



# *Annual Report*

**Central Church Warrington  
2024**

# Introduction

Our church is nearing its three year birthday as we write this report and there is so much to be thankful for from the past year. There were some particular headlines. In January, we launched our Youth Night.

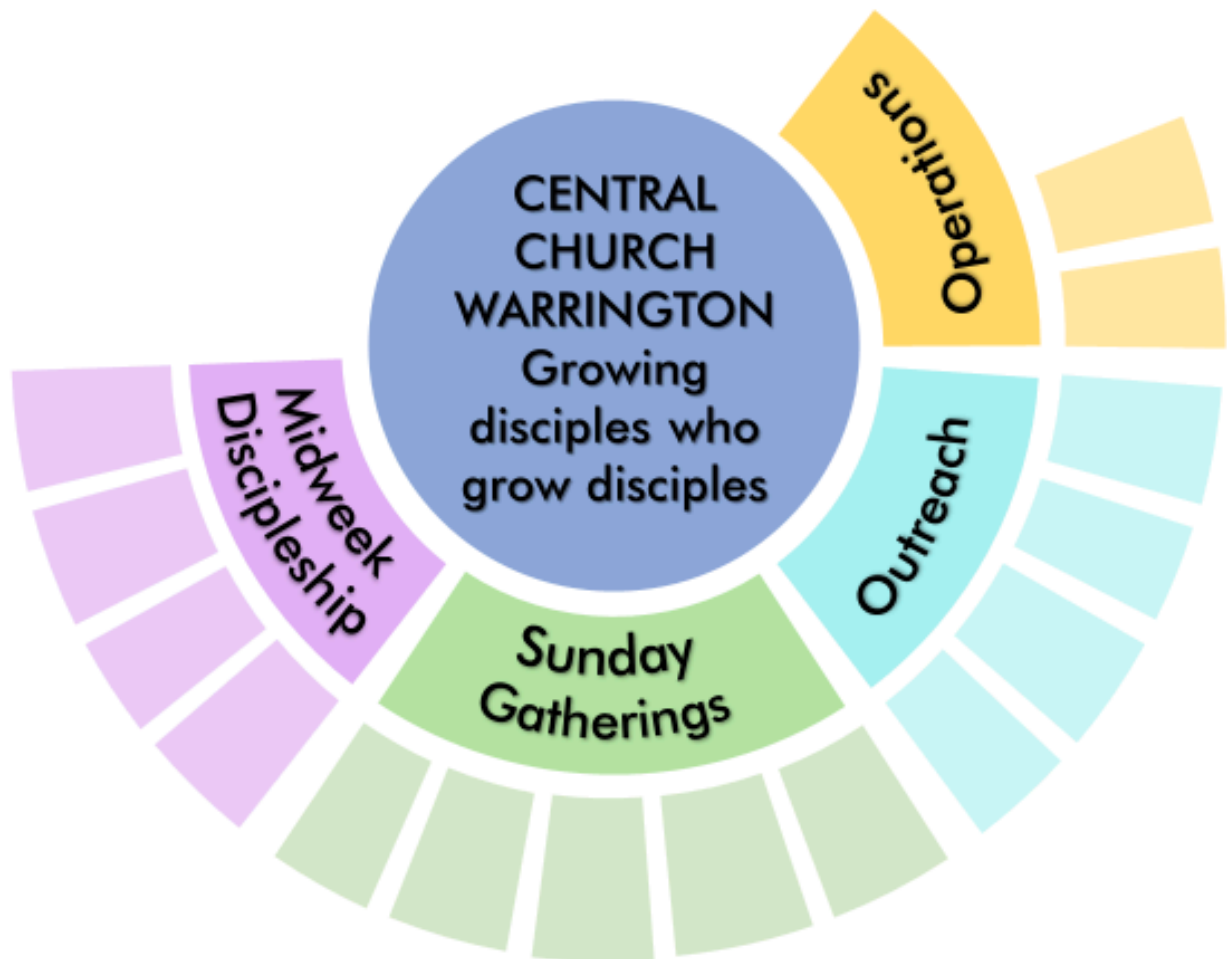
In March, we employed Ruth as a Ministry Coordinator. In May, we embarked upon a building appeal. In June and July, we hosted two summer interns. In September we welcomed Sidney as a Ministry Apprentice. In October we were able to purchase Buckley Street church building as a base for us into the future.

However, those headlines are not ultimately the big deal. Jesus is still the Lord of the world. That's what matters. And everywhere we see ourselves trusting Jesus, following him sacrificially, loving each other like he loves us: that's the real encouragement, the real victory.

I thank God for calling us to be a church family together, for all the ways you have served our Lord, and each other, over this past year. Whatever happens in the year ahead, our task remains the same: to grow as disciples ourselves and grow other disciples.

To him be the glory,

*Mark*



One of the main priorities over 2024 was to organise our ministries so that we are all using our gifts in the Lord's work.

- We have split all our ministries into three main areas - Sunday gatherings, Midweek discipleship, and Outreach. These encompass the core goals we have to listen to Jesus, respond to him, and share the good news with others.
- Each ministry has a leader and a team supporting the work. They are practically supported by Ruth as our Ministry Co-ordinator.
- All of our other administrative, legal, practical work that supports our ministry is covered under Operations.

We're really excited about where we have got to, and the following report reflects this three-way split of our ministries and we hope this structure will support us as we grow.

# *Sunday gatherings*

## **Overview | Mark Cooper**

Every Sunday we gather together around God's Word to hear the Bible read and preached, to sing and pray, to share church family news, and to share the Lord's Supper each month.

Through the course of the year, we had major series in Isaiah, Acts, and Galatians. They made us think about God's plan for the whole world, and the gospel of grace which is at the heart of that plan.

Somehow we have managed to cope with growing numbers within the dining room of the Salvation Army, and it reminds me of how much effort and energy goes into each every Sunday, from setup, to the kitchen team, to the welcomers. It's a wonderful display of our partnership in the gospel.

One of the major developments this year was that we began a weekly service planning meeting. It meets most Tuesday lunchtimes and we look ahead to the coming three Sundays. It has been really helpful in giving us space to evaluate and plan our Sundays, and I pray it will continue to be a blessing.

## **Music | Sarah Cooper**

It's a wonderful gift of God to be able to sing his praises and to encourage one another with his truth through song! We thank God for providing musicians and singers to facilitate our singing week by week, and for all of their unseen hard work in the run up to Sundays. I'm particularly encouraged by seeing musicians and singers who have been willing to step out of their comfort zone to help us sing as a church family.

In 2025 we hope to continue singing songs that can help drive the truths we're hearing home in our hearts, and pray that more musicians might take steps into joining our church musical life.

## **Sound and Tech | John Hunt and Peter Thomas**

Sound and Tech is about ensuring that Sunday services run smoothly by making sure everyone can hear what they need to hear. Things have been going well - we've got a good set up for Sunday mornings, and thankfully enough people on the rota to be able to share the workload reasonably well.

Nonetheless, please do be praying for more people to join in with this ministry - most people on the tech rota are involved in other ministries too, which can lead to things feeling a bit stretched. Please also pray for wisdom as we look to get a good tech set up for Buckley Street, that we'd make good purchases and be set up well for Sunday services when we move in there.

## **Sunday Club | Rebecca Tomlinson**

Over the last year, we have had a regular group of around 15 children attending Sunday Club each week and 18 teachers and helpers taking it in turns to serve in this ministry. As the children are growing and maturing, it has been a real joy to see them asking more questions and really engaging with the Bible passages they have studied. We are still using Mustard Seeds teaching material, following a mixture of Old and New Testament themes. Please pray for wisdom in feeding the teenagers into the main church services; particularly getting the timing right for them. Pray for a smooth transition into our new building and most of all, pray that the Lord would save and keep every one of our children and young people.

## **Creche | Ruth Kunar**

Creche aims to show love and care to the youngest members of our church family and their parents. During 2024 Creche was self-service on an as needed basis due to lack of space and staffing. Our hope is that the move to Buckley Street will enable us to provide a more formal Creche in 2025.

# Midweek Discipleship

## **Prayer | Mark Cooper**

Our church's prayer life is a key indicator of our health as a church. 'Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain' (Psalm 127:1). At the core of our church prayer life is the Central Prayer Meeting, on the first Wednesday of every month. Throughout 2024, 20-25 of us joined together at these meetings, some joining online. After starting with a message from the Bible, we focus on praying for areas of church life, Warrington, and further afield.

We continue to produce a daily prayer diary, aimed at helping us pray for every person in our church, for our partners, and for other prayer needs. In 2025, I pray we never lose sight of the priority of prayer, and that our prayer meetings grow numerically as much as our Sunday gatherings do.

## **Teams | Mark Cooper**

Teams are our small groups, and at the heart of our pastoral care as a church. We look up (to God) as we read his word; we look in to care for each other; and we look out to work together in sharing the gospel. Team leaders meet together once a month to be equipped for leading their individual Team.

In 2024, there were various changes to our Teams such as the South Team transitioning into a Central Team. We were also able in September to start a new daytime Team: this Team breaks into two, having a Cantonese study and a simple English study, and has got off to a great start.

## **Practical Care | Ruth Kunar**

Practical Care is a way of loving and helping members of our church family who are in need of extra support. In 2024, this was done on a very

informal basis, with many people involved in different practical ways, from providing meals, helping with gardening and providing for the needs of some of the asylum seekers.

The hope for 2025 is that, working in partnership with the Teams leaders, we can formalise the team and be more pro-active in serving our church community in tangible ways.

## **Weekend Away | Ruth Kunar**

The Weekend Away aims to help us grow in our faith and as a family as we spend extended and unrushed time together

Our first weekend away was held in October 2024 at Cloverley Hall in Shropshire. It brought together 45 members of our congregation for a time of fellowship, spiritual growth, and fun activities. We had great teaching from our guest speaker, and it was really nice to be able to be together as a family for an extended period of time, sharing meals, taking walks in the beautiful grounds and taking part in a fun quiz night. The feedback from the attendees was so positive that we are planning to go to Cloverley again in 2025 and hope that even more people will be able to join us.



## Youth Night | Ethan and Laura Kee

Youth night was set up at the beginning of 2024 as a ministry for young people in Year 6 to Year 9. Youth night is led by Ethan and Laura, with the help of Megan, Sidney, and Kaylee. The aim of youth night is to help the youth develop as disciples of Jesus by providing a fun space where they feel comfortable to dig deeper into the Bible and to ask important questions.

During 2024, we completed the Youth Alpha Series where we explored who Jesus is and why he is so important. After the summer break we began to study Mark, diving into the bible to see what it says about Jesus. We have also had a Q & A night, as well as a pizza night which the kids loved.

Hopes for 2025:

- The leaders and helpers work well together to teach the children how to study and learn from the Bible.
- The youth would ask more questions and go home talking to their families about what they have learned.
- To introduce the youth to older members of the congregation through Q & A nights.
- For the teens to invite their friends along.



# Outreach

## Christianity Explored | Mark Cooper

The aim of the Christianity Explored course is to give anyone a chance to dig deeper into the message of Christianity and ask their questions. We often say that there is no question too stupid to ask. With videos and discussion, people get a chance to encounter Mark's gospel and through it, we pray, Jesus the Son of God.

In January, we were able to start a mixed course in Cantonese and English where we all watched the video together and then discussed it in two groups in our preferred language. We had approximately 10 or so people join regularly and we thank God we could share the gospel through it, and that it was a step towards one baptism in May (Antha).



A photo from the baptism of Antha, Zoie, Edward and Elena

## Events | Sarah Cooper

Our Events aim to provide opportunities for us to bring friends and family along to hear the good news about Jesus, as well as to make new connections as a church. Different events are aimed at different people and interest groups.

In 2024, we ran an Easter Egg Hunt, Sports Quiz (in partnership with Bethesda Church), a couple of Picnics in the Park, and encouraged church family to use the opportunities around Halloween in a decentralised way. Over the Christmas period we focused on 'activity-based' events, running Ribbon Wreath Making, Stollen Making and Gingerbread House Making, all leading up to our first Candlelit Carol Service, which was a real highlight.

It is encouraging to consider all the different people who heard the Lord Jesus proclaimed at these events! We thank God for the boldness of church family inviting their friends along, the new connections we have made, and for all the hard work of church family in enabling them to happen. We pray for the Lord to continue working in their lives.



## Hong Kong Ministry | Sze-Lok & Erica

CCW reached and supported a group of more than 20 senior Hongkongers who keep learning English to integrate into the community. We decided to form a “Golden Age Club” — a space to engage in continuous learning, social activities & exercises, and explore the purpose of life through Christianity.

Besides, a team comprising Pastor Mark, 8 church people, and two summer interns collaborated to offer learning and sharing space through various activities. Everyone seemed to enjoy both the exercises and learning time, including one outing event of visiting Heaton Park in Manchester and having Dim Sum at a Chinese Restaurant. We are also grateful to see a few of them later join our daytime team and study the bible together.

We hope the opportunity and experience can form a useful base to offer more ESL practice groups at church in 2025 for daily conversations and/or faith-seeking.



## **Persian Ministry | Stuart & Jenny Boydell**

2024 was very different and, because of this it was just Stuart & Jenny involved in ministry to the Persians. The government moved our previously Warrington based community to anywhere between Burnley, Bolton & Colne.

So, the priority became finding & encouraging them to join a good local church community where they would, prayerfully, come to faith in Jesus, whilst deepening their understanding of Christianity.

We did this by maintaining contact (mainly by visiting & eating lots of food !) but occasionally helping in more practical ways as they navigated their new circumstances & gain their right to remain in the UK, such as, where appropriate, facilitating letters of recommendation from Pastor.

Our highlights would be the precious times of prayer during those visits & the baptism of Morteza & Maryam & Amir in their new church families. At the end of 2024 Ali & Rik joined us from Iran & Sanaz gave birth to beautiful Kaira ...

Our hope for 2025 is for our Persian brothers & sisters to want to stay in Warrington & that, together with others from CCW, we can reach out to other Persians, as they arrive, both with the gospel & to start an English as a second language group.

## *Operations*

### **Members | Mark Cooper**

Behind the scenes, there are a lot of legal and practical tasks that help our church function. Most of this is done by volunteers and we're so grateful for everyone who made this happen. On the formal level, we grew by 7 members (to a total of 34). The Trustees formed a working document called Trustees within Central Church Warrington as we continue to work on the policies and procedures and legal obligations that support our ministry.

## **Church Finances | Peter Thomas**

Taking care of the church's finances has two edges to it as a ministry. First and foremost, it is about enabling ministry to occur, be that ensuring that church staff get paid, reimbursing church members for costs incurred during events, or helping the trustees gain clear insight into the financial situation of the church. Secondly, it's about ensuring that in our financial operations, we have integrity and accountability, so as to be above reproach as we do ministry in the public square (1 Timothy 3). By the grace of God, we have managed to achieve both of these two things over the course of the past year.

2024 has been about establishing patterns and norms - when CCW started in 2022 there were many uncertainties around how best to do things (what's the most helpful way to present financial information to the trustees and the congregation? Can the church have a bank card and still have sufficient accountability whilst people use it? How on earth do gift aid claims work? We're now at a point where everything has been done once, and so the role is becoming a lot more "known", and a lot less open ended. The next steps for 2025 will be writing this information down, so that individuals serving in this way in the future have guides for what they need to do. Furthermore, once these guides are written up, I hope to hand over this role to other individuals. Please be praying for the writing of these guides, that they'll be clear and will make this ministry straightforward for others to do. Please pray too for God to raise up the right people to take on the role, and for the transition period as they do so.

## **Safeguarding | Sarah Cooper**

As a church we are committed to our duty of safeguarding, and implement the Church of England's procedures and guidelines. In accordance with this, this year we have continued to develop our safer recruitment procedures, encourage safeguarding training, write risk assessments for our different activities, and ensure wise ratios are in place for children's

work. Our designated Church Safeguarding Officer is Sarah Cooper, and we thank God for all the ways he has kept us safe through 2024.

In 2025, we hope to have clear procedures that spell out safer recruitment steps, with what is required for each different role. This includes asking a wider group of people to complete Safeguarding training. We also hope for a new Safeguarding Officer and Lead Recruiter, and pray for a smooth transition period.

## **Building | Tom Ridout**

The Buildings ministry area seeks to ensure that CCW has a physical home for the Church's other ministries. In May 2024, we started to explore purchasing a church building on Buckley St which seemed to fit our needs well. We completed the purchase in October 2024 and since then we have been planning the renovation work required to make the building functional. We are thankful for all who have been involved so far, from those who gave to and prayed for the Building Appeal, those who helped prepare the Building for the Carols service, to those on the buildings team.

In 2025, we are looking forward to completing the renovations and moving into our new building. In the meantime, we are grateful to the Salvation Army for their continued willingness to host us.

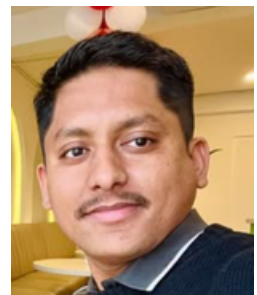


# Partnership

It was a privilege at the start of the year to consider financially supporting others. We're part of the global church and to be able to partner with others as they proclaim the gospel is a great privilege and responsibility.

We selected three ministries to particularly support during the year:

- Locally: Youth for Christ. We were able to get to know Alex Stewart who is the worker in the town centre & Penketh, and who visited us to share prayer requests and news at different times.
- Regionally: a church plant. Through the North West Gospel Partnership, we heard of plans to plant a church in Buckley, North Wales, and were privileged to support and pray for them as they look to launch in September 2025.
- Globally: Kantipur Church (Nepal). Prem Bhattarai is the preaching pastor of Kantipur Church in Kathmandu and has been seeking to establish an expository Bible teaching ministry in this church since his time training in the UK.



Our links with the North West Gospel Partnership and two other ReNew churches in the Liverpool Diocese have grown, having a joint churches evening with them in October. As part of this, we prayed for three new churches to be pioneered in the next ten years together.

We also formed a new partnership with AT3 as they seek to train gospel workers for the future. We hosted two summer interns in June and July, and then welcomed Sidney and Kaylee in September.

We have planned to give our 2025 giving to those three areas - with the church plant still to be decided - and a fourth area to be discussed at a Mission Partner Committee we hope to form in the coming year.