

# Salem Baptist Church

## Annual Report 2024

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## Contents

- P1 Title
- P2 Contents
- P3 From the Minister
- P5 Vision Statement
- P6 Safeguarding
- P8 From the Diaconate
- P10 Ministry Assistant's Annual Report
- P11 Governance
- P12 Youtube Streaming
- P12 Tech Desk
- P13 Sunday Morning Refreshments
- P14 Junior Church Report
- P16 Tots @ Salem
- P17 Uniformed Organisations:
  - P16 Rainbows
  - P17 Brownies
  - P19 Guides
- P22 The Hub
- P22 Come and Join Us
- P23 Sunday Evening Group
- P24 Christian Aid
- P25 Salem Ramblers
- P26 Finance
- P27 Addendum: Community Involvement and Mission Partners

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## From the Minister

In the early 20th century, the atheist philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche wrote in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

"The essential thing in 'heaven and earth' is that there should be long obedience in the same direction; there thereby results, and has always resulted in the long run, something which has made life worth living."

The Christian pastor and writer Eugene Peterson later took this phrase "a long obedience in the same direction" as the title of one of his books, which explores what he calls *Discipleship in an Instant Society*. Peterson uses this phrase to express the idea that discipleship is a lifelong pilgrimage—a journey with no shortcuts, requiring steadfast commitment and perseverance.

The report that follows offers a snapshot of our life together in 2024. It reflects moments of joy and celebration—welcoming new life and new members—alongside times of sadness. Yet, through it all, we remain privileged as a community to "mourn with those who mourn." Two events from this year stand out for me personally:

- **The Conclusion of Andrew's Service as Secretary:** 2024 marked the end of Andrew's tenure as Secretary. Beyond his faithful service in this role, Andrew has been a true brother in Christ to me and my family—offering support in times of celebration and in moments of deep pain. I thank God for Andrew and express my gratitude for his willingness to take on the often unseen and un-thanked work of being a Baptist Church Secretary. Thank you, Andrew, and may God bless you in the future.
- **My Delayed Sabbatical:** The final four months of 2024 allowed me to step away from my regular ministry at Salem, partly for rest and refreshment but primarily to complete a project on the Book of Hebrews. I recognize the privilege of having this time for sabbatical, and I am deeply grateful to Salem for making it possible. I especially want to thank those who stepped in to cover my absence, particularly Helen A, our Ministry Assistant, alongside the excellent Salem leadership team—thank you all.

However, alongside these highlights, as I reflect on the year and read through this report, what strikes me most is how we have embodied the very idea of continued obedience in the same direction. We began, as we have for many years, with our Epiphany service, chalking the door. We celebrated another Church anniversary. Week after week, we gathered to study God's Word and worship the God of the Word. We've broken bread together, both formally in our communion services and informally over church lunches, teas, and BBQs. We marked special days and seasons together. We prayed and we wept

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together. We gave lifts, served tea and coffee, and supported one another in countless ways. We have loved God, loved one another, and loved God's world in a variety of ways—some recorded in this report, others unnoticed yet no less meaningful.

Every act of service—whether remembered or forgotten—contributes to our "long obedience in the same direction." I am thankful for the Salem community and for the many highlights captured in this report. But more than anything, I am grateful for another year of walking this journey of faith alongside you. We are now a day's march closer to home. As you read this report, I encourage you to reflect on the path we have travelled together over the past year, giving thanks for the community we are blessed to journey with and for the faithfulness of the God who walks ahead of us, with us, and behind us.

**In His Name,  
Pastor Andy**

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## Our Vision Statement

### **SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH**

#### **:: making missionary disciples of Jesus ::**

*Mt 28:19 ... go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*

#### **:: who love God ::**

*Deut 6:5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

#### **:: who love one another ::**

*John 13:34 'A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'*

#### **:: love God's world ::**

*Gen 3:15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*

*Lev 19:18 ... love your neighbour as yourself ...*

*Jer 29:7 ... seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper*

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***making missionary disciples of Jesus who***  
***:: love God :: love one another:: love God's world ::***  
***>> by explaining the truth of Jesus Christ***

*Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*

*1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect*

*>> By encouraging one another to be Spirit filled disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ*

*1Thess 5:11 ... encourage one another and build each other up ...*

*Heb 10:24-25 let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds*

*>> By equipping and enabling one another to witness, in word and deed, to the Lord Jesus Christ*

*Rom 12:6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.*

*Eph 4:11-12 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up*

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## **Safeguarding Statement**

As members of Salem, we commit ourselves to the safeguarding of all, (children, young people and vulnerable adults).

It is the responsibility of each one of us to seek to prevent the abuse of anyone, and to report any abuse that is discovered.

We recognise that as a church our programmes of outreach and evangelism are an important part of Salem's work and therefore, we commit ourselves to pray regularly for all those directly involved.

We recognise that this work is the responsibility of the whole church.

We undertake to exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working in these areas, whether paid or volunteer.

The church is committed to supporting, resourcing, training and supervising those who carry out this work.

The church is committed to following the relevant official guidance from the Home Office and any relevant guidance from the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Each worker must follow the current safeguarding policy and procedures as laid out. Salem has appointed Ann B and James G as the Designated Person (team of 2) to whom any specific concerns must be addressed.

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## From the Diaconate

The deacons continue to meet together on a monthly basis on the 4th Wednesday. It is good to come together to discuss church business, but when we meet, we also make time to hear what has been going on in our lives, how the day has been, and this gives us a basis for understanding each other and how we are feeling coming into the meeting.

The agenda is always full, but we have now adopted an approach of using a Google sheet to populate with items between meetings, then, when we come together, some items have already been cleared, and this gives us more space to discuss key points.

We have continued to engage with the Re:Imagine process, meeting again with other churches from our region in April and September, and with Alisdair Longwill, our regional minister, in between times.

In March, at the AGM, Andrew stepped down as Church Secretary after faithfully serving in this position for over 15 years. We acknowledged the positive impact he had had on life at Salem and wish him well in his 'retirement'. We welcomed Jayne onto the diaconate, serving her first term; and Georgina came back onto the diaconate, having taken a break. Helen L became Church Secretary and Marion Assistant Secretary.

We celebrated the birth of Maria, to Tom and Ellen in March and Ennio to Antonio and Trix in May. Henry and Becky brought Olivia and Emily forward for dedication in May.

We mourned with the family of Brian in July, who had been a member for 25 years.

We welcomed into membership Héloïse in January, and Krisztina in August.

Helen A continued to be active in her role as ministry assistant, preaching on a regular basis and supporting many aspects of church life, including running the Tots group, Thursday morning prayers and often the Sunday evening discussion group.

In September, Andy took a 4-month break for study leave and a sabbatical. We were pleased to be able to allow him this time to finish his studies and take time out for refreshment too.

Helen stepped into many of the Sunday preaching slots, and it also gave us an opportunity to hear from a variety of visiting ministers. We are grateful to all those who came to us from other churches, and also to those within our own community who took the opportunity to lead and preach. Salem benefitted from the variety for this period.



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During the year there have been a number of different groups set up: the Thursday prayer meeting; 1st Wednesday discussion group; Sunday evening discussion based around the morning teaching; Naomi's pop-up Bible study and T in the Church.

It has also been good to share food and fun alongside supporting each other in our Christian journey.

We are grateful for all those who help make Salem the vibrant community that it is. We are always pleased to welcome new folk into our midst and to share God's word with them.

I recommend this report to you, it gives a snapshot of life at Salem and we are pleased that you are part of it.

**With every blessing**

**Helen L and the Diaconate team**

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## Ministry Assistant's Annual Report

What a busy year it has been, with so many fantastic opportunities. I have had lots of opportunities to minister, lead and preach, as well as continuing my studies at Bristol Baptist College. Andy and I took the opportunity to jointly lead a number of services, particularly during Holy Week. My main preaching series focussed on the first few chapters of 1 Peter in our Sunday morning meetings.

I have been making an effort to get to know some Salem folk a little better by inviting myself for coffee, and attending the Hub when I was able to. In the summer, Simon and I had our first experience of the Keswick Convention, which was a great opportunity to experience wonderful worship with 3000 other followers of Christ, and benefit from some first class teaching. I also came home with quite a large number of books!

Things got very busy in September, because I was part of the Student Exec for the college, and had the privilege of helping with welcome week and interviewing for new college staff. At the same time Andy took his much delayed sabbatical, leaving me opportunities that I had not had before.

I led a number of class assemblies at Gloucester Road Primary School, had the whole of KS2 here at Salem for a Harvest Festival Service, and threw a very impromptu service for a few residents of Sandfields Care Home when they came to bring some goods for our harvest collection, (Thank you Linda, for being roped into playing 'We plough the fields and scatter', with no warning!)

I also led my first Parade service, and a Remembrance service on the 11th of the 11th at Sandfields. For Advent, we used the 'Down to Earth' material provided by LICC, which was my first experience of using somebody else's sermon plan and provided valuable insight. Both of our Carol services were well attended, with friends from Jenner Court joining us around the firepit.

I also took the opportunity to visit Leckhampton Baptist Church, and preach there, to get a fresh perspective on my own practice and how things work at Salem, and I finished the year by taking the Crib and Christmas Day services, another first.

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One of the delights of the year was to work alongside and encourage some of our folk to step up and have a go at leading worship and getting involved in the services, and this is something I would really love to see continue in 2025. I have also been working alongside Paul, explaining the mysteries of the Church account spreadsheet, leading the Tots@Salem group, engaging with the Sunday evening group, leading the first Wednesday discussions during the Autumn, representing Salem at the WebNet AGM, and visiting as many people as I could. Oh, and writing the odd essay here and there!

Thank you Salem - I couldn't have done any of this without the support, prayers and encouragement of all of you, the leadership team and my own family, and I am humbled and amazed at the way God has shown how he can use me in every situation and opportunity he has provided. What's next, I wonder?

**Helen Alderton**

**Ministry Assistant**

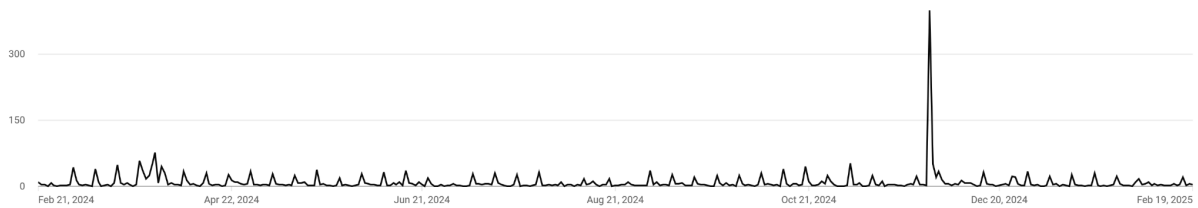
## **Governance**

Salem has a strong governance structure and processes in place, where policies are reviewed, enhanced and executed adequately and reasonably. All activities are risk assessed and covered by a valid public liability insurance. Safeguarding and Health & Safety policies and practices are regularly reviewed, observed and practiced. Incidents, while very rare, are reviewed as learning opportunities. Due diligence and duty of care are observed both in caring for the people and caring for the building, but also in financial practices.

**Marion**

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## Youtube streaming



This chart shows the number of different viewers on each day in the last year...

As you might expect, Sunday is busy with people joining the live stream, but there are people using our content throughout the week.

Once again, the guided prayer reflection “Praying with a marble or hazelnut and Julian of Norwich” video, is still being watched this year 637 times (and over 300 of them make the big spike on the 28th of November, mostly from the US and Canada) - if anyone has any theories what happened that day I’d love to know. However it does serve as a reminder that these videos are available for a long time, and that people are finding and using them.

This year the total number of views was slightly up at 3106, while it’s not about the numbers, and there’s a lot of nuance in these figures, they do represent an impact that we’re having in the wider world.

## Tech Desk

We remain steady at 6 volunteers, manning the desk in pairs on a three weekly rota with one working sound and the other focussing on the visuals in the service and the stream.

James, Fiona and Abigail work wonders on the sound, which isn't as easy as would appear, as it needs to be balanced both in the sanctuary and on the stream.

The two Chrises and Simon are responsible for the visual side of things, which has changed significantly over the past year. We have had several updates to software and hardware to make things a lot easier and smoother to produce, as well as investing in new microphones to improve the audio quality.

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As ever, there is still a lot to do in terms of upgrading the equipment we have, and I would like to extend our thanks to Chris Major at this point for his constant, tireless work to improve our system. We are also looking to increase the number of people on the rotas and would welcome interested people coming up for a chat after the service to see what we do.

**Chris C**

## **Sunday Morning Refreshments**

Salem's Coffee is served by five weekly teams at present, and we are all very grateful for the warm welcome they offer as well as the warm coffee.

Our tea, coffee and sugar is all ethically traded, and helps make our fellowship time very pleasant.

If you would like to get involved, serving at the hatch is a great way to get to know people, and play a part in our community, and there's always space for more willing hands. We'd love you to join us.

**Simon**

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## Junior Church Report

We meet in the back hall each week during morning service. We have around 25 enthusiastic children on roll and a team of regular staff supplemented by adult helpers from within our community.

Georgina developed a teaching plan, building on the work of last year, where we looked at the books of the Bible. She grouped the books and key characters together into themes: Introduction: Bible = library; First 5 books, 'From Creation to Law'; In the land; Anointing a king; Exile; Looking for wisdom; We need a saviour! and Promises that a saviour will come.

We then moved into the New Testament, and explored how Jesus was like some of the Old Testament prophets. Also looking at the letters and finishing up in Revelation! The children are always amazing as we tackle some of the big questions within the Bible and wow us with how they link ideas together.

Craft and games are always big hits with the group, and they have really come together as a group to enjoy each other's company. It is always great to see how the older ones help to support the younger ones and the trust and friendships that develop from their time together.

The leaders took time off again in the Summer and the children worked well at the back of the sanctuary, drawing, colouring and quizzing quietly whilst the service continued around them.

In September, we reassessed where we were, and the workload involved in planning and preparing for all the sessions. We were grateful that Héloïse came onboard, and we met to review the programme. We bought in a scheme of work: All in One Sunday School and were grateful that Bennington Hall Trust Fund paid for this resource. It is a quality Bible based teaching programme, which provides all the activities, games and ideas for each session, cutting the workload considerably.

From September to Christmas the topics continued to be Bible based and moved through parts of the Bible linking their relevance to today's world and the situations children find themselves in.

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As ever, Christmas and the Nativity were the usual stressful time! Much as we love it, it has to be acknowledged how hard it is to rehearse when you have different children each week and a Christmas lunch in the midst of rehearsals which means that we lose the use of the hall. However, the children did amazingly, and Christmas was celebrated in the usual fashion of costumes, sheep and frazzled staff!

The adult helper rota has been established as a key part of the staffing of the Junior Church, and we are grateful for everyone who has come out with us. We would encourage others to join us.

Thanks must also be expressed to the Creche helpers who go out faithfully with the youngest children and keep them entertained throughout the session.

Marion stepped down at the end of the year having served faithfully with us. She will be missed, and we are thankful for her service.

### **The Junior Church Team**

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## Tots@Salem

The recurring comment we hear at Tots@Salem is how welcome people feel at the group. They appreciate having so much space, so much variety of activities for the children, and love how the team is genuinely interested in each family. We are experiencing the effect of the reduced age for free nursery places, so our group is smaller, with younger children, but our conversations are deeper, and relationships are developing. We have had Tots parents approaching us for practical help such as borrowing tables for parties, or Christmas dinner in one case, and several families came to Banger night, the Barbecue, and the Crib service.

This year we looked at some of the key Bible stories in the old testament, and some of the stories that Jesus told. We don't always have Bible stories but we do always have a little prayer and a song about Jesus in our song time, and our parents know that they can put their prayer requests in our prayer teapot.

We had a great time at our teddy bears picnic in the park in the summer, and we finished off the year with a little interactive Nativity, followed by hot turkey baps, and once again the donkey was the star!

I would like to take this opportunity to offer huge thanks to the team of Ruth, Naomi, Christine, Abigail and Andrew, who come most weeks now, and make it possible for all of us to interact and chat with the parents. Ruth also helps me set up every week, which is a huge help, and having everybody cracking on with the tidying up while I lead song time is working really well.

It would be great to see more people coming through our doors, and to encourage the families to attend on a Sunday, and our prayer is that the seeds we help plant will be nurtured and grow to a saving faith for each parent and child who comes.

**Helen**



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## Uniformed Organisations

### Rainbow Report 2024

As we start 2025 we are pleased to say that Salem Rainbows continues to thrive. We have a full unit and a waiting list.



During the year the Rainbows have worked for interest badges at home and skill builders and theme awards during our meetings and we were very pleased to be able to present several Gold awards during the year to Rainbows who had gained all their interest badges and theme awards, a huge achievement.

We started the year with a carnival theme where we made fancy headdresses and danced to loud music, a good way to warm up on a cold January morning!

This year we have learnt about traditions from other cultures, our Guiding history and we have travelled through space with our Teddy bears, stopping at each of the planets to find out more about them.

We looked at the commemorative blue plaques that are put up to remember people and then designed our own.

The Rainbows have enjoyed trying curling and basic survival skills and when we visited Deer Park they got to try Arrows (archery for young people). We have been on a local walk looking for features such as road signs, bridges, parks and crossings.

We also had a meeting where everyone had the chance to vote on things that they have enjoyed/not enjoyed in Rainbows using a paddling pool and a lot of coloured balls!

We have joined in with the church parades, barbeque and we sang a new song on shoebox Sunday.

We ended the year by making our annual visit to Sandfields where we sang Christmas songs and gave out cards and decorations that we had made, always a lovely morning.

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We would like to thank all at Salem for their continued support and prayers which helps us to continue the work that we do with the girls.

We would also like to thank our team of volunteer adult leaders and young leaders who come along each session to help us to provide a fun and exciting programme for the rainbows.

**Sally and Karen**



## **Brownies Report 2024**

We're showing very healthy numbers this year and are very nearly at our maximum capacity. So much so that movement between all units is on pause until September while we wait for some of the older Guides to be ready to move on and for the Guide unit to have a little more capacity. Karen has been incredibly helpful (given she wears a Guide and a Rainbow hat in these conversations) in helping us manage the flow of girls from Rainbows through Brownies and onto Guides.

We have had a couple of changes in the leadership team. Ann (Brown Owl) stood down as the main point of contact for the unit in the summer after 34 years in the role. She has remained a part of the unit – stepping in and supporting when we're short of Guiders and maintaining our unit accounts. Her continued support and advice are very much appreciated as I pick up the running of the unit. Amy (Spotted Owl) also left us at Christmas to focus on her work in Early Years education. She began with us as a Brownie, re-joined us later as a Young Leader, then became one of our adult Guiders. It has been a privilege to watch her grow from the cheerful have-a-go-at-anything little girl we first knew in Brownies into such a practical, competent and confident leader. She will be very much missed.

Our two Young Leaders Lexie and Béa have remained with us through the year. Although studies and school exams mean we can't always guarantee having them with us every week, the girls love having them around and their enthusiasm (and extra pairs of hands) are very welcome!

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The Brownies had a lot of fun doing some first aid training and working towards their Be Well theme award during spring term. Lots of fun was had role-playing emergency situations: some of our girls are clearly gifted performers!

We took the girls away for Brownie Holiday in May – the theme was Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and the girls very much enjoyed maximising on our chocolatey theme with their crafts and makes!! Some of our Brownies were staying away from home for the first time and we were incredibly proud of those girls who overcame a spot of homesickness or a late-night ‘wobble’. As ever, Brown Owl provided an excellent Wide Game (treasure hunt) for us all – enjoyed by our visiting younger Brownies as well as the older ones – and we all made a lot of noise rounding our Saturday night off with a campfire and marshmallow roast. Huge thanks to Eagle Owl for the amazing food throughout our stay and to Barn Owl for being our first-aider, campfire expert and for supporting the older Brownies with their Camp Stage 2 Skills Builder.

The unit did their Reflect Skills Builder during the later part of the summer term for the Know Myself part of the Brownie programme, and we managed to get back up to Cowley for some grass sledging fun in June. We also held an Olympics themed evening that month – complete with Torch relay in celebration of the Paris Olympics. The iced biscuit Olympic medals were very popular, although not all of them made it home without being eaten! Church BBQ in June was well attended, including by many of our non-church families, some of whom were joining us for the first time.

We completed the Skills For My Future theme award in the first weeks of the new term, learning a selection of leadership skills. The Brownies had a very busy evening filling shoeboxes in November for Teams 4U. Barn Owl and Snowy Owl – who were on box wrapping detail - struggled to keep up with demand from our enthusiastic box packers! Seeing our filled boxes all piled together at the Parade service always makes the Brownies very proud of their hard work 😊 We were lucky this year to be donated a wonderful boxful of assorted goodies donated by Sue from Church, and to have some beautiful hand-made toys which were knitted by a neighbour of Mrs Rainbow.

As ever, the run up to Christmas involved considerable amounts of glitter, glue and mess. The girls had a brilliant time decorating some wooden baubles to take home and making

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their Christmas cards. And when we got back after the Christmas break, we had our New Year party with lots of snacks and silly games.

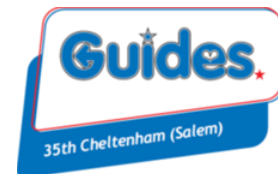
Girlguiding's guidance on when and where Brownies can complete interest badges has changed this year, allowing us to return to completing some badges together as a unit if we wish – something we have all missed and which really helps those Brownies who don't have as many opportunities to do the badge work at home. The girls have worked on their Charities badge (collecting Christmas Cards for the Cobalt Unit to recycle) and their Performing badge (singing for the residents at Jenner Court in January). We particularly enjoyed the visit to Jenner Court and look forward to going again next year. The residents look forward to our visit very much and we were very proud of the way all the girls chatted and interacted with residents after the singing finished. We also completed the Girlguiding Gloucestershire Dyson Challenge badge (lots of STEM activities, led brilliantly by Barn Owl)

Finally, can I please thank all those from the Church community who kindly sponsor and support those of our unit who struggle financially. This help means we have been able to offer all our girls a full and rich Guiding experience. The difference this makes is enormous and very much appreciated.

**Rachel (Snowy Owl)**

## **Guides Report 2024**

During 2024, we have had 24 Guides, and 2 Young Leaders. Numbers are healthy and we have a waiting list. Highlights of 2024 have been:



During the Spring term, we had a taekwondo session led by the father of one of our ex-guides, where girls learnt how to protect themselves when out and about. We went to the cinema to see Wish along with hundreds of other Cheltenham Guides and Brownies. In February, we had a sleepover at Salem with the theme of Night at the Museum, which included a visit to the Wilson Museum. During race week we met on zoom for a taskmaster challenge evening.

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During the Summer term, we spent some evenings tent pitching, fire lighting and on the low rope's courses at Deer Park Cowley. We spent an evening picking litter along the river Chelt footpaths. In June we took some of the Guides to Bubbs Hill Bash 24-hour challenge day at Deer Park completing various tasks earning points before ending the day with a campfire and songs. We held a successful summer camp at Bubbs Hill, Cowley in July where we were joined by 2 patrols from Woodridge Guides (Meg's guide unit) The theme was SWEbots. The guides took part in air and water-based activities including a wide game, zip wire, geocaching, went swimming at Cirencester open air lido and did a treasure hunt around Cirencester, finishing the camp off by sleeping under the stars. Erica was successful at the camp in obtaining her "Going Away With "qualification so is qualified to take the guides on future residentials.

In the Autumn term the guides cooked sausages in cartons, and we took part in UK Parliament Week taking part in a round robin of activities learning about voting and important roles in Parliament. We also held a pudding evening to support the development of Deer Park's new wood and to support 1 older Guide going to Norway and representing Girlguiding Gloucestershire and 2 younger guides going to Belgium on ICE (International Community Experience) with Girlguiding Southwest England. We also collected and filled shoeboxes for Eastern Europe as part of the Teams4U appeal.

The last meeting we had a presentation evening with lots of interest badges earned. Congratulations to Layla getting her Silver Award and Emily S her bronze award.

Karen retired after 39 years as a Salem Guide leader, and we held a celebratory afternoon at Deer Park. Karen is still helping behind the scenes as unit administrator and treasurer but is not attending weekly meetings.

Thank you to Emily, Erica and leesha, our Guide unit leaders, and Bea, our unit helper for all their help and support during the year.

We thank God for the safe, nurturing environment we, at Salem, are able to provide these teenagers and young women as they grow into maturity. We want to thank all among our Church Fellowship, who have supported us through prayer during the year.

**Karen, Unit Administrator**

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## The Hub Annual Report

The Hub has grown! We used to be a small but welcoming group and God has used our members to spread the word, so that now we have several of our neighbours coming regularly on a Tuesday and some also on Sundays. If you haven't been to the Hub, do come. We're a very friendly group enjoying a time of coffee and chat, and it's great to have a chance to catch up each week.

I'm so grateful to Ruth in particular for being willing to turn up early each week and get the coffee on, and for everyone mucking in with the clearing up afterwards.

**Helen A (Occasional host and milk monitor!)**

## Come and Join Us

Come and Join Us is a group of (usually) around twenty Salem friends that meets for a midweek lunch approximately five times each year in different venues. These are happy occasions when we enjoy food, fun and fellowship together. In 2024 we held our gatherings at Norton Garden Centre in March, The Rainbow Shop in Bourton-on-the-Water in May, Leaf and Ground Garden Centre in July, Highfields Garden Centre in September, and Simpson's Fish & Chip Shop in November.

These events are open to and enjoyed by Salem friends of all ages. We hope you will Come and Join Us for more adventures in 2025.

**Helen L & Myra**

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## Sunday Evening Group

About two years ago, as Lent began, we started meeting on Sunday evenings as a small group. The initial plan was to discuss the morning service over a cup of tea (and the occasional sweet treat), ask questions if we were unsure about certain topics, and grow together as a fellowship—like a family. Since then, we have continued to meet most Sunday evenings. I feel that not only have I grown spiritually, but I have also become more integrated into the Salem family.

During our gatherings, we chat, analyse the sermon, brainstorm new ideas, and grow together.

Importantly, the key aspect of these evenings is that there are no rules or strict commitments—everyone is welcome! Whether you join us for one occasion or every week, regardless of whether you're 20 or 90, and whether you're just beginning your journey towards God or have been walking this path for most of your life, you're invited to participate. Hope to see you at 6pm (the same time as the Lighthouse youth group)!

**Krisztina**

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## **Christian Aid**

Christian Aid continues to give practical support to people in some of the poorest countries in the world, and this year it provided help to meet the immediate needs of 3.2 million people across the world. Wherever possible it works together with local groups – about a third of these are local churches.

Christian Aid depends heavily on the financial support of churches and individuals. As usual, the main fund-raising event in Cheltenham was Christian Aid Week in May – the theme for the week was Christian Aid's work in Burundi. Volunteers from Salem distributed envelopes in the Gloucester Road area, although it is no longer necessary to go back to collect them. A total of £7,864 was raised within Cheltenham, excluding online donations which were paid directly to Christian Aid.

At the end of the year, a group from Salem raised money by singing carols at the local Waitrose supermarket. This year the total raised by all the church groups singing carols was £1,173. In addition £47 was raised at Salem from donations in place of Christmas cards. Thank you to everyone who supported all the events during the year.

**Andrew and Jean**



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## Salem Ramblers

We have once again enjoyed lots of walks in the beautiful local countryside.

We walk on the 3rd Saturday of the month and share the planning or the routes.

We started January by walking a favourite road route around Cowley. Unfortunately, since the last time we did it, the road has become increasingly busy, so we will shelve this walk now for safety reasons.

February's walk was more pleasant as we walked the lanes around Coberley. In March we walked another favourite around Yanworth but were somewhat startled as several police vans passed us, thankfully we didn't come across the problem!

April's walk was cancelled as numbers were low and as it had been so wet the fields were still very muddy to walk on. By May we got back into the fields enjoying lovely views on the Miserden estate.

June was a new walk led by Jo and Russ starting at Saul Junction and walking along the canal and then crossing into Frampton, such a pretty village with a huge village green. In July Carol led us around the lanes and fields of Prestbury and in August Rosemary took us back to another old favourite in Stanton, starting at the village cricket club where you really could hear leather on willow!

Wet weather thwarted us again in September as Terry had planned to lead us along the river bank at Eckington, but unfortunately the whole area was flooded.

We returned to Cowley in October but took to the fields which were much quieter than the lanes. November saw us on the top of Painswick Beacon with lovely views across to the Severn. This was the first time we had followed this route for several years and it was lovely to be back.

We are a social walking group, enjoying each other's company and the lovely area we live in. We are always looking for new routes and members, so feel free to join us.

**Helen L**

# Finance Report

## Income and Expenditure Account Year ended 31 December 2024

	2023	2024
<b>Income</b>		
Offering	47867.42	47291.14
One off and projects	9930.62	9240.81
Income tax refund	11027.74	9942.77
Rental - church	3640	5767.5
Interest	1112.58	2045.98
	<u>73578.36</u>	<u>74288.2</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
ministerial costs	-35738.93	-39241.21
cleaning	-1243.42	-1350.48
gathered worship	-959.75	-1263.37
pulpit supplies	-280	-841.59
youth and childrens work	-1193.68	-723.47
Manse heat light insurance	-4626.76	-4619.14
Church heat light insurance	-7581.84	-12752.57
church and manse fabric	-3889	-2057.08
misc,admin, gifts, subs	-8658.61	-1706.47
donations	-6553.83	-6345.85
local mission opportunity	-797.97	-1013.13
social	-909.95	-655.53
projects (heating/min studies/malawi)	-800	0
added to reserves	0	0
	<u>-73233.74</u>	<u>-72569.89</u>
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT FOR YEAR</b>	<b>344.62</b>	<b>1718.31</b>

	<b>OPENING</b>	<b>Closing</b>
c/a	£3,565.93	£3,255.64
reserves	£47,007.27	£49,035.87
<b>balance at bank</b>	<b>50573.2</b>	<b>52291.51</b>

## Salem Baptist Church

### Balance sheet as at 31 December 2024

	2023	2024
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Property and fixtures	1066668	1066668
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash on deposit	47007.27	49035.87
Cash at bank	3565.93	3255.64
Cash in hand	1 50574.2	1 52292.51
	<u>1117242.20</u>	<u>1118961</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Property	1011932	1011932
General Fund	98464.85	100072
Reserves General	6845.15	6956.89
	<u>1117242</u>	<u>1118961</u>

Audited by Duncan Lilley and Chris Cooper 24th Feb 2025

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## **Annual Report 2024 Addendum:**

### **Community involvement**

Over this last year the church has actively arranged various community events; BBQ, picnic in the park, school assemblies at Gloucester road school, services at the local care home, Tots Christmas meal. The church also supports the local food bank and the debt support offered through CAP (Christian's Against Poverty). Annually the church sends Christmas shoeboxes via the Teams4U charity overseas, this year sending 400+. Other specific activities are elsewhere in this report.

**Naomi**

### **Mission Partners**

Salem Baptist church financially supports 4 mission partners who work abroad in Zambia, Malawi, Albania and Thailand. They work to support the building up of the church in the communities where they live and seeking to support them in practical ways through training, education and health support depending on their skills and giftings.

**Naomi**

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**Salem Baptist Church is a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain. Salem is affiliated to the West of England Baptist Network and to the Cheltenham Cluster of Baptist Churches. Salem is also a member of an ecumenical grouping of Churches in Cheltenham.**