

**Minutes of the Church Members Meeting Held on
Tuesday 22nd October 2019**

Chair: Graham Simpson (Elder)

Secretary: Andrew Thompsett

Present: Sue Whitmore, Dave Miller, Mary Simpson, Michael Cassell, Jenny Stephenson, Colin and Denise Russell, David and Ruth Bellerby, Farrell Clifford, Linda Williamson, Annette Morris, Lee and Lorraine Jackson, Alison Whiteley, Ian Simpson, John and Christine Daniels, Anne Gosling, Pauline Fuller, Amy Lanelly, Lena Parker, Lynne Foulton, Gill Beams, Catherine Wilson, Phil and Serena Stephenson and Sally Plant. Len Smith (see note below)

Total Members Present - 31

Andrew sought permission for Graham Simpson to chair the meeting.

Devotions

Graham opened by reflecting on the prayer meeting which had taken place immediately before the meeting. Some of the words given were 'Trust in Me, 'Be sincere' 'It's not what we know but who we know that is important in knowing Jesus' 'If our focus is in you need to be thankful in all things' 'There are no nobodies in Jesus Christ. We are all handpicked' Graham said that we should all be encouraged that God is saying that we are all special, we are all special to Him

Romans 12: 1-10 A Living Sacrifice to God

¹ And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him. ² Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

³ Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. ⁴ Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, ⁵ so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

⁶ In His grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. ⁷ If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. ⁸ If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

⁹ Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. ¹⁰ Love each other with genuine affection and take delight in honouring each other.

It speaks well of who we are in Christ and our relationship with one another. Lee will tell you that if you get bitten by a dog, your whole body aches, not just your finger. We are part of a whole, and it may not be us that gets hurt. If somebody else is hurting, then we should be feeling that throughout the fellowship and seeing what we can do to support and help.

What does this mean for us?

1. Prioritise the Presence of God. Which is a sacrificial desire to put God first in all things.
2. Be Holy. We are not called to be better copies of what the world does. We are called to be set apart and be a different reality for the world to see. We are to act and think in a different way to the broken world in which we live.
3. We are then to live out God's will for us. This will lead to fulfilment and satisfaction. We will know God's pleasure.
4. As we are "in Christ" so God has put us together to be His body working together for His glory and bringing His Kingdom reality to this world; seeing the communities we live, work and serve transformed.
5. We are to develop the skills, or gifts, God has given to each one of us so that we can work together on His Kingdom business.
6. The basis of us being the body of Christ is love. We are instructed to love one another with genuine affection, and also to honour each other. That means we do not gossip about others, we do not dwell on their failings, we may have to challenge sinful behaviour, but we must always find ways of encouraging and building up each other.

That is briefly what God wants to say to us. That being a body together we need to work things through together. We need to honour one another. To look for the best in one another. Not dwell on those things that are often so obvious. They are the things that take our attention instead of looking for that deep nugget of gold or that diamond that is within. Then get that out so that you get blessed and someone else finds the rest. It is an act of the will, and the way of your heart, in terms of church, together, seeking to do God's will.'

Graham then prayed before the business of the meeting commenced.

Apologies:

Sue and Steve Parker, Judith Smith, Chris Butler and Melanie Crewe-Butler, Burcin and Milixa LeFerve, Jim and Dianne Clifton, Hannah Cassell and Danni Simpson

Minutes of CMM 16th July 2019

The minutes of the Church Members Meeting on the 16th July 2019 were accepted as a true and accurate record following the removal of Jenny Stephenson from the apologies

Proposed: Ruth Bellerby

Seconded: Serena Stevenson

All in favour - No abstentions

There were no matters arising

Len Smith arrived

Elders Update: Graham Simpson

The emphasis for the Autumn term is preparing the church to be more active in looking out, reaching out, and releasing people to pursue their God-given dreams. This is to give opportunity for the Kingdom of God to impact, through each one of us, our various areas of

work, the communities we live in and Bentley New Village. For this to be successful, it is essential that we 'Prioritise the Presence of God'. This has and will be the focus of Sunday teaching and the encouragement for the prayer meetings.

Prayer and action flowing from prayer, God speaking to us, is the only way we can fulfil the church vision to 'Make disciples who make disciples.' We are called to be witnesses to who God is to us, tell of His love for us, live out our lives with the Hope and Joy that comes from knowing Him and introduce people to Jesus who is 'the Way, the Truth and the Life.'

At the July church meeting, we all shared around the topic of prayer, and a number of suggestions were made for us to consider.

- Is Tuesday the best afternoon or evening for prayer? We need you to indicate what days and times are best for you. Please put your name on the Preferred Prayer Times lists.
- Life Group Leaders - is prayer important within your group?
- 24 hours of prayer would be arranged when we have a clearer awareness of what God is wanting for us as church.
- Rhythms of prayer are a good self-discipline and are to be encouraged, without them becoming legalistic or religious.
- Some have signed up for prayer walking, adopting a street or area. If you are physically unable to prayer walk, then link with a couple who do, to support them. Please consider how you can get involved.
- An additional prayer focus is for mature Christians who have the same vision as the church, to be called here by God.

We continue to seek God's person to be our full-time paid leader. The elders, along with Clive, are exploring various ways of identifying who this may be. Keep praying for wisdom as we actively wait for God's appointed person. This afternoon as Elders we held a conference call with a possible person. He lives in Eastbourne and is in the final year of his training. We feel it might be right to explore further and we are asking Adebayo Babalola him to look at a couple of dates for him to come and look at this area and with the possibility of hearing him preach.

Finance: David Bellerby

David circulated copies of the accounts.

Our bank balance today is £77017.70 an increase of £22,000 on the same time last year. This is mainly due to a slight increase in giving and reduced outgoings, which includes not having to pay a Minister's wages. Gift Aid reclaim from HMRC amounts to £11216.25 and we have just started to receive income from letting out the manse.

Graham thanked David for looking after the accounts along with all those who helped him

Other reports incl Safeguarding:

Gill Beams updated the meeting with the fact that the majority of DBS checks had been completed. Gill reported that with Annette in CBBC, they had been looking at the possibility of all CBBC volunteers wearing a lanyard with identification, showing who they were and making it easier for visitors to identify them. Annette also has a list of all DBS cleared persons so that she can identify who can be asked to assist with CBBC. This doesn't mean that if you don't hold a DBS certificate that you will not be asked to help out, it just means that you will not be left on your own with children. As we move forward we are looking at some refresher training regarding Safeguarding.

Graham thanked Gill for her work and Annette and her team for all they do at CBBC.

Jenny Stephenson reported that they now have a good relationship with the head at New Village School and she had asked that we would pray into certain areas. Jenny shared one of the main points which was the amount of domestic violence that children witness on a daily basis.

Jenny had felt challenged, both herself and as a church to help with items that the school needed. Jenny then read out a list of items which she encouraged church to collect over the coming weeks, which we could then take to the school.

Graham then led the meeting in prayer for our children and for New Village School

Membership

Linda Williams has resigned and will now be worshipping at All Saints Woodlands.

David Hodson-Walker has also resigned and will be worshipping at St Peters Bentley.

It is always sad to lose people from our church fellowship, but it is good to know that in both these cases the individuals concerned have not walked away from their faith. Andrew then read a letter received from David.

Dave Miller then spoke concerning Steve and Heather Rigg who people will have noticed have not been in church for a few weeks. He emphasised that he could not share a lot, but at the moment they are feeling overwhelmed. They are taking some time out and will also be visiting some other churches. The main thing is that we pray for them during this difficult period.

There was then a time of prayer

Christmas Events / Activities

Andrew gave a brief overview of the Christmas Activity day which would be happening again this year and for which plans were well advanced. He encouraged people to sign up to help on the day.

He then outlined all the other Christmas services including the Flower Decorating by Vicki and the joint carol service at St Peters

CIO Update

Andrew then gave a short presentation concerning our move as a church to becoming a CIO (Presentation notes attached)

Following the presentation Andrew emphasized the need to pray about this whole issue, both tonight and over the coming weeks before we come back together to vote on whether this is right for us.

The vote to go forward and adopt a new constitution, which would not come into effect until we transition to a CIO would be at a Special Church Members Meeting, which for the convenience of everybody would take place following a Sunday morning service, probably in about three weeks time.

There then followed a time for questions. These did not highlight any new or difficult areas for further investigation. As a membership and a church most people would not notice any real change. The main issue would be concerning the liability for any debt etc, which at the moment rests with the leadership, would be reduced to a minimum amount.

The presentation and questions and answers were recorded so that anybody, present or absent could listen to what had taken place.

There then followed a time of prayer

Future Events and Dates:

Light Evening on 31st October

Christmas Events – See notices

No date had been set for the next Church Members Meeting

Graham brought the meeting to a close at 21:12

Signed Date: 3rd March 2020
Graham Simpson (Elder)