

# Church Members Meeting Minutes

21<sup>st</sup> January 2024



WESTBOURNE PARK  
BAPTIST CHURCH

24 Church Members were present. A number of friends joined the meeting. Apologies given were recorded in the attendance book.

## LOVE GOD

Elizabeth opened the meeting with a focus on the church family and the opportunity for pastoral prayers in small groups.

The **minutes of the November 2023 Meeting** have been available on the church website. There were two **Matters Arising**. 1) Stu updated that the light on the cross at the top of the building has been repaired. 2) There is an additional Prayer Meeting on Wednesdays at 12:15 in the Prayer Room.

**Worship Update:** Felicia informed Members that the Worship Group have reintroduced their practices, with 2 being held each month; one on a Thursday evening from 18:00-20:00 and the other on the last Saturday morning of each month from 10:30-12:00. Anyone who feels led to get involved in the Sunday worship was encouraged to attend the practice. This may be a role related to the PA, helping to set up or clear up, sorting out cables, and so forth, not necessarily related to singing or playing an instrument, although this is also encouraged, and people can join practices until they feel ready to join the group on a Sunday morning.

## LOVE CHURCH

**Church Membership Classes:** Stu informed the Members that he is introducing a new style of Membership Class to help people think through whether they are called to join WPBC. Prospective members will then be visited by the Elders to get to know them and to explore their calling.

**Recap on Church Leadership Structure:** Stu reviewed the church structure that had been introduced during 2023, focusing on God being the absolute authority in the church, with the Member’s Meeting being the next layer of authority. The Elders provide the spiritual oversight of the church, focusing on pastoral care, encouraging people to grow, discerning God’s will for the church, as well as focusing on some issues of governance, such as safeguarding, policies and procedures. The introduction of Deacons to increase capacity within the Leadership team will mean that the team have more regular meetings this year. All areas of ministry in the church have a Leader who is not elected to the role, so brings flexibility for people to serve God in a specific area of church life, without the additional responsibilities of wider church leadership.

**Process for electing Deacons:** Elizabeth updated the meeting that the next opportunity to elect Deacons will be at our Member’s Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> May. For this election we will follow our previous pattern of nomination and voting, surrounded by prayer and discernment. The following timescale was shared:

Constitutional Requirement		Dates
List of eligible church members made public	Over 18; in membership over 1 year; meet biblical guidelines	17 <sup>th</sup> March
Announce during at least 3 Sunday Services		17 <sup>th</sup> March, 24 <sup>th</sup> March and 31 <sup>st</sup> March
Nominations received in writing	Deacon's nominated by Members. Core Leaders by Core Leadership Team	By end of 7th April
List of nominated people made public		14 <sup>th</sup> April
Announce during at least 3 Sunday Services		21 <sup>st</sup> April; 28 <sup>th</sup> April and 5 <sup>th</sup> May
Elections at a members meeting		12 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
50% of voting members have to vote	Leaders have to receive 2/3 of votes to be voted as a Core Leader/Elder or Deacon	

**Share teaching focus for 2024:** Stu shared that the preaching focus for 2024 will be the church mission statement, which we will explore phrase by phrase.

- a) During the week, we will be encouraged to take part in a Bible Reading plan with a chapter a day.
- b) We will also be encouraged to set an alarm for midday, and pray as a church "Let your kingdom come and let your will be done"
- c) Stu will introduce a 'getting to know you' slot into our Sunday services, interviewing people about how they spend their lives in their everyday normal place, so we can pray for each other in a more meaningful way.
- d) We will be encouraged to share testimonies to share what God has done / is doing.

## LOVE PEOPLE

**Discussion on small groups:** Stu has reviewed the summary of the discussions held during the interregnum on small groups and has identified that the conversations at the time centred on the following themes:

- Space and opportunities to connect
- Space to give and receive pastoral care and friendship
- Space for equipping and being equipped

Small groups fit within our church mission as they exist to equip one another to build the Kingdom of God where we are by loving God and loving people. If pastoral care is the main focus, the group may not provide space for growth. The proposal is to relaunch small groups with different purposes for different groups. As examples: men's and women's ministries help people connect and give & receive care; Celebrate Recovery gives and receives care and equips people; Focused small groups may centre on Bible Studies for equipping; some groups may have specific focus, such as CAP Money Advice, Leadership

Training courses, as examples. It will be important for every member to link in with at least one option of small group. Full details of proposed groups will be available for April when it is hoped to relaunch them.

Feedback from small group discussions included the following ideas:

- Its important to have consistency of days and times so people know when/where something is happening.
- Having different options, with groups having a defined duration makes them more manageable
- They need to be established first to help people feel they have a place within them
- We would need a programme of dates/times and focus
- Positive idea of a Fellowship Group where people discuss and apply the preaching
- Some groups could have a webinar format where people join via zoom for a 15 minute presentation (that could be recorded for future use) then discussion
- Groups where people have a common interest/goal, such as baking
- A group for 18 to 24 year olds
- Complete a survey of topics people are interested in to determine what subjects to look at
- We are not doing as good a job as we could with pastoral care, so need to balance this within the small group structure.

## LOVE God's Resources

**Reviewing our tithe allocation:** Elizabeth shared the current allocation of the church tithe over the last few years, and how this has been allocated to local, national and international organisations. People reviewed this briefly around their tables and the following feedback was received:

- More updates/information is needed on some of them, such as the Agape Arabic Centre
- The 'youth project' allowance is no longer being used as Katharine Biggs completed her year with the church in Bristol
- Can we reduce the number of organisations so we can support new projects?
- Can we support Dave and Michele Mahon directly?
- Members to prayerfully consider this before the next meeting

Stu will look at the tithe and bring a proposal to our March meeting.

**Closing Prayer:** Geoff closed the meeting with prayer.

**Date of next meeting:** Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024