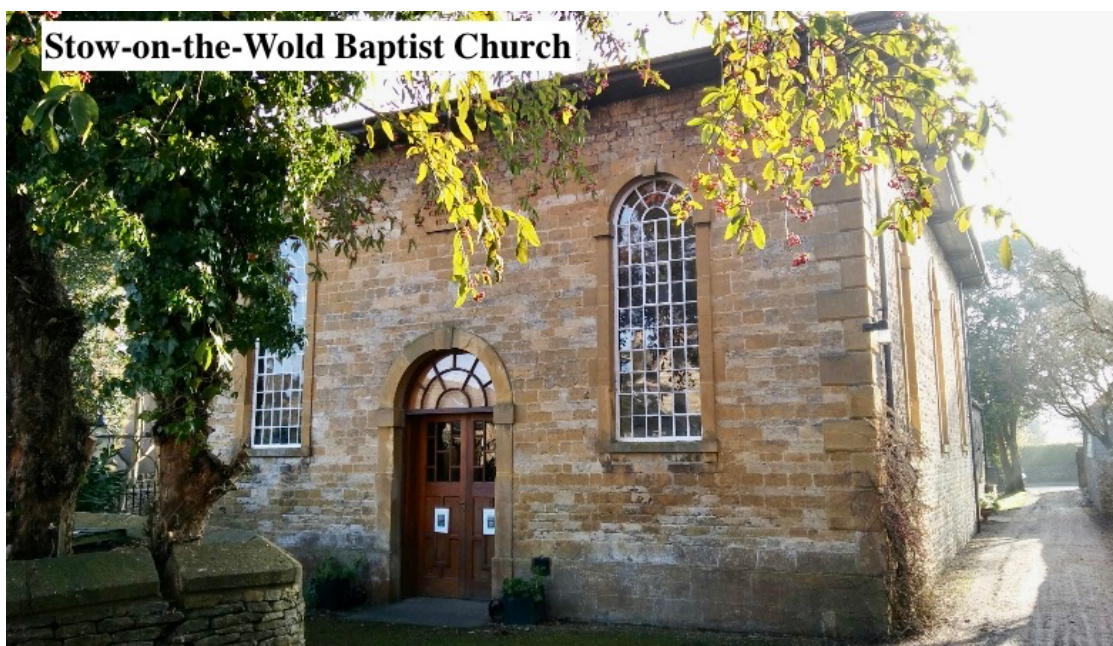


## AIPM at Stow-on-the-Wold, 2015 - 2018

Stow-on-the-Wold Baptist Church (SWBC) had 4 American volunteer short-term pastors serve from September 2015 until January 2018. Stow has dual affiliation. They are part of the Southern Counties Baptist Association in the Baptist Union of Great Britain. And because they are a rural church that have been supported for many years by Rural Ministries, they also come under the umbrella of Rural Ministries. Stow-on-the-Wold (rough translation: “Holy place on the Hill”) existed in medieval times and was mentioned in the “Doomsday Book,” a survey of all England in 1086. SWBC was founded around 1660 and is one of the oldest Baptist churches in England. The town has about 2000 people and is in the beautiful Cotswolds.



When AIPM started in the fall of 2015, SWBC had around a dozen in worship on Sunday mornings. When the 4<sup>th</sup> of 4 American short-term pastors finished in January 2018, attendance had grown to about 20. That number might have been adequate to continue AIPM, however the church could not make the finances work out. One major reason was the rent for the apartment used as the manse was very expensive with the village of Stow being a very attractive place to live. As a result, SWBC began discussions with a much larger and stronger nearby Baptist Church, Chipping Camden, with a view to some form of partnership for pastoral leadership.

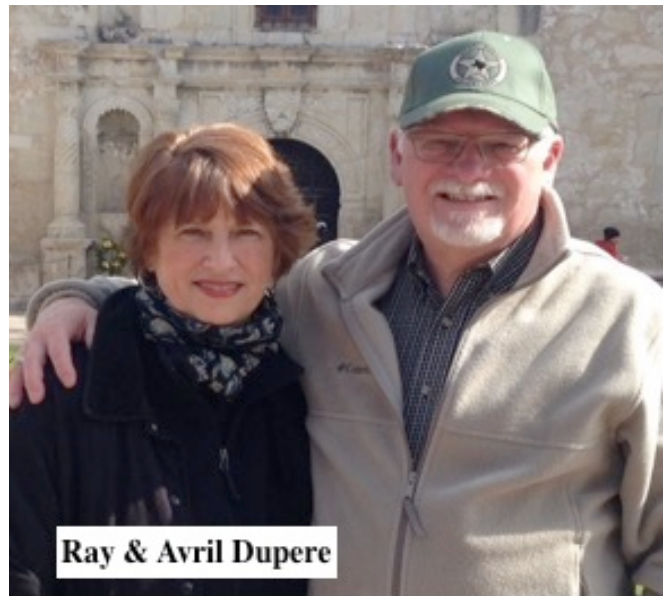
AIPM's volunteers were Jim Booth from Gavleston, Texas (Sept. 2015 - March 2016); Ray & Avril Dupere from Ellington, Connecticut (May 2016 – Jan. 2017); Ty & Georgene Lunberry from Winston-Salem, North Carolina (Jan. 2017 – July 2017 and John & Jan Ward from Lake Jackson, Texas (July 2017 – Jan. 2018).

Jim Booth had served as pastor of Pastor, Island Baptist Church, Galveston, TX for 30-years prior to his retirement in 2014. He had also served as Headmaster, Island Christian School which his church operated for 20-years. Jim's wife had passed away, so he served at Stow-on-the-Wold solo. His ministry worked well but the requirement to have a visitation partner did add complexity to scheduling visits with members and people in the community.

Ray Dupree had served as pastor of a church in Maine for 18-years, followed by Sports Chaplain in Watford, England for 3-years and pastor of Union Church, Rockville, Connecticut for 8-years prior to retirement in 2015. He also served on active duty in the US Army for 4 years and as an Army Chaplain in the reserves for 17-years.



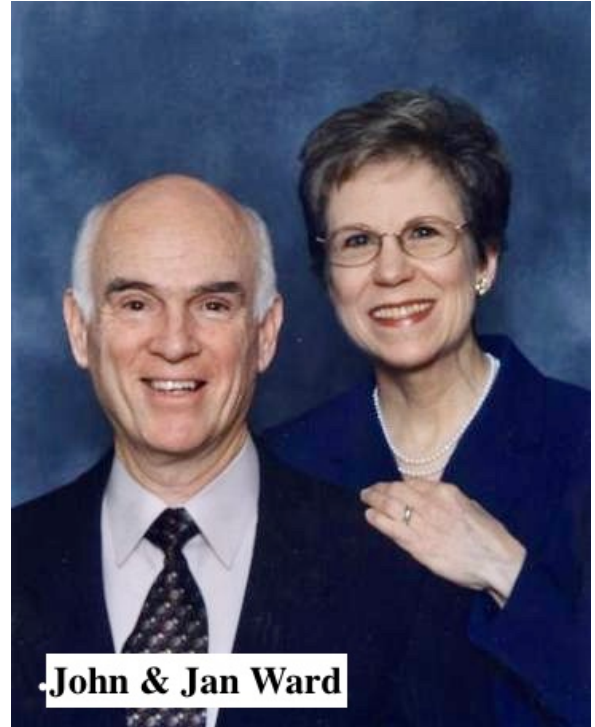
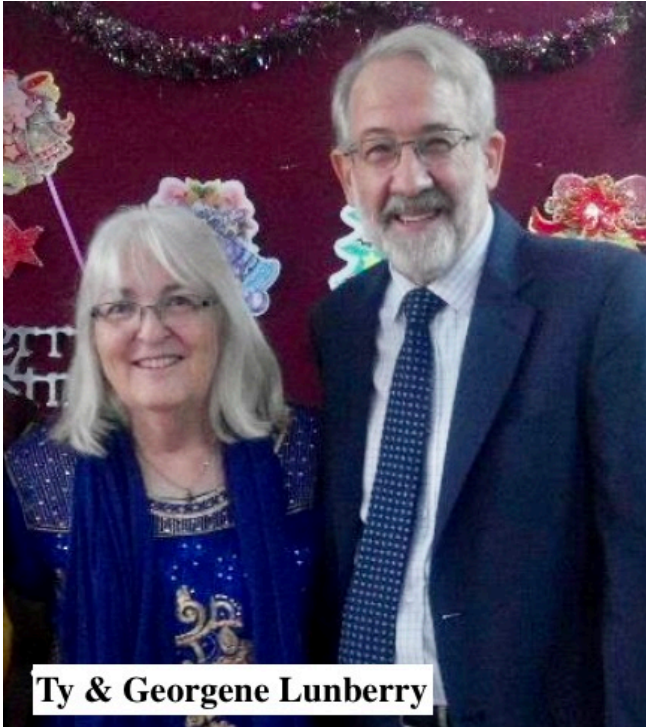
Jim Booth (Widower)



Ray & Avril Dupere

Ty Lunberry trained as an architect and worked at that for 18-years. Ty served as a missionary for Bible Study Fellowship International of San Antonio, Texas in Kampala, Uganda, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Hyderabad, India for 20-years until his retirement in 2014)

John Ward trained as a Chemical Engineer and worked for Dow Chemical Company in Freeport, Texas for 31-years and served as an active layman at First Baptist Church, Lake Jackson, Texas for more than 35-years. Stow was John's 5<sup>th</sup> assignment with AIPM in UK churches.



As a standard practice, UK churches send to AIPM a profile of their church. We use this information in communicating with potential candidates. It helps them know the church better. Below is the profile that Stow-on-the-Wold sent to us.

# Stow On The Wold Baptist Church Profile



## Location:

on-the-  
or, "place  
worship on  
is a small  
set some

Stow-  
Wold, -  
of  
a hill"-,  
town,



eight hundred feet above sea level, deep in the Cotswold Hills of South Western England, denoted on the map below as a red dot.

The town boasts a population of around two thousand people, and as the town was mentioned in the Doomesday Book, Stow-on-the-Wold has a real historical feel to its picturesque landscape. Stow's Baptist Church was established just after the English Civil War in 1660, but has its roots are deeper in history, making the church one of the oldest Baptist Churches in the United Kingdom. The church was built in two separate parts, one in the 18th, and the main church the 19th centuries.

### **Affiliation:**

The church is a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, which divides the whole country into regional Associations.

Stow belongs to the Southern Counties Baptist Association. The Southern Counties Baptist Association has over 160 churches in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Dorset - and adjoining counties and islands too! The Baptist Union of Great Britain encourages churches to work together, and "Cluster" to share the work.



Stow has been clustered into the North Oxfordshire Baptist Cluster of churches, to whose food bank we also belong, with a specific mission focus, this is a scheme that helps us to distribute food for those in need.

As a church, we have been blessed with a lot of help from this group of churches, especially guest speakers. Stow has a good working relationship with Rural Ministries, who's aim is to help and equip small country churches into mission.

### **Services:**

Stow Baptist Church's heart is for bible based teaching, and to see the people of Stow-On-The-Wold turn to Jesus.

Our services are lead by our Worship team, and a series of guest preachers, and are a mix of traditional and modern worship, these are held on a Sunday morning at 10:30am, -with no Sunday evening service at the moment-, and run with the use of multimedia projector, through an Apple software platform.

Our times of prayer are Tuesday mornings and Sunday mornings, at 9:45 am.

Our coffee morning is Tuesday from 10am - noon,

Our Worship team meets on a Wednesday at 7:30

Although we have none of our original members, we are blessed with a very loyal congregation, the bulk of which, have served the church for over twenty years. The church is a very warm and welcoming community of believers, and its times together have a very relaxed and family feel, mixed with a certain British humour, that makes the atmosphere unique, but very loving.



### **Youth Work:**

Our youth work is a real blessing, and a great asset to the church. While we have no Sunday school at present, -the last product of this into the church is the Church's Worship Leader!-, our Messy Church is a thriving and ever changing group of children usually numbered in the mid thirties, and that is before we count the parents who come with their children, and the churches Mums and Tots Group, begun in late 2014, is already beginning to bare fruit.

Since 2012, Stow Baptist Church has brought a company in to run a Holiday Club for us, which is greatly attended by the children, and even some adults too!! These Clubs have a heavy Bible content, but are presented in a way that those children who are there hear the gospel, and in our 2014 club, nine children came to know Jesus as their special friend.....

### **Conclusion:**

While Stow Baptist has its strong points, -the children's work, its worship team, and more unity than has been felt in the church community for many years-, it does need to see growth, as the bulk of or membership are, if not approaching retirement age, than already retired, some new blood into the church would be a real blessing, into the Kingdom of God

Our then friends in Children's Ministry, Pulse Ministries, once called Stow Baptist Church "A Small church, with a great big heart for God", a claim we pray we might match, though not by our strength, but God's...