

# MINUTES – CHURCH MEETING

Thursday 26th January 2017 at 8pm in the Clifford Wood Room

## Introduction

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- Refreshments were served before the meeting
- The theme of this meeting is **Pastorate**. (The theme had not been publicised before the meeting, nor had the programme been distributed.)
- There were 17 Church members present (plus one non-member). Apologies were received from Paul Burt, Jenny Lane, Tim and Caroline Gillard, Ray and Nellie Ong, Peter and Janet Dallman.
- The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 24th November, were signed as a correct record.

## Prayer

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- A time of prayer was led by Andy.

## Andy Explains

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- Andy announced that he will be leaving the Church to take up the role as minister at another Church.
- He explained that he is not in any way unhappy with WHBC. A window has arisen whereby Esther is leaving secondary school but Noah has not yet started, allowing an opportunity to move without disrupting his secondary education which they do not wish to do. Andy felt the desire to be the minister at one more church before he retires, and also to work as part of a team rather than on his own. Andy and Sarah were beginning to consider whether to explore the possibility of moving when Andy was approached by a friend who was the former minister of a Church in Sevenoaks, advising him that a role was available for a second minister, which would be ideal for him.
- The Church is Bessels Green Baptist Church. It has around 200 members, and is located in what was a small village which has now been consumed by Sevenoaks, next to the M25.
- Andy has been investigating since October, he preached with a view on 15<sup>th</sup> January, and the Church Meeting made the decision to appoint him last Sunday.
- Andy will leave after Easter – the exact date is not confirmed as the Manse at Bessels Green is currently occupied, but probably some time in May.

## What Next? (Andrew)

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- Andrew has been studying the guidance from both the BU and the LBA regarding how to proceed with appointing a new minister. The first step in the process is to create a 'Church Profile' – a document which describes the Church and the qualities we are looking for in a minister.
- The Church Profile is sent to the BU's 'Settlement Team' – they use it to identify possible suitable candidates from the pool of ministers who are looking for a new church. They then forward the profiles of those candidates to us and we decide who we would like to

take further – a committee will need to be formed to do this. The final decision on who to appoint as minister will be made by the Church Meeting.

- It is important for the whole congregation to have an opportunity to provide input into the Church Profile. It is common for churches to hold a special event, to which everyone is invited, lasting a whole day or half a day, where the congregation have the opportunity to think through various aspects of what should go in the profile. It was suggested that such an event should be led by an external facilitator who is experienced with these events – this was done successfully during the last transition.
- It is seen as good practice not to involve the outgoing minister in the process of creating the Church Profile or appointing a new minister, though there is nothing to stop us from beginning this process before Andy leaves us.
- There was energy amongst the members to get the profile started as soon as possible.
- As well as thinking about a new minister, we also need to plan how the Church will be run and organised during the transition period, which is likely to be at least a year. The deacons will start considering this urgently and will keep the congregation closely informed as to their plans.
- One of the most important jobs will be to ensure that the pastoral needs of the congregation are looked after while there is no minister – a pastoral team will be formed to do this.
- The district and regional ministers have been informed that Andy is leaving and they will support us in our next steps.
- Andy would like the rest of the congregation who are not present at the meeting to be told of the news as soon as possible, preferably before Sunday. An email announcement will be sent out on the Notices list tonight, and he will call the people who do not have email.

## **Other Matters**

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- The Year 1 group (90 children) from Highfield School will be visiting the Church tomorrow as part of their RE studies.
- A special Tribute Fund has been set up with Tear Fund in memory of Joy Shriever. At present £870 has been raised.

## **Prayer**

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- There was a time of prayer for Andy and his family, for the ongoing work of the Church during the transition period and for wisdom and guidance in the appointment of a new minister.

## **People**

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- News was shared about a number of members of friends.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_