



SENIOR PASTORS REPORT

2021 was not the year we hoped for. This time last year I was writing to you about the year of 'Reset', anticipating a solid year of rebuilding and pursuing our mission and vision with newfound gusto. Instead, we are again looking with hope to a new year and an even greater task to build again – only with perhaps even more insight and conviction around what exactly we are to build.

This year has been skewed by its second half which for all of us was a new level of change and limitation to anything we experienced in 2020. During the first lockdown GRLC still carried on in many respects and while we pivoted to several on line spaces, there was far more mobility to be enjoyed. But this year, 90% of our church was in a LGA of concern so our lockdown was next level. Kids Games was again cancelled, pastoral visits and ministries ceased, everything was strictly on line and the office all but empty for 3-4 months. We saved on electricity!

There is still much to be thankful for this year...

- Small group leaders who have consistently gathered and supported their groups through the difficult months of lockdown. Our 31 small groups have been a vitally important lifeline this year to the life of GRLC. Attendance at groups was the highest we've seen and we were encouraged by the willingness of so many to stay connected to each other. We were so thankful to see 4 new groups start during lockdown and at least 4 community connections from Life Care connect into groups.
- Our Chipping Norton team has remained constantly adaptive amid change and relentlessly committed to one another. See Ben's report.
- Our Life Care team showed their dogged commitment to serving the last and the least and the way they invite our church into the work of the gospel. See Glenn's report.
- Our youth and kids teams championed the discipleship of families and helping young people stay connected to God and one another. They worked hard in the online space and found creative ways to engage our kids.
- Our staff have soldiered on behind the scenes, adapting most of their work practices to do whatever they could to hold GRLC together. I often say that our church observes just a fraction of what our staff and key leaders actually do and I'm forever thankful for that which goes unseen by most.

The GRLC Church app was completed and launched in March creating a single source location for all GRLC information and resources. Renata Freitas also joined the team as WHS and Administration Officer in July, and we have improved our processes to ensure our volunteers are Safe Church compliant prior to serving.

The impact of covid was exacerbated by changed gathering rhythms and times this year. And in a year where society was already polarising, I recognise that some of our choices as a church leadership have also been to varying degrees polarising too. Leading us forward is certainly complex. But we must move forward together under the guidance and power of the Spirit and our prayer is that 2022 will be a year of unity, discipleship growth and many coming to know and share in the good news of Jesus.

Our Church Leadership Team under the guidance of Braddon Wheeler has been a tremendous strength to our team and the whole church this year. We are very thankful for the sacrificial, wise and godly leadership shown by our CLT, especially in the present season.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Suzanne Sharp for her many years of service to GRLC on staff. As Suzanne retires from formal work, we wish her a very happy new season that will be equally purposeful and fruitful in the kingdom.

With much affection and anticipation of the year ahead.

Scott Morrison
Snr Pastor GRLC



CHIPPING NORTON REPORT

2021 has been another challenging year of navigating lockdowns, adapting to Covid restrictions, and establishing a new site during a pandemic. However, in the midst of this, we are approaching the end of the year with a great hope, and our site is healthy, on mission and increasingly connected to our CN community.

Our priorities as a site throughout 2021 have continued to be threefold:

1. Building a presence in the CN community
2. Cultivating intentional spiritual relationships
3. Establishing CN River Kids, Life Care and discipleship rhythms

Lessons in Lockdown

God has really highlighted for us the need to grow in discipleship that is intentional, communal, practical and missional, in order to be a disciple making community during lockdown and the pandemic. While we acknowledge that lockdown affected us all differently, many of us have expressed that God has been teaching us as individuals and families through the slower and simpler lifestyle that lockdown forced us into. We have learned that discipleship is not dependent on busyness, events, and programs, but flourishes in the context of daily discipline, commitment to others and a heart for the lost.

Out of this, we are learning to reorient our lives around those who do not yet know Jesus. We are increasingly convicted that making disciples is our core business and can only be done through strong relationships that demonstrate Jesus' love and are empowered by the Spirit in our lives. In this way, our discipleship and our disciple-making are completely entwined together. And we are excited to celebrate the first fruits of this learning as we celebrate new relationships that have been formed over the year, as well as clear signs that our culture is shifting to embrace these lessons. We believe the best is yet to come, and trust that this will continue to grow deeper, as the Holy Spirit continues to form us into disciple-makers in 2022.

Chipping Norton River Kids

Throughout 2021 we have prioritised the discipleship of our children and practiced new ways of family discipleship and intergenerational approaches to discipleship under the leadership of Ellen Tyrell. While this has been challenging and required much flexibility and planning, Ellen has done some great work in building and maintaining a sense of community among our River Kids during the year. We look forward to moving forward together into some great kids and family intentional rhythms in 2022.

Life Care & Building a Presence in the Community

Due to the close ongoing partnership between Life Care and Life Church, 2021 has seen us make great progress in becoming a recognisable presence in the CN community and feeling like an integral part of the neighbourhood. In Chipping Norton, Warwick Farm, Moorebank, and Wattle Grove, we are becoming known in many schools, community services and homes – with one of the local school principals calling us “kind, supportive and lovely”. Life Care has mobilised our site into practical ways of loving and supporting our community, committed always to both loving without strings and a

desire to make disciples. With regularly loving over 60 families this year we anticipate that this will only continue to grow and flourish in 2022.

Discipleship Rhythms

Gatherings have continued to flourish during 2021, and we particularly enjoyed meeting face to face in the first half of the year, utilising parks and community centres before finding a free longer term venue through our relationship with Moorebank High. During lockdown we quickly pivoted to online gatherings, using zoom and breakout rooms to attempt to maintain some community and interactivity throughout the long lockdown.

Once again, small groups have played a crucial role in maintaining discipleship and fostering connection during lockdown. We are very thankful to all of our brilliant small group leaders who have worked tirelessly to this end, keeping us connected, collaborating and convicted in our discipleship.

We have continued to focus on establishing ISRs as a core component of a disciple-making culture. We have found the process to be slow, but critical to growing as disciples together. We continue to see its importance and celebrate the deepening accountability and support for our individual daily discipleship.

We credit much of our health, success and fruitfulness to all of us at Georges River Life Church. Being a people of prayer and one church in two sites has empowered us at CN to be focussed on discipleship, a gift that is worth honouring. So to all the people of GRLC, we celebrate together another wonderful year in Chipping Norton and look eagerly to 2022 as a year of fruitfulness and multiplication.

Ben Rusin
Chipping Norton Site Pastor



CLT REPORT

Thank you for taking the time to read our Annual Report. The last year has been another one of great disruption caused by the impact of COVID-19 both to personal and church routines. We recognise that this has all affected us in different and in some cases profound ways. Within the church, the implementation of a fortnightly church rhythm arising from our collective decision to pursue intentional discipleship, has also been felt. As with any significant change, this has proven to have both positive and negative outcomes for church partners. As a CLT, we acknowledge the need to hold lightly to the form and to amend as required, to continue to care for individuals' circumstances while exploring how best to live out our Vision and Mission.

The CLT has been humbled by the continued dedication and adaptability of the staff and volunteers who serve us all so well. We have been impressed by the resilience of the congregation to press through challenges to serve God and the work of His kingdom. In the midst of the all the turmoil the team at Chipping Norton has established themselves as a team within their community, meeting regularly both in Life Groups and services at the Moorebank High School or online. Despite it all, we have largely been able to stay connected and continued to reach and serve people, both inside and outside the church community through new ways in Peakhurst such as the prayer services and community connection times with Life Care, while at Chipping Norton they have connected with schools and those in the community needing assistance and social connection through providing Life Care hampers.

The year has been challenging financially, with continued pressure on income in offerings and rents, requiring us to vary the budget mid-way through the year. We have been fortunate to receive government assistance through Job Keeper which has allowed us to reach the end of the year with a manageable deficit. We approach the new year with considerable financial uncertainty and the resourcing of the church mission requires our ongoing prayer and financial commitment.

As discussed at the last ACM, there was a significant change in our governance processes to meet the regulatory requirements to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable people. The new arrangements have placed a large, ongoing burden on the church with mandatory documentation and information requirements placed on recruiting, employing and training all church workers and volunteers. After a great deal of work, we are pleased to confirm this has now been embedded in our processes. These processes were tested this year to manage a complex complaint which required external investigation. Although that matter is now closed, it highlighted the significant workload in ensuring that our legal, moral and pastoral obligations are all met.

This year the CLT had seven members in the team: Scott Morrison, Braddon Wheeler, Sarah Gray, Peter Fazio, Adna Siqueria, Winnie Chow and David Seeto. At this ACM we farewell Sarah, who has completed 3 years of service in the CLT. Sarah has made an enormous contribution and we have greatly appreciated her godly and considerate input, as well as her love for God's people. We have been very fortunate to have had Sarah serving in CLT and her input and fellowship will be greatly missed.

Finally, the CLT would like to pass on our thanks to God who has, through His graciousness and love, allowed us to share in His Kingdom's work here along the Georges River. We delight in seeing our brothers and sisters in Christ live out their discipleship journey and are very thankful for all the people in both our Peakhurst and Chipping Norton sites.

Grace and Peace.



GEORGES RIVER
LIFE CHURCH

LIFE CARE REPORT

We've had another challenging year managing services in the midst of lockdowns and restrictions but have much to celebrate.

ArtsLife, Legal Clinic, Parenting Courses and Autism Support all continued throughout the Covid Lockdown via zoom with great success. Our Case Management and Emergency Relief continued in a combination of face to face and online formats.

We have a sensational bunch of staff and volunteers! The team grew in 2021 with Naomi Zrno commencing 2 days as a case worker and Renata Freitas employed to assist with admin. We have had a healthy number of new volunteers join the team this year in various roles.

Demand for food hampers increased from 40 per week last year to up to 100 per week this year, with 30 hampers a fortnight also being delivered in and around Chippy by the site team in partnership with Liverpool Council. All models of hamper distribution have been designed around building and developing relationships.

In May we commenced Community Connections on Sunday every fortnight with fantastic success (until lockdown). The program included children's activities (supervised by Sophie and Taryn), food hamper distribution and coffee and morning tea for the adults. The Sunday option provided great opportunity for many more children and adult volunteers from Church to get involved in these amazing events and build relationships with our wonderful community contacts. This was a wonderful way for individuals and families to practice their discipleship.

During the lockdown we had 4 people join small groups who are contacts from our community connections.

Glenn Power
Life Care CEO