Secretary’s Report
Val Statt

Our motto text for 2018 was:

“Delight yourself in the LORD And He will give you the desires of your heart” Psalm 37 v4.

Our Minister Darren brought this to us on 7th January, 2018 and began our new year with a sermon on “Trusting God with Delight”. I would mention here that you can always go back and listen to sermons on our website.

During this year, we have been blessed with a Minister and family who have despite family health concerns, have carried on and led us diligently and lovingly throughout the year. Our creator God has upheld them and us through this season which is ongoing. Our trust is always in our Lord Jesus Christ. I remember too, when our Lord was with Darren when he was travelling to a meeting on the A130 and he shared with us on Sunday 28th January, that he was stuck in a slip road, waiting, when he heard from out of nowhere “I don’t want you hear Darren, Go home!”. He obeyed and on turning round, travelling past where he had been, an accident had occurred with a car crash. We serve a powerful God and Darren was thankful that night.

As we entered into a new month of February, on the 13th Shrove Tuesday, Melanie invited everyone to eat pancakes, and in doing so cooked over 100! We started the Lent season with a service on Ash Wednesday, 14th February. For our FISH groups we had a Lent programme called “Delight yourself in the Lord”. Looking at being changed and filled by the Holy Spirit.

On the Saturday, 24th February, we had a quiz that was arranged by Molly Pike and her school friends from Eastwood Academy, a very good evening as they raised money for MIND.

During the month of March, and I think we all remember the “Beast from the East” so very cold and snowy, but Melanie still was able to encourage all to have fun. We had Mothering Sunday on the 11th March and the ladies were given scented candles. The following Sunday the 18th March we had Neil Keeble lead our Parade Service including his amazing illusions. Seated quite near the front, I do not know how he does it!
Holy week began on Sunday March 25th with Palm Sunday, and Revd. Allan Cox was happy to return to the pulpit, we know that he loved to preach, and share his knowledge of the bible with us. This was followed by a week of reflections which Darren has provided us in previous years. Helping us to walk through the Holy week and the events that happened prior to Good Friday, when our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified and given a crown of thorns, then triumphant crowned King of Kings on Easter Day.

On Saturday, 31st March, we held a thought provoking evening called “Eastwood Calling” a gifted piece of work from Mike Mircic and Clive Lewis and others. You can read all about this in Mike’s report.

Our Easter Day celebrations started with a breakfast and we can thank Vinny for his fresh eggs from his hens! It was also a great idea that the Brigade painted stones and laid them around the Eastwood Area, these were to point people young and old to the Hope we have in Jesus and to make them smile. This initiative was very well received and many were found and posted on Facebook.

In May, we had a very important Royal Wedding, of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle and we had our own wedding party in the church on Saturday 19th where we had a bring and share lunch, with flags and bunting and really enjoyed seeing them get married. This included the American Pastor, Revd Michael Curry, who spoke for quite a while but with a lot of zeal for our Lord Jesus Christ.

On Sunday 20th May we had our Anniversary, of 107 years and we welcomed Revd Beth Powney, Regional Minister for EBA Northern Sector.

As we entered into June, and after 50 years of marriage, my dearest husband and brother to all of you unexpectedly went to be with our Lord on the 12th June. His thanksgiving service took place later in the month and many of our family and friends attended. Although a sad time, it was also a special service where so much was included to reflect the man Andy was. I would like to thank everyone for their support and love shown at that time and which continues. Special thanks to Darren and Melanie, who helped so much professionally and pastorally through this time of grief. I am so blessed to be part of EBC.

The eBand held their annual fundraiser on Saturday 16th June and was called “Reach for the stars” and the evening included songs from S-club 7 to The Kinks, and Frank Sinatra to Bruno Mars. We have a very talented group of musicians.
It was a time also to celebrate that Melanie Pike went another step on her journey on Ministry Recognition and spent time being interviewed by the Eastern Baptist Association. This was on the 21st June and she received their acceptance. Well done to Mel!

The weekend of 6th to 8th July, our young people went off to Solid camp and enjoyed another weekend of fun, camping, many outdoor activities and hearing more about Jesus. Meanwhile on Sunday 8th July, we were also blessed with the ministry of Mike Mircic, who is always ready to assist if he can. I would like to thank him for his commitment to EBC.

August was as always a time for many clubs and groups to stop, to recharge themselves ready for the autumn.

On our return in September, on the 16th September we had the launch of OCC Shoebox Appeal and we welcomed the Puppet Partners who helped us see the need in the world, with a colourful presentation. Our Harvest Supper on the 22nd was arranged by our Energise Team, and gave us a very large helping of a ploughman’s lunch followed by apple crumble and custard. It was delicious. Well done to them, we supported the BMS “Life’s First Cry” appeal for health care in the Middle East as well as tangible items for HARP.

It was sad that our regular monthly meetings at Havengore had to cease after 35 years. This outreach had been supported by Rosie Midson and Carol Land and other church members, but new management of the home had decided not to include this act of worship at this time.

Our next big church event was our Holiday Club in the October half term. It was named Eastwood Towers, and the church built an amazing castle, with Draw Bridge and Towers for each Team. More will be said in the individual account by Darren and Melanie, but as one being part of it, I loved every minute. Great community event which included a lot of happy children, this was followed by our Light Party for everyone on the 31st October. Letting all know that we represent the Light of the World. Jesus Christ our Lord.

I would think that you would all agree that our Brigade decorated our church superbly well, as we remembered the Centenary of the end of WW1 on the 11th November. Their display of the soldier with poppies and little crosses was brilliant. I liked the idea that they used one of the juniors to be the ‘model’. Well done to all those involved.

On the 17th November, we received back all the shoeboxes ready to be distributed and it was good to be advised that 91 had been collected.
The church then entered into our Advent Season, and took delivery of a Christmas tree in memory of Andy Statt, it was big and busy and was decorated with Stars which was the theme for Advent. It was very special to me to have one star with his picture on it. Thank you, Darren and Melanie.

Our Christmas services were well attended starting with our Dress Up for the Nativity Service in the morning and in the evening by Carols by Candlelight on the 23rd December. On Christmas Eve, we had a very busy day, where we met to make Christingles, a good team worked together to make 200, in record time, these were to be ready for the two packed Christingle services at 3pm and 5pm. The church was full, with around 170 for the 3pm and 150 for the 5pm. The costumes that Darren and Melanie wore were fantastic and Neil Keeble looked quite distinctive in his Christmas Suit, he helped out by creating, illusions. Melanie, also with the help of the young people painted ‘baby Jesus’ on stones and placed them around the Eastwood with a bible verse Isaiah 9:6 and a Merry Christmas wish. These were found and much loved, so much that more had to ‘hidden’ for children to find. Later that evening we also had our Late Night Service, because of the hour 11pm, it did not see a great many, but those that did come out to greet the Christmas Morning, heard about The Light of the World with reflections on the stars, and who put them there.

We reached Christmas Morning, the next day, and had a Celebration of Jesus birth.

Along with all the other events, which will be reported by the individuals that lead them I think we can say that we had a blessed year and full of hope for the coming year 2019.

Home Call:

Andy Statt had his home call on 12th June, and had been a church member since, 19th June, 2001. He was baptised by Darren on 28th November, 2011. His character was one of always willing to give a helping hand; if he could help he would, always with a cheery smile. He was always very supportive of all the initiatives that EBC undertook, especially, Party in the Park. He loved his fishing, and he taught his grandsons to fish and spent many hours with them. One thing he said when he was baptised “He spent many years trying to catch a Pike, he never did, but a Pike caught him”. God Bless Andy.
**Last words**

My report covers some of the highlights of the 2018 which I hope has been an aid to your memories.

I would like to thank the Diaconate of EBC for their faithful service and all the different roles they undertake and a special thank you to Debbie Peck our newest Deacon who has supported EBC in so many areas.

For everyone, who supports our church in whatever role they play a big thank you to you all.

For our Minister Darren and our Children and Young Families Worker, Melanie Pike who continues to give so much of them in leading our church, giving advice, leading us in the ways of our Lord Jesus Christ week by week.