

## Secretary's Report

So, this is my first report as the church secretary since we officially became a CIO back in May 2021, after what was a long drawn-out process, through a pandemic that nobody had expected when we set out on this process.

What difference has it made to us all in the running of church? Well very little really. There are certain things which have had to be formalised, but the reality is that the biggest change will be that when we come to the AGM we will be formally electing the Trustees of the CIO.

The Leadership kicked off the year with the Fresh Streams National Leadership conference, which in 2021, like so many other things, was held on line. Yes, it did mean that we couldn't interact in the same way, however it took nothing away from the words given by the speakers or the worship.

The major changes during the year have been the employment of three new people by the church and the taking on of a new property, Joel and Kirsty's house on a leaseback basis, a second manse.

In November, we employed our new cleaner, Karen Wilkinson, a regular (although relatively new attendee) making sure that everywhere is spic and span not just for ourselves, but for anybody who uses the church facilities.

In July we met and agreed to employ Hannah Cassell for one day a week as our Digital Recourses Leader. We recognise the work that she has put in both when we were not meeting and since we have come back together to ensure that a Sunday service goes out on line, each and every week.

Oh, and one other person. After a long wait we appointed Joel as our new minister on the 1<sup>st</sup> February, and we all joined with people from across the country on 7<sup>th</sup> March for Joel's induction on Zoom.

Before we met together in church, and following the setback of a delay in the relaxing of the Stage 4 roadmap, we met on two Sundays for a picnic in Bentley Park. Finally, we were able to meet together in church on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July for worship and although we recognised that some of our congregation felt that it was too soon to meet with others, it was a joyous occasion to be able to worship together. Whether we are masks on or masks off, it matters not. It doesn't affect the reason that we are here, to offer worship and praise to our Lord.

In October we had first baptism since lockdown when we saw Neil Shakleton baptised. Baptisms are always a special day and this one was no exception.

The Leadership rounded off their year by going away together for a day. A day where God was heard powerfully in so many ways.

Church attendance has steadily grown since we have returned and we now have 57 members. With numbers growing it would be good to see that reflected in our membership during 2022.

I would like to thank everyone who contributes to making God's church here in Bentley such a great place to be. Some of you are mentioned in the reports you will have had the chance to read, but even more are not. Whether you head up a group, have another formalised role or just turn up and see that something needs doing, and just gets on with it, thank you.

My prayer for us all is that, as it says in Colossians 3: 'Above all, clothe yourselves with Love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony'

Thank you and Bless you all.

Andrew

Church Secretary