

**SCOTTISH BAPTIST LAY
PREACHERS' ASSOCIATION**



PREACHING STATISTICS 2018

SUMMARY REPORT

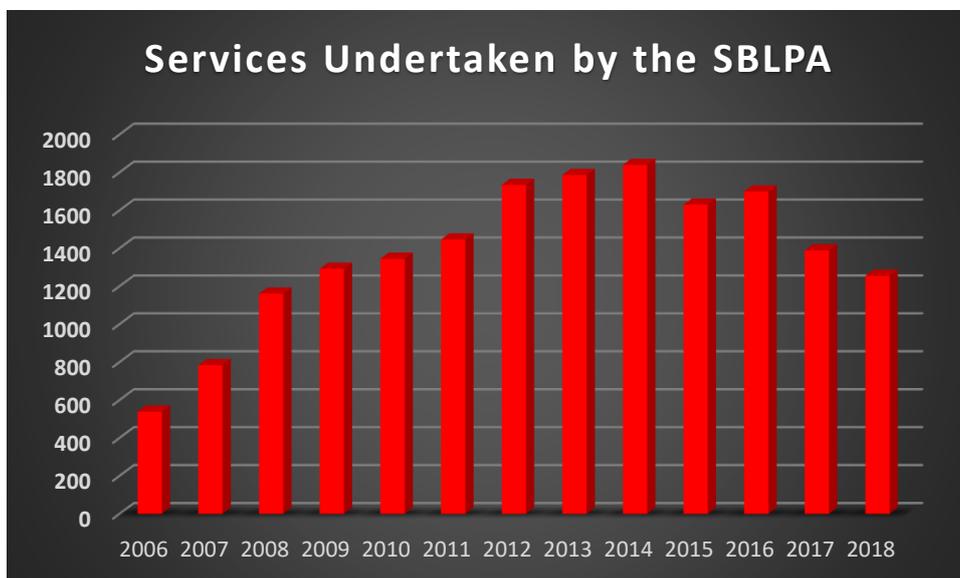
“While the difference between a bad sermon and a good sermon is mainly the responsibility of the preacher, the difference between good preaching and great preaching lies mainly in the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the listener, as well as the preacher”.

Tim Keller, Founding Pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York

Keller’s wise words reminds us that permeating every message any member of the Scottish Baptist Lay Preachers’ Association preaches, must be the Holy Spirit, otherwise prophetic and expository preaching is reduced to nothing more than a bible talk. If we believe preaching is a divine act, then inviting the Holy Spirit to come, both in preparation and preaching, is an absolute essential.

From a spiritual perspective, never know the countless lives which have been touched, the people who have been encouraged, the men, women, boys and girls who may have come to faith through the ministry of the Association and the proclamation of the truth of God’s Word. Our call is to be faithful, for if we are faithful in sowing the seed, then who knows where that seed may fall.

From a statistical perspective though, we make and made in 2018, a hugely significant contribution to not only Baptist life and witness in Scotland, but in many other areas too. To measure it in pure statistical terms is to almost take away from the immeasurable spiritual aspect and eternal impact, but suffice to say in 2018, we conducted 1,255 services in a wide range of settings.



That said, we ought never to get hung up on or see numbers as the primary barometer, informative though they are and can be in and of themselves, but rather we ought to humbly reflect and give thanks to God for the unknown spiritual impact of 1,255 services in terms of kingdom work done, and for what the Lord has granted to us in previous years (over 15,000 services over 10 years):

- For 2017, a total of 1,389 services
- For 2016, a total of 1,700 services
- For 2015, a total of 1,630 services

- For 2014, a total of 1,840 services
- For 2013, a total of 1,787 services
- For 2012, a total of 1,735 services
- For 2011, a total of 1,447 services;
- For 2010, a total of 1,345 services;
- For 2009, a total of 1,292 services
- For 2008, a total of 1,161 services
- For 2007, a total of 784 services
- For 2006, a total of 539 services

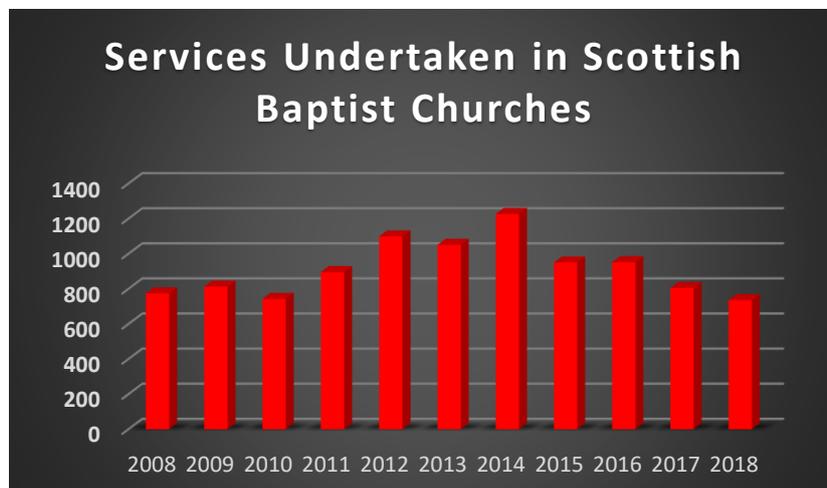
The 1,255 figure is based on a 100% response rate, and of the 1,255 services undertaken:

- 736 (or 59%) were in 85 Scottish Baptist churches
- 233 (or 19%) were in 102 evangelical churches of various denominations and types
- 104 (or 8%) were in the environment of care homes
- 50 (or 4%) were in the context of conferences
- 46 (or 3%) were in the setting of funerals
- 38 (or 3%) were in schools
- 21 (or 2%) were in community centres
- 17 (or 1%) were international in nature
- 4 (or 0.5%) were in the setting of camps
- 2 (or 0.5%) were in prisons

Of the 736 services undertaken in 85 Scottish Baptist churches:

- 464 (or 63%) were on a Sunday morning
- 176 (or 24%) were on a Sunday evening
- 79 (or 11%) were midweek services
- 12 (or 1%) were at other times (Friday night, Saturday morning)
- 5 (or 1%) were on a Sunday afternoon

With 161 churches forming the Baptist Union of Scotland, this means in 2018 we were involved in preaching in 53% of them. Primarily, though not exclusively, the figures are higher where the church was/is vacant and/or where there is already a lay preacher presence/preaching team.



Looking back at previous years, the comparative figures were:

- For 2017, 805 services in 92 Scottish Baptist churches
- For 2016, 952 services in 100 Scottish Baptist churches
- For 2015, 950 services in 106 Scottish Baptist churches
- For 2014, 1,227 services in 109 Scottish Baptist churches
- For 2013, 1,051 services in 106 Scottish Baptist Churches
- For 2012, 1,099 services in 104 Scottish Baptist churches
- For 2011, 896 services in 99 Scottish Baptist churches
- For 2010, 743 services in 98 Scottish Baptist churches
- For 2009, 813 services in 94 Scottish Baptist churches
- For 2008, 775 services in 96 Scottish Baptist churches

Were we to have the time to engage a deep-dive analysis of the 2018 preaching returns, we could probably find a myriad of reasons to explain away the reduction seen in some areas (which is not necessarily a negative), and the various figures, but what we have identified, and have seen a trend emerging in over the last 3-4 years, is:

- a drop in the number of services taken by members of a Sunday evening or midweek, reflecting the changing nature of Sunday evening services away from the 'traditional teaching' service and the ascendancy of 'life' or 'house' groups over the 'midweek meeting'.
- a broader range of settings in which members have been and are now being invited to preach and share, which is encouraging to see, thus highlighting the many 'touch points' we have and which God has granted to us. While 'preaching' will always be the bread and butter of who we are and what we do, teaching and communicating Gpd's Word are also key areas.
- churches in which we have preached in frequently over the last couple of years calling a pastor, which although good for them, has for us meant there has no longer been a need to provide pulpit supply to the extent we did. Sadly, not a small number of mission halls where primarily though not exclusively, and historically a number of our older lay preachers preached, have over recent years closed.

Our 2018 statistics serve as crystal-clear evidence of the extent to which lay preachers are being used, not just within a Scottish Baptist context, but across a wide spectrum of settings. Through our initiative of supporting resource-needy churches, we've been able to provide systematic pulpit supply and preaching to churches and a few churches who haven't used us in the past contacted us in 2018 for pulpit supply, which was encouraging.

Our prayer for 2019 is for numerical growth through engaging the next generation of lay preachers and encouraging those involved in preaching in our churches to connect with the Association. That said, this will always be secondary to the prophetic preaching of God's Word married with the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

GLEN P CARTWRIGHT
General Secretary

February 2019