Do?**

### Our Worship

#### **Style & Format**

We currently hold two services on a Sunday at 10.30am and 6.30pm, with Communion being taken on the first Sunday evening and the third Sunday morning of each month. Our children are important to us and they share in the first part of every service before they leave for their own Junior Church. Eastwood Baptist Church is traditional but very relaxed in our worship. Our worship tends to be standard 'Baptist' format with the 'Word of God' being a major element but we occasionally use the evening services as opportunities to explore different styles, example services in the previous year have included: Prayer; Meditation; Songs of Praise (individual testimonies); and New Songs, Informal 'Tea' Services.

#### **Music & Music Group**

*(Carol Land)*

We believe that music in worship is a central and vital part of the life of our fellowship and hope to encourage everyone who attends our services to enter into a deeper relationship with the Lord through the act of worship.

We currently lead singing with piano accompanied by acoustic guitar. We like to include both old and new songs/choruses in our worship and aim to include some suitable for children. As we are constantly on the lookout for new material we have formed a singing group which meets approximately every two weeks to learn new songs. The singing group occasionally present songs in services as 'performance' pieces but we also occasionally hold special 'New Songs' services to introduce new songs to the congregation.

The hymns and choruses that we sing, mainly come from the Songs of Fellowship series, but occasionally we also use the Baptist hymnbook. We also have a 'home made' supplement book which we add to from time to time, with any new songs that we have learnt. These songs come from a variety of sources.

### **Song Pro (Worship Projection)**

*(Jan Noble)*

SongPro is a worship presentation programme for use in churches and other places of worship. It allows the projection of songs, bible readings, videos and PowerPoint presentations onto a large screen. The system has been in use at EBC for several years and allows the congregation to view songs and bible verses clearly without the need for books. A small team of operators prepares and operates the Songpro programme for each service. By importing graphics and using colourful and varied typefaces, the presentation has both impact and clarity. Of course, bibles and song books are available to those who are unable to view the screen.

### **Amplification**

*(Geoff Land)*

A small team of four people aid the worship by providing the best possible sound enhancement we can. There is a provision for services held in the sanctuary to be relayed to the crèche. Services are recorded and currently archived on CD. CDs may be borrowed or, alternatively, the sermon (with preacher's permission) may be listened to from our website [www.eastwoodbaptist.org.uk](http://www.eastwoodbaptist.org.uk)

## **Prayer & Bible Study**

### **Prayer Initiatives**

*(Robin Oldfield)*

We believe Prayer to be the foundation on which God builds the Church. As such we hold a number of Prayer Meetings and Services throughout the Church weekly, monthly and yearly calendar.

We have three diverse Prayer and Bible Study groups meeting weekly. One takes the form of a House Group, the second a traditional Church Prayer and Bible Study group and the third a Church-based Nurture group.

Once every two months we hold a prayer breakfast, which can be on either a Saturday or Sunday morning at 9.00am. The subject for these prayer meetings can be on any aspect of the Church life but we also pray for the community, other local Churches and of course the World in general.

Once every three months we also hold an evening Prayer Service where we come to worship God through Prayer and Praise.

### **Monday Evening House Meeting**

*(Peggy David)*

About 12 of us meet regularly; sometimes we are joined by friends or relatives. We start with a warm drink, then after an informal chat we get down to Bible Study. We are not a prayer meeting as such, but we do ask the Holy Spirit to reveal God's word to us, and we close the study with prayer. If we are concerned about anyone or anything, we bring it to the Lord in prayer. We discuss what we wish to study, sometimes it is Old Testament and sometimes New Testament. If we find the subject especially interesting and we want to know more, then we continue the study. The meeting is intended to make the Bible reading easier, interesting, blessed and fun. Everybody is encouraged to take part. We finish the evening with refreshments as some come straight from work, and it also encourages friendship.

### **Tuesday Evening Prayer & Bible Study Meeting**

*(Robin Oldfield)*

During these evenings a small number of the attendees take it turns to prepare a Bible study using reference books written by such people as Tom Stott and Barclay. We also spend time in open prayer. Our recent studies have been on Galatians and presently we are reading the book of James. The meeting is open to all of the fellowship and we average about 10 people from a regular group of 20 attendees.

## **Nurturing Courses**

*(Allan Cox)*

For many years the Church made good use of "The Alpha Courses". However in recent years their effectiveness diminished, therefore our last minister designed his own courses based upon some of the Alpha material. These were called "Christianity the Truth", and "Christianity the Life". These were a little more successful because the minister's wife was able to gain the interest and support of some of the "Pinocchio Mums" who brought their children to our Mother and Toddler mornings.

As a result of these "Designer" courses the need arose to nurture those who were interested in knowing more. We then launched and currently run weekly "An Introduction to Bible Study" and have found this is a useful way of helping new Christians or others needing this kind of help.

We shall continue to make it possible for people to make a commitment to Christ as Saviour and we shall also continue to offer a nurturing opportunity.

It is our hope that our minister will share our desire for these things and that we shall work together for the salvation of many.

## **Taking Care within our Fellowship**

### **Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and Group**

*(Jo Hellenbrand)*

We are committed to the caring and fellowship of everyone with links to the church but especially for the elderly and unwell amongst us. We make sure that the vulnerable have contact and visits which include companionship, prayers and bible readings. We also are available for any other needs that arise like transport to hospital/doctors appointments, shopping, picking up prescriptions/library books etc. We have even helped obtain a cleaner and hairdresser for one lovely couple.

The Pastoral Care for the church members and friends is coordinated by a team of 9 members with many more volunteers at hand to help out any time. We meet half yearly to discuss and update on how things are going and monthly an update is given at the Deacons meeting so everyone is aware of any needs or issues arising.

Every member and friend to the church has a member of the team who is aware if they haven't been seen for a couple of weeks so we can check if they are well and make sure they feel valued by us all.

We also do a regular prayer list that is normally distributed a couple of times a week but can be daily if there is an update and need for more prayer. This is sent out to the majority of members straight away by e mail and then a sheet is printed with the requests on to give out on Sundays to those who don't have access to the internet. We hope this means that most people have access to fellowship news and we can feel more like a family, all praying for each other during our highs and lows

### **Coffee Mornings**

*(Mavis & Arthur Land)*

Coffee Mornings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month except December when it is the 2nd, and none in August.

They are run by five church members with transport arranged if requested. The objectives of the coffee mornings are to make friends whilst enjoying coffee, tea, toast and marmalade for which donations are welcomed.

They are also a Fund Raiser by means of Birthday, occasional, Christmas and Easter cards etc. being available for purchase, through which we have donated monies to Love Russia, Haven's Hospices, Latin Link, TWAM, Samaritan's Pursue and Mission Aviation Fellowship.

## **Working with Young People**

### **Safeguarding Children**

*(Rosie Midson)*

As a church we demonstrate a commitment to nurturing and valuing all children that we come into contact with.

Our policy statement is reviewed annually and read out at a church meeting to remind all members of their individual and corporate responsibility.

All those who work with children have an initial enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check which is revised every 5 years. As part of their signed agreement all those involved with children's work receive regular training and mentorship. We aim not to expose anyone to the vulnerability of working alone with children.

An annual safeguarding update training is undertaken by all children's workers and also anyone who is interested in the welfare of children is welcomed to these sessions.

The church has 3 advocates, one for the children, one for the leaders and helpers of children's work and the 3rd is the church Secretary. We are registered as members of the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) who facilitate our CRB checks and send us regular safeguarding information.

### **Crèche**

*(Sharon Watkins)*

We have created a fresh and personalised space for the youngest children in our church. Painted on the wall are drawings the older children have made of themselves when they were crèche age along with words from Psalm 98 "Sing for Joy to the Lord" There are a variety of toys, books and a slide that are used and enjoyed under supervision. The older children enjoy spending time here after the Sunday service and even on a Friday night. The provision of the crèche is flexible and arrangements are made to support events other than the Sunday service as and when required.

### **Junior Church**

*(Dot Stevens)*

Junior Church consists of two groups of children in the age ranges of 3-7 and 7-14 which meet on Sunday mornings. After the first 15 minutes of the main service we then adjourn to separate rooms for a Bible or other relevant story, followed where appropriate by art / craft activities. The children in the younger group enjoy singing along with the "Jesus Loves me, this I know" CD. The teaching material and leaflets used for the 3-7 age group is published by Go Teach Publication, whilst the older age group use Scripture Union material which includes leaflets to complete puzzles and points for discussion. In recent times the younger age group has welcomed 3 newcomers who also attend Pinocchio sessions.

### **Friday Club**

*(Karen Oldfield)*

Held between 6.30pm – 7.30pm each Friday in term time, this club is open to any child aged 5 to 11. There are about 18 names on the register and 4 leaders and 3 helpers run the club on a rota system. Three staff members attend each week (all of which have been CRB checked). There is no set pattern to the evening except that a short devotional time will be included, which loosely works in with the Church calendar. Craftwork, games (both physically and socially interactive), and discussions may be included.

The majority of children who attend this club have no other connection with EBC and our main form of recruitment is by word of mouth.

### **Rock Solid**

*(Rachel Squire / Malc Seaman)*

Rock Solid is the EBC Youth Group that meets every Friday evening between 8pm – 9.30pm at the church, during school terms. The group is intended to cater for ages 11 – 16 (School Years 7 – 11) although we do not restrict those that have been coming to the group whilst at school and have since left school, from continuing to attend. We have 23 young people registered and on average, have a weekly attendance of between 14-18.

The group is supervised each week by a team of three adult church members. Ideally we would have sufficient helpers to be able to 'rota' such that the leadership was shared. Unfortunately we currently rely on some of the Friday Club helpers to assist Rock Solid when one of the three regular people in our team is unable to attend. We believe we have achieved good progress with the young people attending Rock Solid despite this shortage of helpers but could achieve more if we had additional resources.

The format of the group evening is fairly open as we recognise that the young people have been at school all week and having reached the weekend, are not looking for additional 'structured' activities but mostly want to mix with their friends and 'chill out.'

We engage them with a variety of indoor sports, games and computer games and have an on-going 'Sports Award' for the more competitive, where points are awarded for games won against each other or against leaders, either as individuals or in teams.

We also have a range of other activities from cooking and occasional trips out to bowling, swimming etc, as a way for the young people to enjoy each others company outside of the church environment.

Our intention is to provide a safe place for young people to join in fun activities under the watchful eye of Christian leadership. We spend a short time with them each week discussing either some topical event or a real-life situation that one of the leaders may have faced, as a way of directing the conversation towards a relevant scriptural principal. We always try and incorporate the Gospel and Jesus' love for these young people in how we approach these talks. Our hope and intention is, in a quiet and unobtrusive way, to show the young people that come to Rock Solid that there is a God who loves them and who cares for them. We do this by the way we befriend, encourage and take a genuine interest in each one of the young people that attend.

We care because God cares.

### **Holiday Club**

*(Jan Noble)*

After a break of a few years, EBC will again be staging a holiday club this summer. Using a Scripture Union programme, Waste Watchers, the theme of the week-long Club will focus on the environment and God's creation.

Few events in the life of a church require as much organisation or as many resources as a Holiday Club and EBC members have not been slow in coming forward. Many have committed their time to participate, while others will be providing back-up support and many more are collecting materials that will be required.

Between thirty five to fifty 5-11 year old children are expected to take part, divided into five groups. Each of the five half-day sessions will focus on a different part of the Waste Watches programme, which involves a wide range of elements, including drama, craft work and singing.

The Holiday Club is an opportunity for EBC to develop a relationship with parents, as well as children, and a key element will be a dedicated Sunday service to be staged at the end of the week-long event. It is hoped that many parents who do not normally consider coming to church will attend this service, in which their children will participate. A specialist guest speaker will provide added sparkle to the Sunday Service.

### **Outreach to schools**

*(Karen Oldfield)*

Within the Eastwood area there are 3 primary, 1 secondary and 1 special school. Links have been forged with 2 of the primary schools. One of the deacons is a senior teacher at one of these schools and at present access to assemblies has always been granted to EBC ministers. The schools have had opportunities to visit EBC as part of their RE curriculum studies.

## **Working with Parents and Toddlers**

### **Pinocchio Group**

*(Shelagh Turner)*

The group is open to all regardless of financial circumstances, race, religion or sex.

Pinocchio's is open every Monday and Friday mornings from 10.00am to 11.30am during school terms. At present this caters for 75 children and there is still a substantial waiting list.

Our aim is to provide a loving and caring environment for mums/dads/guardians and children from birth to school entry (4+) at a minimal cost. We like our children to learn how to socialize by learning through play and taking part in a varied programme of craft activities, singing and musical movement.

Parents are personally invited to our Church services. Mums are encouraged to come along to the Ladies Evenings. We try to promote the Friday club for siblings and our children

activities when they leave, so there is still a good communication between the families in the area and our church.

It is our prayer that through our work, parents may feel the love of Jesus within our group and will want to know more about him.

## Working with our Ladies Groups

### Women's Fellowship

*(Andrea Squire)*

Women's Fellowship is a devotional meeting held weekly each Monday afternoon. It has a membership of 32 ladies, almost all of pensionable age. We have a guest speaker each week from a variety of Christian organisations, different denomination churches, other Baptist churches and our own church. Together with women's groups in other Baptist churches in our locality we have an annual project, where we donate to a chosen charity.

### Ladies' Evenings

*(Jo Keeble)*

Aims:

- Our ladies evenings aim to bring ladies together to do what we do best – talk and eat chocolate! Our events have included “Choc & shop” evenings (local sellers were invited to come along – cards, hampers, make-up, beauty products, cakes Traidcraft chocolates) with Rev'd Sheila Martin giving a humorous & challenging epilogue.
- We held a Pamper evening with refreshments. This entailed various massages, relaxation techniques, Christian meditation & beauty products on sale.
- More recently we held a Swishing Evening (bring own item of clothing, exchange/swish for somebody else's). This event culminated with a singer & with gentle! persuasion we even managed a line-dance!
- We have a charity to support at each event. Over time we would like to present more information to the ladies about the work of Love Russia as we feel it is a charity they will empathise with.
- We do feel that these events are an opportunity for outreach & try to create a caring, warm & friendly atmosphere. We want to show that as Christian ladies ourselves, we also enjoy 'normal' activities!

Growth & Opportunities:

- Future ideas for events include a “Mamma Mia!” themed afternoon (family orientated) with popcorn!, a children's swish, pudding nite/lunch, a 'chick-flick'. More day-time events to include those who find it difficult to get to evening events &/or babysitters.
- On a number of occasions now, the idea of running a parenting course has been suggested. We are aware that friendship/relationships are very important in outreach – with a parenting course we hope to encourage the parents from Pinocchio's (toddler group) to attend.
- Involving other churches and combining our limited resources – we hope to get together (over coffee!) with other local Christian ladies & encourage each other and strengthen links between the churches on a more regular basis. (Mixed teams of helpers!) liaising/merging with ladies breakfasts for example to utilise our limited number of faithful volunteers!
- Last year a small group of us went up to Coventry for the Activate weekend. It was so encouraging to be amongst so many Christian women & to experience for ourselves a time of refreshing & empowering from the Holy Spirit.
- We want to be open to God's leading on this work & to acknowledge the opportunities that God will open up to us. We are looking for strategies/courses which will enable us to move forward in our evangelism to non-Christians, making our Church the focal point for the local community.

### **Ladies Breakfast Bar**

*(Peggy David)*

Four years ago three of us ladies attended a Breakfast Bar at a church in Thundersley several times and decided that it was the type of service that our own church needed and so asked permission from the diaconate to commence one. It is hard work as we try to prepare an healthy, super breakfast. We give each guest a corsage and we try to invite excellent speakers. After the talk we invite ladies, who feel a need, to stay for personal prayer or counselling.

We hold meetings bi-monthly. We advertise, and invite/notify many ladies personally. We make a charge of £4 to cover the costs, which vary considerably as sometimes we invite very well known people and professional people, who are born again Christians. Occasionally we've made it for men and ladies if we need extra charges to cover costs and the content is suitable.

Our attendance varies from about thirty five to over a hundred. Many of the ladies do not attend our church but it gives us an opportunity to tell them about the Lord and we have had conversions.

It is friendly and very informal so that if any lady has not attended church she will feel welcome and at home.

### **Working with other Churches in Eastwood & Southend**

#### **Local Cluster of Baptist Churches**

*(Gareth Evans)*

Eastwood Baptist Church is pleased to join with other Baptist Churches as part of a local Cluster. It is vehicle for our ministers to share support and ideas and for the churches to create stronger ties and to come together to share worship time. In addition to ourselves the churches in the cluster are:

**Leigh Road; West Leigh; Westcliff; Church From Scratch.**

We typically join together for evening services throughout the month of August, with one of the cluster hosting and leading one evening each. Other examples where we have recently joined together were Maundy Thursday and a visit of Baptist Union President.

#### **Churches Together In Eastwood**

*(Gareth Evans)*

In recent years we have sought to forge closer links with our neighbouring churches within the boundaries of Eastwood, to create opportunities to promote and advertise a single Christian witness within our community. Our neighbours are:

**St David (CoE); St Laurence (CoE); Eastwood Evangelical ('Leighfields'); and Eastwood United Reform Church**

In the last 12 months we have held:

- a joint Service in The Week of Prayer For Christian Unity (held annually); and
- a summer outdoor service followed by a barbeque in the green outside St Davids..

#### **Churches Together In Southend**

*(Maureen Cox)*

Churches Together in Southend developed from the Southend Council of Churches some years ago.

It has had a chequered history, mainly due to the range of Clergy and Ministers in post in the town, and the depth of their commitment to the concept of Churches cooperating whenever possible.

CTS were instrumental in setting up and supporting the Southend Night Shelter for the Homeless. Whilst many churches continue their support in cash or kind, the organisation is now part of services for the homeless including a Day Centre and managed by a registered Charity.

CTS were the umbrella organisation for a service to Asylum Seekers, working in partnership with Southend Council's Social Services Department, known as CART. This is an acronym for Churches and Refugees Together.

Five members of Eastwood Baptist Church worked as volunteers during the period when CART was functional. The service was closed in 2004 when Southend was no longer a dispersal area for asylum seekers.

Churches Together in Southend has been in decline for the last two years due to the Chairman, an Anglican vicar, being moved to a church in Harlow, and the recently appointed vice chairman, a Baptist Minister needing time to rekindle interest in CTS.

There are 40 churches from 14 denominations who are affiliated to CTS, but the attendance at meetings has been disappointing.

The CTS compiles a lists of most of the churches, chapels and other 'non denominational' groups, providing addresses and contact numbers in an annual Directory, which is distributed to all the member churches, the Southend Hospital and local funeral directors.

I have been a member of CTS since 1972, and had involvement with setting up the Night Shelter and CART. I have seen what Churches co-operating together can achieve when they have a shared vision. I hope to see CTS revive enthusiasm for joint working this year.

### Working with Residential Homes

#### Havengore

*(Rosie Midson)*

A small group of the fellowship provides a monthly worship outreach to the residents of Havengore house, a local home for the care of the elderly.

On the 3rd Sunday afternoon we spend a short time leading hymn singing, and offering prayer, a bible reading and a simple message to those residents who wish to participate.

We also ensure that each resident is given a personal card for their birthday.

Staff welcome us and occasionally join with us, always offering the encouragement that this service is appreciated and valued.

There are more such homes in the Eastwood locality where there is opportunity to support and share witness.

### Working within the Community

*(Roy Norton)*

The church archives show that the fellowship at Eastwood has always been willing to share the church buildings with the local community and it is interesting to note that with the shortage of buildings during and after World War 2 the old chapel building was used as a medical centre until a purpose built site was built. With the larger building now available this tradition of sharing has continued over the years until the present time.

Currently we are pleased that "Olive Tree" a Christian counselling centre uses several small rooms for their meetings with clients and "Jo Jingles" an educational music group for young children meets on a weekly basis with the child's parent in attendance. Both these organisations contribute to the running costs of the church whereas other, usually smaller, groups contribute according to their means.

These other groups have varied in their contribution to the community including two neighbourhood groups chaired by local police personnel similar to the "Neighbour Watch" initiatives. Two of our members are Authorised Persons for attendance at weddings but unfortunately there has been little demand for this service in recent years. It is always a welcome addition to our activities when the London City Mission or Little Havens Hospice uses our facilities as their venue. The excellent kitchen that adjoins the lower hall is a tempting attraction for children's birthday parties and if our own programme of events has a suitable gap in our timetable we try to accommodate them. During the last eight years we have become a recognised venue for parliamentary, borough and European Parliament elections which sees many local people crossing the threshold of the church.

Other occasions which bring local people into the premises have been flower festivals, a model railway exhibition in support of Tools With A Mission and demonstrations by local wood carvers.

We plan to continue assisting local community ventures by use of the buildings, avoiding the risk of crowding out our self-run meetings, with the intention of making opportunities for local people to sense the friendly and welcoming atmosphere of the church.

## Working with Missionary Organizations

### **Missionary Support**

*(Allan Cox)*

The overall aim of our Mission Support is to ensure that the church maintains a lively interest in mission at home and overseas. Historically we have given support to six missions which we give money to on a rota basis at our Communion Services.

The overall financial giving to Mission is very encouraging. At our last AGM 2009 it was announced that we gave approximately 19% of our money away

It has been our practice to invite representatives of our supported Missions to take Sunday Services so that education remains vital to our understanding and commitment.

It will remain our desire to maintain this work in the years to come by working alongside our minister and continuing to keep Mission high on our agenda.

I think that it needs to be said that some of our members give support to missions in a private capacity which only seeks to underline the heart that we have for the spread of the Gospel.

### **Tools With A Mission (TWAM)**

*(Ray Squire)*

Tools With A Mission is a nationwide Christian charity providing tools and medical equipment to needy people around the world. It started in a modest way at Belle Vue Baptist Church in Southend, and so Eastwood Baptist Church has had some connections since the late 1980's. In more recent years, our church's involvement has been increased. We have supported TWAM through sharing news and interest at the men's breakfast meetings, and by donating our harvest offering to the work. One of our members is a Director and several of the members offer loyal support by collecting and refurbishing tools and working on the haberdashery needs of the organisation.

### **Love Russia & Summer Camps**

*(Karen Oldfield/Jan Noble)*

One of the organisations with which EBC has a special relationship is Love Russia. Formed in 1993, the Isle of Wight-based charity supports 1,250 orphans in 20 different projects across Russia. A member of the UK Evangelical Alliance, Love Russia believes it is "the hands and feet of the gospel, living our faith while providing the necessities of life to the children."

Testimonies to the love and saving grace of Jesus are brought back from Russia each time Alex Cooke, who heads the organisation, returns from his regular 10-day monitoring visits to the country.

EBC supports the work of Love Russia, through regular giving, fund-raising activities and the direct involvement of members in Summer Camps run by the charity.

As part of the Church's support of Love Russia 3 church members have travelled to Russia to help run Summer Camps for the orphans supported by Love Russia. 3 members travelled to Yerlatma in 2007 and in 2008 one went back to Yerlatma and one went to Chapes. The Church supported the trips both financially and in prayer and presentations were given to the Church on their return.

### **BMS Birthday Scheme**

*(Dot Stevens)*

Currently there are twenty seven people who participate in the "Share a Smile" scheme. These folk use the occasion of their birthday to give a gift that is used towards the support of the BMS medical work around the world.

### **Home Mission**

*(Maureen Lazenby)*

Our church supports Home Mission both prayerfully and financially.

We would like to be more informed of Churches receiving Home Mission Grants in Essex, so that we can pray specifically for them. We hope this will be possible in the future.

## Special Occasions

### Flower Festival

*(Marguerite Russell)*

The first flower festival was held to celebrate the opening of our new building extension in 1993. The theme was the 'Seven Ages of Man'. This has been followed by more ambitious themes: 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' ; 'Jesus Said I Am'; 'Thank You God For Everything'; 'Reflections of The Bible'; 'One World, God's World'. The latter in 2007 incorporated Tools With A Mission (TWAM) and told the story of unwanted goods to us here that are able to help in underdeveloped countries. Most of the displays were arranged by Church members and friends. We were also able to enlist the services of a wood carver and a spinner and lace maker. Folks were able to enjoy lunches, cream teas and friendship.

### Harvest Festival

*(Sharon Watkins)*

We enjoy our yearly Harvest Festival celebration and think carefully how we will focus our thoughts in a relevant way each year. One person coordinates the project and we meet as a team to plan our response. We are adventurous and creative in our display work and aim to involve as many people in the preparation for the event as is practical. Individuals and groups work to create visual displays. For example all the Pinocchio children make an item that is displayed and they and their parents are then invited to the service. We keep the displays up during the week and the next time the group meets the parents are invited into the church to view the windows as we find most don't come to the service. This is an opportunity to pray for. Previously we have supported 'Send a Cow' and we all made cow style piggy banks collecting money that was brought to the Sunday service. We had a field in which the cows were placed. BMS ran an appeal to promote awareness of their work in Afghanistan. We made Kites and wrote prayers on them. TWAM provided an opportunity to bring a Harvest gift of surplus tools, sewing materials, books and all manner of items. The response was excellent making a very practical use of our celebration. We benefit from the variety and flexibility of this approach. Already plans are being formed for our centenary harvest celebration and we look forward to making this extra special.

### Christmas

*Gareth Evans)*

Christmas is a special time of year when we have been reasonably successful in inviting our community into our church to share with us.

On an annual basis we have participated in the Samaritans' Pursue 'Shoebbox Appeal' where we have combined resources with either a local school or St David's Church.

Our Young Church have an annual Christmas Party in the first weekend of December.

In the last two years we have held special themed services for young people which have shown the opportunities that exist for interacting within our younger community. In 2007 our 'Christmas Tree' service was a huge success when local schools participated with our church groups, with each decorating a Christmas Tree and attending a special service. The church was full with standing room only, even after providing additional seating. In 2008, following the then recent departure of our Minister, we held a more low key, but still successful, "Sing Like an Angel" service to support the Spurgeon's Children's Charity.

Our annual Carol Service continues to be well supported providing opportunities to reach fringe members of the church.

Our annual Christmas Eve 11pm service is led by members of the congregation and whilst it may only attract around 35 people, we always have visitors from the community who would not otherwise attend church.

### Social Events

*(Jo & Neil Keeble)*

Over the last few years, as a church family, we have held a number of social events. These have included:-

- *Formal dinner/Concert/Sale of Talents* We all dressed in black tie/glamorous dresses for a buffet style meal. We continued the evening with a few humorous skits from members and friends. The evening was rounded off with the sale of talents, where people offered their skills/specialities in an auction.

- *Let me Entertain You! - Talent show* We were able to persuade a number of Church members and friends to take part in showing off their dramatic, musical, comical skills. Fun was had by all. This was broken up with a fish & chip supper.
- *Gospel Magic Evening* Steve Price, a Christian Magician and Vice-President of the Fellowship of Christian Magicians UK (FCMUK) was invited to bring a message in a different intriguing way.
- *Party Games/Sing-a-long* We arranged an evening of 'potted-sports' where groups of people had to complete certain tasks/games within a short time frame. Pool, Dingbats, Putting, Pictionary & Jenga to name but a few. Again we had a fish & chip supper. We finished the evening in good party style with a hearty old-fashioned sing-a-long.

Within these events we have aimed to bring the church family closer together as we share in a time of fun & fellowship with each other. We have all gotten to know each other better, rather than just as familiar face on a Sunday.

These evenings have also shown where 'hidden' talents lie!

### **Church Outings**

*(Ray Squire)*

The Annual Church Outing has taken us to many varied & interesting places over the years. The event provides the opportunity for Church members and their families to enjoy fellowship and have a great day out. Last year we had a boat trip on the River Lee with lunch on board and a visit to Waltham Abbey. There was much to see as we strolled through the town and Abbey grounds on a beautiful day in September

### **Celebrating our Centenary**

*(Liz Reeve)*

The year 2011 will see us celebrating the anniversary of 100 years of worship here at Eastwood Baptist Church.

Plans are being made through a committee to hold several events, taking place at specific times throughout that year.

#### **January 1<sup>st</sup> Sat PM**

An inaugural dinner for adult church members with an after dinner guest.

#### **January 2<sup>nd</sup> Sun AM**

A Sunday morning worship service with a guest speaker.

#### **January 9<sup>th</sup> Sun AM**

A morning service to launch our centenary text (Isaiah 40 v 31):-

'Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall walk and not faint'

#### **February 13<sup>th</sup> Sun AM**

A morning service especially planned to invite people who married at our church and people who have been dedicated as children in past years.

#### **April 24<sup>th</sup> Easter Sunday**

We will be holding a pictorial revue of the last 100 years.

#### **May 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service**

The weekend will start with a Saturday evening social.

For the Sunday morning service it is hoped to have a representative from the Baptist Union as our guest speaker. Also a birthday cake is to be purchased for the Sunday service.

#### **August 22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>**

A children's Holiday club is being planned.

#### **October 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest Thanksgiving**

Sunday morning service with a guest speaker.

#### **November 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> Mission Exhibition Weekend**

Saturday to include displays of the various Missionary organisations that we support.

Sunday, both services with an invited guest speaker.

## **December 18<sup>th</sup> Christmas PM**

An Edwardian Christmas

### **King James Bible**

As 2011 is the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the King James Bible, we are hoping to include this fact and celebrate it sometime during our anniversary year.

### **Conclusion**

This then is a brief outline of our centenary year's celebrations where we hope that many members and friends of our church will become involved. In many ways the year is being looked upon as one of great enjoyment and celebration for ourselves, but it will also be an opportunity for outreach into the community as most of the events will be ones where folk of our district and beyond will be invited in to our church to share with us, and to see how as a church of God's people, we worship, and enjoy fellowship together.

## Communication

### Weekly Newsletter

*(Jan Noble)*

Good communication is essential and our weekly news-sheet plays a key role in the life of our church. Printed in several colours to improve impact the A4, 2-page news-sheet is distributed at both Sunday services. It is also available on the church website.

In addition to providing news about our church and its people, the publication also serves as a useful events diary, listing upcoming activities at EBC and in the wider community of God's people. One of the most important roles of the news-sheet is to serve as a weekly prayer guide, listing people and situations for which church members and guests are invited to pray.

### Bi-monthly magazine

*(Geoff Land)*

Eastwood Baptist Church NEWS provides information of the day to day events taking place in the church through the Diary Pages, Flower Rota and Birthday Scheme. It is also a vehicle for spreading the gospel through the Pastor's Letter, reports of events, articles and adverts of forthcoming events. To keep the mind active there is a puzzle page and various cartoons to stimulate the smile. Copies are posted to old members and friends who like to receive news of the fellowship.

### Web-site

*(Robin Oldfield)*

We have a website: [www.eastwoodbaptist.org.uk/web](http://www.eastwoodbaptist.org.uk/web)

On this site there are a number of articles about the Church, its people and its activities. The Church Calendar for the next two months can also be accessed. Sermons preached each Sunday are also uploaded to this site and so can be listened to again and again. Several links to other useful and friendly organizations are also available including BibleGateway.com where verses and phrases from the Bible can easily be found. There is a helpful page giving the Church postal address and access to the Google map of Eastwood.

The website is regularly updated and can be amended, added to and items deleted as required making it a relatively cheap yet very powerful and useful means of communication. A church member administers the site.

## **Where Are We?**

### Our Neighbourhood

*(source [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastwood,\\_Essex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastwood,_Essex))*

Eastwood is a town four miles west of Southend-on-Sea in Essex, England. It is a suburb of Southend and part of the Southend-on-Sea unitary district. Eastwood is sometimes called Eastwood Park, such as for local elections.

It is bordered by Rayleigh to the west, Rochford to the north-east, and Belfairs, part of Leigh-on-Sea, to the south. To the north lies Edwards Hall Park, a large area of open countryside, part of which is farmland. This green space extends all the way to Hockley Woods, and Hockley. There are also several swing parks throughout Eastwood.

Eastwood has good bus links to both Southend and the surrounding areas, with popular services including Arriva Southend's route 9 service, and First Essex's route 20 service. The nearby Southend Airport mainly operates charter and business flights, with the only regular air service being a scheduled flight to Jersey on summer Saturdays. However, the nearest railway stations are Rayleigh station and Rochford station on the Great Eastern Main Line with services to London Liverpool Street operated by National Express East Anglia, and Leigh-on-Sea station on the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway, with services to London Fenchurch Street operated by c2c. There are currently no buses connecting The north side of Eastwood (north of the A127) with south side and it's administrative town of Leigh-on-Sea.

It is a mainly residential area with housing and small clusters of independent local shops scattered throughout. There are several pubs and also a snooker club. Along Western Approaches there is a supermarket (Morrisons) a doctor's clinic (Scott Park Surgery) and a community centre. There is also a larger clinic at Kent Elms corner, with a pharmacy and library.

There is some light industry, mainly centred about the A127 dual carriageway and Progress Road industrial estate. A large number of car dealerships also lie along the A127.

Eastwood has many infant and junior schools. There is also one secondary school, Eastwood School, a mixed school with about 850 pupils (in 2004). Eastwood School is home to the Eastwood Studio Theatre, which puts on several theatrical productions, as well as other events such as battle of the bands.

Eastwood has its own small police station. It is open to the public every Thursday for "Community Surgery" whereby residents can raise any community issues they have. These sessions are hosted by Neighbourhood Specialist Officer PC Neil Gale, who has worked at the station about 5 years. The station has been useful to police in their struggle to reduce petty crime caused by some local teenagers.

According to figures from Southend Borough Council, Eastwood has only half the national average of people having degree level qualifications, but the number of home-owners is above average.

### **Local demographics**

A comprehensive view of the demographics of our community based on the census of 2001 may be found at the local authority website and specifically can be found at <http://www.southend.gov.uk/resources/EastwoodAreaProfile.pdf> .

## **How Are We Financed?**

*(Mike Reeve/Gwen Harper)*

The church is financed through the giving of the fellowship.

Our financial affairs are managed with the help of a Treasury Team consisting of:

- Cashiers who count and record the offerings at meetings
- Bankers who are called upon to make deposits at the bank
- Gift-Aid Secretary records all Gift-Aid donations and claims the Tax refund once a year.
- Assistant Treasurer helps the Treasurer
- Treasurer, is responsible to look after income and expenditure, pastor's stipend etc. and produces accounts, monthly for the deacons and quarterly for the Church Meeting.

Annual Accounts are audited by members appointed for the purpose by the Church.

Expenditure is decided by the Minister and Deacons with advice from the Treasurer. Larger expenditure is approved by the Church Meeting.

Our support of the denomination and other Christian organisations is either by a fixed sum standing order, by earmarked giving, special fund raising or through our communion offerings.

A Gift day once a year provides extra funds for projects either within the church or other organisations.

## **What are our Plans to Maintain and our Opportunities to Improve our Church Accommodation?**

*(Maureen Cox/David Flatman)*

We started to think about improvements to the building in November 2007. The minister, a group of three deacons, and a friend of the church who is a retired architect were appointed to give thought to how we could reduce our carbon footprint as well as improving our facilities for all the people who come into the church.

We spent time on our initial wish lists, then refined them into a preliminary plan divided into three stages.

The first stage included inspection and insulation of the chapel roof, replacing windows with double glazed units. The central heating boiler needed replacing, and possibly changes would be made to the warm air ducts which heated the chapel.

The second stage included replacing the two external entrance doors, changing the Crèche room into a coffee/tea bar, removing the glass partition in the vestibule. Mounting a new projector and improving the sound system.

The third stage was to convert the back rooms into one hall to provide better youth facilities, and storage facilities.

Unfortunately our minister resigned in September 2008 and the Building Group did not meet for some time. One of the deacons, made contact with two Consultants who gave us advice regarding the “greening” of our heating and lighting needs. They informed us of various grant making bodies that we could approach for financial help.

The Building Group visited three local churches who had done improvements, or were planning improvements to their premises, and were pleased to help us with their experiences, and names of useful contacts.

The group have had a preliminary meeting with one firm of Architects, and have two more meetings planned later in May.

It is probable that following the architects’ advice, a much more ambitious programme of building improvements would be desirable, but serious consideration will need to be given to fund raising, taking out loans, seeking grants etc. We will need to bear in mind the ability of our membership to bear the cost in view of the proportion of pensioners to wage earners in our Fellowship.

## **Where Do We Believe God Is Leading Us?**

*(Church Meeting)*

This is a challenging question, which as a church we have prayerfully considered. Our focus is very much in our journey rather than in our destination.

In both old and new testaments God’s faithful servants were given a clear call from God to move in obedience to unspecified places and situations. They were called to journey in faith, often not knowing where they were going. Their destinations were never made clear but their instruction for the journey left them in doubt as to what God wanted them to do.

It seems therefore that it is in obedience and faith that we are called to do what God is asking of us without necessarily knowing where that will lead.

As a church we were very much shocked when our two previous Pastors left due to personal reasons outside of their church lives. We found it challenging and difficult to understand God’s leading. However, we believe these events have made us stronger as a church.

As a church we want to focus on worship and outreach as well as remaining committed to “World Mission” and to ensure that we keep up to date with problems and challenges facing the world church.

As a church we believe we have two major concerns: the first is that while we have an active congregation it is ageing; and the second is that while we have been given significant opportunities with our young people (both in the church and on our fringes) due to current limited human resources we are unable to richly nurture and grow this potential. We have a history of nurturing young people who have grown into fruitful Christians but who have moved

away from the locality in their adult life. This has left us with a gap in our church family. In addressing those problems we see that we must seek to meet the needs of these age groups and at the same time find ways to bridge the gap between them. We are hoping our new minister, with God's leading, will be able to energise and focus our efforts, both visibly leading and being involved with us as we seek to enthusiastically address these challenges and opportunities.

We hope that our Parent & Toddler groups and Ladies events will continue to be a vein of opportunity and that we can develop closer relationships with the local schools. We would seek to be able to follow up and forge links with the families of the young people who attend our groups. We would desire to venture into new territory to attract younger men. Our building infrastructure and location offer significant potential for outreach to our community.

In recent years our nurturing groups have helped us cultivate the shoots of new growth in the church, although in very recent times we have sought to consolidate and feed existing people in the fellowship rather than embark on major outreach activity. With an active congregation keen to support our new minister we are now hopeful and confident that our time of consolidation will be over and that God will reveal to us further opportunity to increase our outreach and resource our numbers, so that our age profile may once again be one which is balanced across all generational groups.

So as a church we look forward for our continued journey, trusting in Christ alone. In our obedience and life together in Christ we shall be able to discern where God is leading us and be happy together to be there.