

Church Council Update – The following update reports on the Church Council discussion at the December CC meeting and the away ½ day held at the end of November. If you have any questions regarding this, please speak to Peter or any member of the Church Council.

CC Review – The CC's six monthly away day took place at the end of November. We spent the afternoon considering our Mission, Vision and Values and how our many activities/ministries supported this. We spent time considering mission and how we move people from first engagement with the church to exploring the faith and making their own commitment. We have strong foundation for making contact with people, for example through Café Eden but struggle with the next step. Whilst we all have a responsibility for evangelism, we recognise that this is a gift that is not particularly prominent in our membership. We should pray earnestly for people with an evangelistic gifting, as this is an important part of fulfilling the mission and growing the church.

We discussed the desire to make the Christian Centre more central to the life of the community and a place where people will naturally seek support in times of need. Whilst much is being done already to make the church accessible, there are some practical issues that have been identified, such as more clearly identifying the Christian Centre as a church, which would help.

Time was spent considering loads on members of the congregation in supporting everything that the church is doing. The difficult balance of making people aware of what is happening but not making them feel pressured was discussed. There is a requirement to provide more information about all that is going on, including the areas where help is needed. It is important that people do not feel pressured by this and that everyone feels that they can say no and are able to step down from things without feeling guilty. This will need to be included in a future sermon series but we all have a responsibility for this, even if that means that as a church we have to stop doing things sometimes. Similarly we should be aware of opportunities where changes would enable better alignment of people's roles to their gifting as this can also reduce stress levels.

Overall though, we should remember that the concerns we have are often because of the success of the various ministries (which says that we must be doing something right), and the fantastic commitment of the members of the congregation. The CC is planning to meet more regularly with the leaders of the various activities in the coming year, to be more proactive in our support and to ensure that we maintain sufficient focus, vision and direction.

The verse that “the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few” was brought to mind and is particularly pertinent for us at the moment. We must however continue to pray for the fruits that will come from this labour but remember that it will happen in God's time, not always to our own plans (but keep praying for more evangelists now though).

Youth Work – The youth concert on the 21st November was definitely something different for Peachcroft and brought new people into the church. There were some very positive aspects and some learning points. Many comments have already been received but if you would like to add anything please contact Lawrance or Peter. Lawrance is approaching six months in post and his contribution has been very much appreciated already, if you would like to contribute anything to the formal review process, please speak to Peter.

LEP Review – This is continuing and is now expected to report back early in the New Year.

Pastoral Care – About a dozen people have complete the CWR course consisting of six video/group discussion sessions with lots of homework in between. It was found by all to be a valuable course the application of which should allow our church to be better equipped to help in pastoral/caring issues. We were reminded about the importance of the welcome that new people receive and this is something that we need to continue to focus on. Plans are being drawn up for another Marriage Course in the New Year using updated material. It is intended to have a Valentine's Day dinner introduction event, with the regular sessions starting after Easter. If you have any questions regarding pastoral care, please talk to Roger or Jean Davidson.

Service start times – Related to the point above, one thing that has been noted is that visitors and new people often arrive earlier than the rest of the congregation and can be made to feel uncomfortable by the empty church and the erratic start times. Please can we encourage everyone to make the effort, where at all possible, to be at church and ready for the start of the service before 10am. Consider it part of our duty in welcoming newcomers.

Environment and Sustainability – Feedback was received from the sub group looking at our assessment against the Eco congregation benchmark, which includes Spiritual, Practical and Outreach aspects of our life together as a church. Progress has been made on the Spiritual side with the recent sermon series and Home Groups studying Planetwise material. On the practical side some further feasibility work is being undertaken to look at how we can reduce energy on the heating/hot water front and what we can do with the roof. With regard to outreach, there have already been some excellent events, which we would want to build on and further ideas utilising the garden at the rear are being investigated. If you want to contribute any ideas, please talk to any of the sub group (Martin and Naomi Tillin, Jo Wiggins, Dave Beaver, Lisa Wyatt).

Church meeting – There are a number of items relating to the items above that would benefit from discussion with the whole church (along with the Building Tithe and the Community Survey mentioned at the AGM), therefore we wanted to plan a church meeting for the New Year (feedback was that the AGM was too rushed and that we should meet separately to discuss major topics, not try to fit them in after the AGM business). We are therefore planning to meet after the morning service on 28th Feb. This will be followed by a bring and share lunch. Please put this in your diary.