

CHURCH OF ST PETER AND ST PAUL, ABINGTON

MINUTES OF PCC MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29th November 2023 AT 7.45PM PARISH ROOMS

PRESENT: Rev Byung Jun Kim, Bob Purser, Sue Harrison, Liz Kelly, Cathy Tinsley, John Wishart, Jim Mercer, Esme Cushing, Donald Loe, Lizzie Loe, Dianne Ward, Douglas Rutherford, Alison Barnes, Jane Evans, Andrew Munns, Melissa Tallack (minutes).

65/23 OPENING PRAYERS AND DEVOTION

The meeting opened in prayer.

66/23 APOLOGIES:

Rev Tracy Pegram, Prester Coleman, Susie McKay, Damian Pickard, Chris Waters, Matthew George

67/23 RECTOR'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Was covered under item 75/23

68/23 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20th SEPTEMBER 2023

Were approved by all present.

69/23 MATTERS ARISING

Christmas charities – as we have not heard back from Street Pastors, the Standing Committee proposes Christians Against Poverty instead. The two Christmas charities will therefore be Read Easy and Christians Against Poverty. This was supported by all present.

Balcony lighting – the work is almost finished, we are just waiting for two more light fittings.

70/23 CORRESPONDENCE

Commonwealth War Graves Commission – the Commonwealth War Graves Commission have asked if we would be prepared to forgo the £20/year they have been paying us. This was unanimously supported by all present.

71/23 SAFEGUARDING

There has been one safeguarding concern raised which is ongoing and measures are being put in place.

There are a few people who still have outstanding DBS checks.

Thank you to Esme for maintaining our safeguarding throughout this year.

72/23 TREASURERS REPORT

A small deficit is anticipated. The 2024 budget is being prepared and the finance committee will review this when the draft is available. £5-6,000 deficit is being planned next year but the finance committee will review this to see if it is possible to achieve a balance budget. Once the budget is ready for wider review, it will be circulated to the PCC members. The summary provided was clear, understandable and comprehensive.

The Harvest campaign raised £650.

73/23 REVIEW OF LAST THREE MONTHS

The Parish Quiz was very enjoyable. All three services (Harvest, All Souls, Remembrance) went very well. Positive comments were received regarding the Harvest all age service and it has been suggested that we extend the opportunities for all age services to make it a part of our worship pattern. This will be considered at the next Ministry team meeting in January and suggestions will be brought to the next PCC.

74/23 WORSHIP PLANNING

- Deanery Confirmation: Sunday 26 November at 3 pm at Christ Church
- Christingle Service: Sunday 10 Dec at 3 pm
- Carol Service: Sunday 17 Dec at 6 pm - mincepies and wine will be served after the service. Need volunteers to put candles out after the morning service and to relight them for the Carol service.
- St. Christopher's Carol Service: 22 Dec at 2.30 pm
- Christmas Eve: Sunday 24 Dec: 10 am Eucharist, 3 pm Crib service
- Christmas Midnight Service: 11.30 pm with Park Avenue Methodist
- Christmas Day: Monday 25 Dec 10 am
- Candlemas: 28 Jan *Candles to be prepared
- Ash Wednesday: 14 Feb at 7.30 pm
- Mothering Sunday All-Age Service: 10 Mar
- Palm Sunday: 24 Mar
- Maundy Thursday: 28 Mar 7.30 pm
- Good Friday: 29 Mar, Walk of Witness at 10 am, Good Friday Liturgy 2 pm
- Holy Saturday: 30 Mar at TBC
- Easter Sunday: 31 Mar

75/23 800th YEAR SINCE THE FIRST OFFICIAK RECORD OF THE RECTOR OF ABINGTON - DISCUSSION

2 Questions to discern as we mark the 800th year

- What would God want for us? (rather than from us)
: to be encouraged, to see the steadfastness of God, to be joyful, to recognise the needs of the community around us, to celebrate and to continue to thrive
- What is God calling us to be?
: to continue to be a beacon, the messengers of God's Kingdom, a good neighbour, a place of fellowship

Celebration Service Date: the Patronal Festival was proposed as the celebration date which is Sun 30 June 2024 and to consider dedicating that entire week as a week of celebration concluding with the Fete which is on Sat 6 July 2024.

A Steering Group will be formed and Melissa will act as chair.

Outreach idea – something related to the Foodbank, lonely elderly people who live on their own (tea party?), maybe 800 new contacts made throughout the year? Feed 800 people?

Other ideas:

- Sermon series
- Prester has offered to help with historical research
- Inspiring talks series – history of the church and Abington, churches in other parts of the world
- University of the third age have also offered to help with a historical topic
- Illuminating the church – seeing the church as a beacon, all hallows, projection onto the church
- A civic occasion
- Heritage weekend – 2nd week in Sept
- Linking with schools: Logo competition
- Theatre group – Hardington Players, Passion Play
- Family Fun Events
- Come and Sing Celebration Concert: Handel's Messiah in Autumn
- Link with Museum: Reenacting Old Village

- Commissioning music to celebrate 800 years– NPAT
- Commissioning a painting of icon (size, subject, where) – suggestion a picture of Saint Peter and Saint Paul looking down on our church showing our recognisable features (hearts, ribbons and churchyard)
- A timeline (1224-2024) on the south wall of the church
- Former choir members to come and sing
- Peterborough Diocese bellringers first quarter peel
- Choir give a concert of music/songs/hymns from last 800 years
- Plan a tree in the park
- Benches in the park
- Illuminating the church / light show
- A revised booklet on the church's history
- A book on Abington Parish
- Meeting other people in the parish
- Invite people back who have a link with the church
- Interviews with the congregation by the children of the church (and vice versa)
- Picture of the church now (to join the other pictures of the church near the vestry)

76/23 LINK WITH PARK AVENUE METHODIST CHURCH

19th January in the Parish Rooms at noon. All PCC are welcome.

Joint services – midnight mass at ours and Palm Sunday at the Methodist church. Were proposed but the preference was for a joint service on a normal Sunday service rather than a high day. The Methodist church congregation will also join us on our 800 celebration day service on 30th June.

We have also been asked by the Methodist Church whether they could use our car park on a Sunday morning. The Standing Committee agreed to bring the matter to this PCC meeting. We would need to let them know if/when we have an event or booking on a Sunday and Jun will confirm who Dianne should liaise with. This proposal was proposed as supported by Alison Barnes, seconded by Lizzie Loe and approved by all.

The Methodist Church has also asked us to consider whether we would be prepared to let the United Methodist Church use the Parish Rooms for their Sunday services. The Methodist Church has now been authorised to conduct same-sex marriages and in order to do this, all branches of the Methodist Church who use the venue have to agree. The proposal has not been supported by the UMC and so they are now looking for an alternative venue to worship. The UMC would pay for the use of the rooms, storage and clearing up. This was not supported but will be explored further.

77/23 MAUNDY THURSDAY LITURGY AND FOOT WASHING

The Standing Committee was split on whether we should or shouldn't include foot washing, as was the PCC

78/23 EXPANDING OCCASIONS FOR ALL AGE WORSHIP

Already discussed (see item 73/23)

79/23 LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

Living in love and faith is an official project of the Church of England intended to provide grounds for conversations about sexuality and marriage.

Recently the synod has been debating about whether to allow an official service of blessing for same sex couples in the Church. The latest synod approved this motion by a narrow margin. This means priests can now choose whether to conduct such service or object it.

It has caused all sorts of reaction from ultra conservative wings of the church to the very liberal and radical wings of the church. Some parishes are threatening to withdraw their parish shares to the Diocese as a protest. Some are seeking alternative arrangements for their episcopal oversight which means they are asking for their own flying bishops.

I have been deliberately quiet about this agenda and haven't introduced the project to the church for the following reasons.

Let me take myself as an example. I love you all in Christ and you love me as a fellow disciple of Christ. Now I happen to be Korean. Let's say one day, Melissa comes and says, 'Jun, you are Korean but that's okay. We still love you.' And she asks others, 'Folks, Jun is Korean but that's okay, isn't it? You would still love him wouldn't you?' How would I feel? I felt LLF was a bit like that.

Sometimes, actions speak louder than words. I was convinced that the way the people of Abington love and care for each other speaks itself. We love and care for each other regardless of our backgrounds, our political views and our sexual orientation. You love someone because of who they are. Sexuality is only part of that identity that is much larger and deeper that was formed and created by God's own hands. Therefore it is not sexuality that defines the person. It is God who defines the person who s/he is and it is also their response to God that will define who s/he will become. Whether we are Korean or English, whether we are gay or straight, that doesn't change that God himself is our creator and he knows who we are better than we do and who we are meant to be. Our identity was born and is formed in Him and His grace. And he holds us in his love even when we struggle to see him in our lives. It is because of God's grace that Jun will be still Jun, John will be still John, Melissa will be still Melissa.

Since the motion is passed by the Synod now, I thought this is the right time for me to clarify my position here to the PCC and invite you to share with me your views on my position.

When this trial service of blessing is officially introduced to the parish, then my position is I will be willing to conduct such service of blessing for same sex couples. I welcome that the church will send a message that our God welcomes everyone, gay, straight, citizens, foreigners, married, single, divorced, black, white, Asian. All have place at God's table. This does not mean, as the synod emphasised, any change in doctrinal understanding on marriage. This also does not mean this matter is closed now and we will not think about it anymore. This is simply a decision to take a step further to respond faithfully towards where God may be calling us to be to reflect his grace and glory in this world.

No one knows the whole truth than God. Some people tend to say what they believe to be right is the absolute truth. But only Jesus is the truth, the way and the life. We can only try to discern and follow him, acknowledging that God's ways and thoughts are always higher than ours. It is crucial therefore to approach this kind of matter with humility and with an attitude that leaves space for God to inspire us and enlighten us. Sometimes we will succeed, sometimes we won't which is why we will always have to be prepared to seek forgiveness and guidance.

LLF is a way of responding to God faithfully. And I would be willing to continue to seek God's will as we take this journey, seeing guidance, forgiveness and encouragement from God for ourselves and for each other.

Supportive and appreciative comments were made by the PCC, saying, 'Thank you for saying that.' 'We will support you.'

80/23 REPORT ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH MISSION

See report – there were no questions. Thank you to Cathy for her faithfulness, resilience, willingness and all she has achieved this year.

81/23 REPORT ON ANNA CHAPLAIN MISSION

The work at Abington Park View continues and the new owners are happy for this to continue. There is a team of about seven helpers.

Liz has completed another course on celebrating age, has led a workshop at the Cathedral on Anna Chaplaincy, attended the Explore Day and received a number of enquiries and has been asked to run the Anna Chaplaincy course for the Diocese.

This mission has seen a tremendous amount of development and growth, especially the link with APV and St Christophers. We do appreciate and value this ministry and sometimes have 40 attend on a Friday service at St Christophers and 20 viewing on a Sunday.

Our thanks were extended to Liz and her team of helpers.

82/23 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Buildings – the meeting discussed the need for a resolution on the churchyard memorial plaques and it was felt that such strong action was not needed. Jun guides families and the principle will be applied as part of the process (if no stone is wanted, ashes are placed in the ground under the East window).

On December 9th the windows in the small hall are being replaced.

83/23 AOB

None

84/23 FORTHCOMING EVENTS

See 74/23

85/23 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS 2024

SC: 31 Jan, 17 Apr, 19 June, 4 Sep, 6 Nov (all Wednesday at 7.45pm)

PCC: 6 Mar, 1 May, 10 July, 18 Sep, 27 Nov (all Wednesday at 7.45pm)

APCM: 28 Apr

THE MEETING FINISHED WITH THE GRACE