

Thornbury Baptist Church

Minutes of Family Forum meeting 6 February 2018

Paul Ferguson gave a word of welcome and led a time of worship.

43 Members were present and 23 had sent apologies.

Follow up from the last Family Forum on 18 October 2017

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

Good News

Jo Bell, Ellie Colwill, Julie and Charles Leeming have become new members. Lots of interest from people who are new to the area.

Green Pastures/Oasis Thornbury – The sale of the house has now completed and work has begun. Lots of help needed and prayer too.

Green Living – Danny Bonnett is setting up a group to look at how green we are as a church (at TBC and in our homes) and what we can do to improve.

Leadership

- **Development Group** – This group was established over a year ago to create a wider representation in discussions of issues that affect TBC. Following an exercise undertaken in the past few months, and taking account of experiences elsewhere in Church, it was felt that God was asking us to prioritise two things in 2018; Evangelism (see below) and Refreshing Sunday morning services ; for Community Services to take account of the fact that teenagers are in all the time and for guests to be invited and for all services to create space for the Holy Spirit to minister through us.
 - The following were members of the group in 2017: Elders plus Daisy Byrne, Clarri Millard, Julia Jolley, Mike Jolley, Chris Beddoes, Mary-Anne Wilmott, Heather J Staley, Jude Dickenson, Richard Crabtree.
 - The following are members of the group for 2018: Elders plus Daisy Byrne, Julia Jolley, Mary-Anne Wilmott, Heather J Staley, Jude Dickenson, Richard Crabtree, Dave Tubb, Anna Colwill, Alina Garner, Jon Bevan, Nicky Phipps.
- **Ministry Team Leaders** – There are nine ministries each overseen by an Elder. E.g. Children and Youth, Pastoral, Admin and Finance. Within those ministries certain individuals have specific roles as Ministry Team Leaders. Dan Potter is an MTL within Children and Youth and Rhea Fox and Simon Lewis were affirmed as MTLs within the Pastoral and Admin and Finance ministries respectively.
- **Paul's sabbatical** – Paul will be on sabbatical from June 2018 until September 2018.

- **Elders** – Paul spoke of the need for some new Elders to join the Eldership Team. Dave Ling has been put forward for consideration. Paul explained that when Dave's name was put forward, Paul raised the issue that Dave had come to faith in a Methodist context when his believing parents had Dave baptised as an infant and then Dave confirmed his baptism when he was able to chose faith for himself. This was a huge moment of commitment for Dave and as a church we fully accept this position. Paul pointed out that Dave holds all of the values that are required as an Elder and Dave fully supports the church's position on believers' baptism having been involved in baptising a number of people and his own children having been baptised at TBC also.

Paul explained in more detail the background to our position on baptism and membership and why we need to make a change to the guidelines.

A number of years ago TBC needed to reconsider its stance on only permitting those who have been baptised as believers in to church membership. This was because we were increasingly getting people wanting to join the church from other Christian denominations, where their practice is to baptise infants, and this is followed at a later date, by confirmation. Whilst maintaining our position that baptism is for those who believe and should follow faith in and commitment to Christ, we wanted to acknowledge that God is at work throughout his church and to require people to be baptised in order to become members would be entirely wrong. So at that time we adopted what can be called an 'open membership', this allows for people who feel that in all conscience that their baptism and subsequent confirmation is a faithful response the call of God to believe and be baptised. We did add one caveat at the time to try and alleviate some members' worries about maintaining the importance of believers' baptism and that was to say that an elder should have been baptised as a believer. We now feel, particularly in the light of Dave Ling's proposed eldership role that we should change this requirement and instead insist that the individual concerned should fully support and advocate believers' baptism.

Evangelism Discussion

David spoke of the importance of making a difference on our front lines and that we are messengers of the Gospel when we are out and about. David discussed the high value of sharing faith and the low confidence many of us have in discussing our faith with people and encouraged the members to discuss this.

We discussed things that affect our confidence:

- The relationship between the yourself and who you are talking to
- Rejection
- Where we are with our relationship with Christ and who we are

- Being open to plant a seed of faith – it's a process
- Being sensitive to the other person and the appropriate way to talk to them
- When the moment is obvious
- Confidence in knowledge
- Confidence in commencing in conversation

We discussed how to help one another grow in confidence:

- Pray for one another
- Sharing experiences to learn from one another
- Discussing difficult topics with one another
- Attending Sunday services
- Thinking about different ways to share faith
- Learning to listen to God and what he wants us to do
- Remembering how we felt before we became Christians
- Using your own life stories
- Being sensitive to where other people have come from

What we are doing as a church to encourage faith sharing:

- Small Groups encouraged to use resources related to faith sharing
- Connect prayer-bulletin
- Sunday Morning teaching
- Digging Deeper evenings aim to equip us for faith sharing
- Development Group/Elders/Family Forums focussed on faith sharing

David Lawrence led us in prayer.

Accounts

The Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2017 had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. Terry Wicks presented them and highlighted that they supported the need for the financial review that was undertaken during the past 12 months and were consistent with that review in showing an excess of expenditure over income. The action taken to reduce expenditure and increase income as a result of the financial review seems to have addressed the gap between expenditure and income in 2018.

Green Pastures

The meeting concluded with prayer for Green Pastures.