

## Minutes of Bentley Baptist Church AGM held on: Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Minister and Chair:** Joel Ward  
**Minute Taker:** Andrew Thompsett (Secretary)

**Present:** Stephen and Sue Parker, Denise and Colin Russell, Danni and Ian Simpson, Graham and Mary Simpson, John Smith, Len Smith, Janet Stacey, Phil and Serens Stevenson, Alison Whiteley, Pauline Fuller, Anne Gosling, Lee and Lorraine Jackson, Lizzi Jaques, Burcin LeFevre, Dave and Moira Miller, Annette Morris, Catherine Wilson, Alyesha and Martin Wright, Gill Beams, David Bellerby, Hannah and Michael Cassell, Linda and Martin Chadwick, Farrell Clifford, Dianne and Jim Clifton, John Costin, Karen and Steve Costin, Sue Costin, Christine Daniels,

**Total Members Present 42**

**Non-Members present:** Toby Davies, Miriam Davies, Phill Needham and Karen Jones

### **Appointment of Scrutineers:**

Andrew explained that as per the constitution, Alison Whiteley and Karen Costin had already been appointed as scrutineers. The postal votes, of which five had been received, will be counted immediately.

Once votes have been cast later, they will be added together to produce a final result.

### **Devotions – Joel Ward**

We are looking at Acts 11, a story that I love.

<sup>19</sup> Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. <sup>20</sup> Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup> The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

<sup>22</sup> News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. <sup>23</sup> When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. <sup>24</sup> He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

This is a time when famously the gospel moved from the Jews to everybody. There were all sorts of transitions. It was a time of expansion geographically, expanding

into a whole different continent. An expansion of ideology. The idea that people who have no knowledge about Jewish things, can actually be a follower of Jesus. There was an expectation of where God's presence would work. There is a fantastic verse, v21 says 'The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.' We might imagine that it was just where people ended up, but that phrase in the bible 'The Lord's hand was with them' is always symbolic of God's approval, of God's sending, of God ordaining something to happen. God was actually saying 'I am here. There is no accident in this situation' I just want to encourage us tonight that we have the vision from God to be this healthy hub church with spiritual outposts, saying 'God, where do you want us to be?' For me, this story is the epitome of that. It's saying, you remain true to everything I have said about you. This is the vision, to go to all the nations, but to go to places where we might not expect to go, where we might not have the vision to go and where God may have placed us and we find an opportunity and the hand of the Lord is with us. God is saying, you might feel like you have ended up in this location by chance, maybe you moved for work or have moved house. You think it is by chance, but God is saying 'My hand is upon this'. I think we need to continue to press, over the coming days, into this vision of God, for us, to be looking at where spiritual outposts, micro churches are going to be in the coming days. They didn't go out with an organisational plan. They didn't have a structure for setting up a church. They just went and told people about Jesus and suddenly discovered that they had a church, then they called for backup and then put the structure in place. I think that sometimes our thinking is the wrong way round. We think that everything has to be in place before we give something a name and a status, before we say that God's at work. God is the other way round. God so often moves the other way round. So I think there is an encouragement for us in that scripture. I think we need to be mindful in the coming days, of wherever we happen to be, 'Is there a move of God? Is the hand of the Lord upon this situation and could there be something that God is doing that we need to be aware of, that might not be as incidental or accidental as we think.

That's what I believe that God wanted me to share this evening. I don't have any defined outcomes or a particular place in my head at all, but I think that God, really wants us, in the coming season, just to be so aware, to be ready. To be so mindful that we could be in a situation where we realise that God is doing something and go back to that phrase 'The hand of the Lord was with them'. God was working, actively in a situation and when He does, we have to respond. I felt God saying 'I just want to plant readiness on your hearts'. I am not telling you what I am doing, but I am telling you that something is coming. You're going to be somewhere, something is going to happen, and you have to be ready to go.

Joel then prayed before the meeting.

### **Apologies:**

Lena Parker, Peter and Sally Plant, Jenny Stephenson, Susan Whitmore, Linda Williamson, Trim Wilson, Ruth Bellerby, Chris Butler, Melanie Crewe-Butler, Lynne Foltyn and Melixa LeFevre.

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 21st March 2023**

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023 were passed at the Church Members Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

### **Election of Officers**

Andrew explained the voting procedures

The nominations were

Ruth Bellerby for Elder

Ruth Bellerby for Secretary/Admin Deacon

Adrian Humphris for Fabric Deacon

Joel then made it clear that Ruth can be voted for to take on both roles. She can be voted for Elder and voted for Admin Deacon.

He then reminded people that we should be voting on what God is saying, not what we think.

The scrutineers then handed out and then collected in the voting papers before retiring to the office to count the votes

### **Affirmation of Church Treasurer (David Bellerby)**

Andrew explained that this position would be by a show of hands

David Bellerby was re-affirmed unanimously without abstention

### **Minister Report (Appendix 1): Joel Ward**

Joel recapped some key elements from his report which was available on the website and is attached to these minutes as Appendix 1

Proposed by Michael Cassell    Seconded by Mary Simpson  
Accepted unanimously without any abstentions.

### **Secretary's Report (Appendix 2): Andrew Thompsett**

Andrew read his report which is available on the website and is attached to these minutes as Appendix 2

Proposed by Dave Miller Seconded by Colin Russell  
Accepted unanimously without any abstentions.

Joel then thanked Andrew for all his work over the years as Secretary and presented him with a gift from the church. This was met with a round of applause

Joel then went on to thank Colin Russell for all his years of service as Fabric Deacon. He was also presented with a gift from the church. This was met with a round of applause

Joel said, in John 17:4 Jesus is praying in the garden of Gethsemane and He says this to his Father.

'I have brought glory to You here on earth, by completing the work you gave me to do'

I think this applies to both Andrew and Colin, thank you for completing the work that God gave you to do in those roles over the years that you served. In that way you have brought glory to God through your service. Thank you both so much.

Joel prayed to close the AGM. The votes were still being counted and would be announced as soon as the scrutineers had completed the counting of the votes.

After a short break Andrew was able to announce the results of the voting.

Adrian Humphries was elected as Fabric Deacon. Ruth Bellerby was elected as Church Secretary/Admin Deacon, but was not re-elected as an Elder

Joel then prayed for both Adrian and Ruth in their new roles.

Signed: .....Date: Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024  
(Joel Ward - Minister)

BBC AGM 19.3.24

## Appendix 1

### Minister's Report

#### Looking back on 2023

Our focus for 2023 was 'Who are you?' given to us by God from 2 Corinthians 5:17, which tells us we are "a new creation" as well as "be transformed" (Romans 12:2) which were passages God had spoken to the elders about on several occasions.

We agreed that our preaching focus and ongoing discernment about how to be a church hub with spiritual outposts was served well by this focus.

In line with our vision to **Make Disciples who Make Disciples** and informed by our **Discipleship Journey Strategy**, the four key strategic goals of the Minister & Elders in 2023 are listed below (alongside the outcomes):

Strategic Goals for 2023	What did we achieve?
Enable Bentley BC to explore and understand the vision to plant Church Outposts.	The concept of outpost church continued to be shared through preaching and church meetings. We also welcomed a visit from Chrissy Remsberg and Chris Knight (Beacon church and Firestarters network) who shared with us how they have been using a multi-congregational church model to grow. In 2023 we also welcomed our first new church members who exclusively attend our Stepping Stones outpost church and not the Sunday morning service.
Train and develop leaders to lead in the Church Hub and to plant and lead Church Outposts.	To train and equip new leaders we have begun a new leadership course – the 'Empower' course – and welcomed new church outpost leaders.  We have also been pleased to welcome those from other churches onto the course.
Discern what and where the next <u>two</u> Church Outposts should be.	Whilst we haven't had confirmation from God, nor a specific plan of action to formally start a new outpost church, we have been excited by the ministry of Broderick and Ancelater at the Kirkstone close community centre as they began stepping out in running a Bible study and prayer time following their existing craft group. We have also been exploring the potential for a church outpost in a local care home, though once again nothing concrete is in place.
Employ a new Youth and children's worker to help us continue to develop our work with children and young people	We began advertising for a new youth and children's worker in mid-2023 but were unsuccessful in our first attempt to appoint a worker.  Following this, Toby Davies applied for the position and following interviews and prayerful discernment, the church decided to invite

	him to take on the role which he started in January 2024. Toby was formally commissioned on Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan.
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### **Sunday Teaching**

During 2023 we ran teaching series on the Great commission of Jesus (Make disciples who make disciples), explored our identity in Jesus asking: 'Who are you?', looked at 'Encounters with Jesus' in the gospels, taught around the theme of 'overcoming', explored some popular Psalms and of course placed our focus upon Easter and Christmas during those seasons.

Of particular note was our series on Human Sexuality, accompanied by many discussions and two opportunities to discuss big questions on this theme with the church leadership. We were very pleased that though many of us were challenged by the different topics and/or held different views to one another, we remained unified in love with a mature and Christ-like attitude displayed by most of the church.

I am overjoyed that many people have been able to respond for prayer or give their lives to Jesus through our Sunday ministry and there are many testimonies of God's goodness as a result!

### **Looking Up – what is God saying?**

As we press into 2024 the Elders believe God is calling us to the focus of 'Be Holy, because I AM Holy' (1 Peter 1:16). This will be reflected in the Elder's personal growth and devotions as well as our teaching series' and culture.

We also strongly feel that this is a year of mission, when God will pour us out into the surrounding streets and areas of the city to reach the lost in a significant way.

This has been confirmed by several opportunities God has given us in the coming year and a prophetic vision given to Evelyn Lithgow:

*'She had seen the church building, with water flowing out into the streets and community from every door and window.'*

This fits well with the theme of Holiness, as we will be unable to pour out God's goodness to those around us if we are being held back by areas in our lives in need of transformation.

### **Looking Forward – Minister and Elder's Strategic Objectives for 2024**

1. Investing in Toby and our Youth and Children's ministry
2. Two Alpha Courses. One daytime course at Renew 127 through Winter/Spring and one evening course in the Summer months when the evenings are lighter.



### 3. Two Summer Missions

- Bentley members to receive training and be a hub for one of Kyria 180's 'Big 3' City outreach missions in May
- Partner with an American team sent by youth For Christ (YFC) working in Bentley schools and community in June

#### Ongoing Objectives:

- Planting Outpost churches to create capacity for growth
- Ensure health and growth of our Life Groups

Joel Ward



**Secretary's Report - 2023**

**The Admin Team exists to resource and equip frontline ministries  
to fulfil the vision of the church**

Nearly 5 thousand people came through the door for our main services in 2023. The averages per week were 82.2 Adults, Youth 5.4 and Children 15.1. Our Second Sunday services averaged 22.1 Adults.

On three occasions we had over 120 people in church. On Easter Sunday, when the Orlando Mission came and on November 12<sup>th</sup>

You will have read elsewhere in the reports that (with no credits to Richard Curtis) in 2023 we had four weddings and a funeral.

Once again, we have been blessed with new people coming into church. We have had 10 new members (although we lost four, who either stopped attending or resigned). The membership which stands at 77 does not reflect the number of new people coming to church.

A really good measure of where we are at, is the number of people giving their lives to God through baptism. It is always a special time and in 2023 we saw 9 people baptised.

As a CIO, it is important for the Leadership Team to enhance their skills and build up their knowledge. To that end three of us attended the Fresh Streams Conference in January and three of us attended the two-day Firestarters conversation at Headingley (Leeds) at the end of February (you may remember Chrissy Remsburg, who was part of the training team, preaching in church).

In addition, all of the Leadership Team, along with others in church, have completed their Level 2 Safeguarding Training, and those that were identified as requiring a higher level have completed their Level 3 Safeguarding Training.

In September the wider leadership once again had an away day on the outskirts of Sheffield. This was a chance to pray, listen to God and discern what He was saying for the church, moving forwards, in Bentley.

November, saw 10 church members undergo a days, First Aid Training.

Most areas of church life are covered in individual reports and I thank everyone who gives their time for God's work. I will mention Peter who is here most Sundays to provide tea and coffee for us as we arrive, and those that step up to serve refreshments after the services, greet at the door and look after our youngest children in the creche.

The biggest change to Admin came in 2023 with the arrival of Church Suite. It will take time for everyone to get used to using it to its full potential and thanks go to Lorraine for setting everything up.





Thank you and Bless you all.

Andrew Thompsett

Church Secretary