



Oxford Baptist Church AGM Reports

2021.

Senior Pastor Report.

Out of all the years I've been in ministry I would rate this year as one of the best and one of the most difficult I can remember, full of challenges to overcome, some personal and some corporate. And yet there has been some of the biggest milestones occur this year that I will look back to in days to come to be reminded of God's love and faithfulness. At least we haven't had it as tough as the North Island though. Our lockdowns have been bearable. It has been the turmoil of the unknown and unexpected mandates that try to wedge out a division and take a toll if we're not careful. Talking through how we handle all this at our AGM will be very helpful for us all to get an understanding of where we are at as a church and to make a plan for how we fellowship together through this next phase of government mandates.

There are few things that collectively have made this a tough year. Watching the building project get held up with bureaucracy while costs escalate at a record-breaking rate, everything Covid, certain difficulties you watch people go through and can't help, and the resignation of a friend and colleague that we've worked alongside and benefited from as a church from 14 years of their ministry. That has been tough. But through it all GOD is still on The Throne. On the positive side however, watching people step into new roles and say yes as Holy Spirit leads is always a privilege to be a part of. Barbara Griffiths has very ably taken on the leadership role of Food Together and our Foodbank. Just as ably, Sarah Seitaridis has agreed to head up a team for our Tuesday community lunches and they have been sorely missed during covid. Likewise, Theresa has stepped into the Ignite leadership role, and I've only heard great things from parents. I wasn't aware of what was happening over lockdown, but Theresa and family were delivering activities to parents to help out families and resource them with Kingdom activities.

Jesse Moore and Esther Hodgson along with the worship team are moving to new levels and taking our young musicians with them. We love how the Holy Spirit is working through you guys and touching our hearts as we worship. Tony has faithfully been overseeing the new build and pushed it along, while also taking care of the Trusts and Church finances. We are forever grateful. And how good is it to see the build progressing? Hopefully the floor will be completed soon and you can take a walk over it one Sunday. Our intercessors and Sunday night prayer people have partitioned and fought the fight, as have many of you privately done so as well. Thank you for your corporate faithfulness and trust in Him.

Thank you also to our elders and Trust members and their families. Especially for all the unseen, long and sometimes arduous hours. Their friendship with GOD, their love for Him and His Church is a great support to us all. I can't unpack the challenges we are faced with here. But they, like the team above, have constantly been faced with difficult situations that calls for experienced and cool heads, wisdom and love, courage and patience, belief and action. Along with Iain and Beth, Joy and myself, we enjoy the benefits of working everyday with people we love and appreciate, watching them grow and expand the Kingdom. And then in the midst of everything to receive an Angelic visitation on the 1st of September this year caps it off for me.

Last year we were unanimous the way ahead was to build new facilities that would serve our fellowship and ministries 7 days a week. Nothing has changed. The government has not made fellowship easy in 2021, but God has a plan of His own, and I am confident He will see it through to fruition. He is good beyond belief. Thank you everyone. Your service, worship, fellowship, love for one another makes this a very special place on Earth, and I love being here together. It is a privilege to pastor here where everyone relies heavily on grace and faith in Jesus. Where brothers and sisters believe in His resurrection power. When Iain and I meet with other church pastors we love to share what God is doing in our midst. It is truly an honour to serve our GOD and walk this faith journey together.

Bless you all and have a well-earned Christmas break. See you at the AGM.

Greg Morris (pastor)

Associate Pastor Report.

I caught up this week with Miriam Atkinson (former pastor of Oxford Baptist). I gave Miriam a tour around the whole church to see all the changes through the Early Learning Centre and the church. I shared about how many of the community ministries have been relaunched with new leaders and resources. After reflecting on all the changes, she made the comment that what we are seeing is renewal over the whole church. It really struck me.

The word Joy had over the church from Song of Songs 2:11-13 sums it up.

¹¹ The season has changed,
the bondage of your barren winter has ended,
and the season of hiding is over and gone.
The rains have soaked the earth^[a]
¹² and left it bright with blossoming flowers.^[i]
The season for singing and pruning the vines has arrived.^[s]
I hear the cooing of doves in our land,^[t]
filling the air with songs to awaken you
and guide you forth.

¹³ Can you not discern this new day of destiny
breaking forth around you?
The early signs of my purposes and plans
are bursting forth.^[u]
The budding vines of new life
are now blooming everywhere.
The fragrance of their flowers whispers,
“There is change in the air.”
Arise, my love, my beautiful companion,
and run with me to the higher place.
For now is the time to arise and come away with me.

Looking back on this year, I think the word renewal really sums it up. God is renewing our facilities, renewing and refreshing leaders, renewing and refreshing our call and increasing the spiritual mantles we carry. This new season has budded, yet we have not seen the fruit of it yet, merely the blossoming. COVID has disrupted much and caused significant uncertainty but over the last few months we are seeing new people almost weekly. I find I have to make a concerted effort to stay focused on what the Holy Spirit is doing rather than be dragged into the fear and despondency that is permeating the world and media at present. It leaves you with a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness. I am not always successful in not falling into it, but you have to fight. It's incredible how God calls us to build when the world is moving in the opposite direction. We have seen people popping in, driving by slowly to look at what is going on.

A huge thankyou to our community ministry leaders Beth Froud (24-7) and Theresa Beard (Music & Movement) who have served for 5+ years and who continue to serve and the new leaders Sarah Seitaridis (IFG Adventure/Tuesday Lunches), Kyle Morris (ICONZ Adventure), Barbara Griffiths (Food Together/12 Baskets Food Bank) and Lynn Millett (Revival Store). To see so many new leaders picking up the baton during such a disruptive year is a testimony of their faith, heart and vision for reaching out to the community. I would also like to thank Samara Wyllie who has done an incredible job this year in the office along with picking up a lot of the organising and work behind the scenes for the youth group. Our youth leaders Samara, Beka, Quinn, Jordan and Yoachim have been amazing serving weekly sowing into our youth throughout this difficult year. A couple of highlights have been the youth band who have played regularly throughout winter led by Beka, along with

the bible study group for the girls led by Samara. Both Greg and I have enjoyed sneaking in and grabbing some of the afternoon goodies on offer and chatting with the youth as they hang out and dig into the Bible on Wednesday's!

Finally, its such an honour and also a lot of fun working closely with Greg and Joy throughout the year. So many churches are struggling, while here at Oxford Baptist, I feel like we are just starting to hit our straps. There are many things we can do and improve on, which I am sure we will do in due course as the build is completed mid next year and we continue to see the new season take shape. Looking forward to 2022 and what is in store.

Iain Froud, Associate Pastor.

Worship Leaders Report

We have been very blessed with not only a fantastic team of talented musicians and singers to serve with each week, we also feel equally blessed by you, our church family, who have supported and encouraged us (Jesse and I) as we have stepped into this new co-led role.

God has been very good in this last couple of years of ups and downs. While we have said goodbye this year to several long serving members of our team, Andy on the sound desk and Liz and Caleb on the computer team, we have also seen growth with Nathaniel and Tyler joining the computer team and Ariana, Hannah and Erin from the youth band joining us as part of the Sunday worship team; We both started out our worship band journeys through playing and leading in youth bands so it is super encouraging and exciting to see the next generation coming through in both quantity and quality.

Jesse Moore & Esther Hodgson.

Ignite Report

It has been an amazing year with the kids! It's so wonderful to see the kids connect with the heart of God. I have realized this year that God likes to use all the things that I think are insignificant and not important. He uses them to teach us that with

Him nothing is wasted. When things turn out different to what we expected God is still there too, working for our good.

We have started the year by looking at what worship really looks like. It is far more than just the songs we sing at church; it is our whole lifestyle. We looked at the tabernacle of Moses and what that teaches us about worship. Everything about the tabernacle was designed to show us who Jesus is. I have heard someone say the Old Testament is Jesus concealed and the New Testament is Jesus revealed.

After the Tabernacle, we looked at the book of Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the wall. We had loads of fun building Tabernacles just like they did in the days of Nehemiah to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. We made musical instruments to celebrate and dedicate our lives to God.

In the last term I felt it was important for me to remember who Jesus is and turn my eyes back on Him that is why I decided to look at the miracles and ministry of Jesus. These include Lazarus, Jesus Heals the Blind Man, The Woman with the Flow of blood and Jairus daughter, Jesus Calms the Storm, Jesus Feeds 5000, Miraculous Catch of Fish, Jesus Heals the Man at the Pool of Bethesda and Jesus the Good Shepherd.

We are going to end the year with a wedding feast Christmas party.

Next year I am planning to start with Psalm 23 and the life of David. I am looking forward to what God is going to do with us all. My prayer and hope for the future is that children's church would be in unity with the rest of the church. I want each child that comes to be united with the Holy Spirit and experience His goodness for themselves, to taste and see that the Lord is good!

I would like to thank everyone who has come out to help or who has prepared things behind the scenes. I would especially like to thank Hannes as he is my greatest support and listens to all my complaining.

Blessings,

Theresa

**Chairpersons Report – Oxford Community Families Trust &
Oxford Community Trust**

Oxford Community Families Trust

The arrival of Covid-19 to New Zealand brought significant change to our ministries. At the end of 2020 a number of ministries had pushed pause or wound up, but for a large part of the year all the others had to do the same. Term 4 saw Music and Movement and ICONZ Adventure start up, but it wasn't until 2021 that IFG started up again with new leaders and fresh vision.

It has been a challenging period, and one that looks to continue. None of us know when life will settle back into a stable rhythm. I acknowledge and thank all our ministry leaders, volunteers and trustees for their continued commitment over this trying time.

The Oxford Children's Trust

What a huge year of change there has been at OELC. When Charlene started the new role of Centre Director early 2021, none of us knew the full extent of the challenges and changes that were ahead. Undertaking an ERO review in the first month of a new role was not the start we were hoping for, however Charlene and the teachers worked together so well and were able to secure a fair and encouraging result, providing clear direction to build upon.

We have seen major changes to the physical building, upgrades to the reception area, office space, painting throughout, upgrades to the flooring and facilities in the 2/3 bathroom, new curtains, toys, furnishings. Hardware and software upgrades of computers, telephones and administration systems. The feedback on the changes from so many has been overwhelmingly positive and I am delighted with the modern, homely and welcoming feel that greets all who come to OELC.

Well done Charlene, you have taken on so much more than anyone expected and have excelled. You are leading and shaping OELC in such a positive way and I am so grateful for all that you bring to the centre. I pray that next year will see us continue to bring positive change, to ensure that our centre is all it can be, but maybe at a more leisurely pace.

I would like to take the opportunity to commend the OELC teachers and staff on the way in which they have embraced all the changes of the past year. I fully acknowledge that for many change is not easy, especially when you come accustomed to the way things are. They have all stepped into the new in such a positive way, it is a credit to them all.

I also want to acknowledge the way in which the Trustees have stepped into their new roles and responsibilities. As a team I think we have all moved up into the level of professionalism that is required for a trust operating in 2021.

Looking ahead I can see that succession planning is something that we need to be mindful of. We need to make sure that a high level of governance commitment is nurtured beyond the current trustees, ensuring a strong future for all OELC children and families.

I hope you all have a well deserved Christmas break with family and friends.

Sonya Sillars

Trust Chair