

St Matthew's Annual Church Meeting 17th May 2015

Agenda

1. Minutes of the previous meeting
2. DCC elections
3. Children's Ministry Report
4. Youth Ministry Report
5. Vicar's Report
6. Finance Report
7. Question time

Minutes

The meeting started with worship and prayer.

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the 2014 ACM were agreed, with no matters arising.

2. Election to the District Church Council

There was one DCC vacancy this year; Suzanne Owen was elected last year but her tenure had only one year to run. She stood down but was re-elected unopposed, having been proposed by Mary Wilson.

3. Children's Ministry

Jon gave his report prior to taking the children to their groups. He spoke about re-starting Deeper and running the Easter Holiday Club which had the theme of the Wild West. He had been pleasantly surprised that having expected about 8 children to come to Deeper, he had been fielding 20+ on a regular basis. The holiday club had catered for 40+ local children over 3 days. As Bright had grown so much, he was regularly splitting it into two, enabling the older children to do more grown up activities. He had also facilitated the inclusion of the children in the Communion Service to help them engage with it.

Ed Tranter thanked Jon for all his hard work in leading the children into faith.

4. Youth Ministry

Claire presented her report and explained about the different activities she undertook with the children and young adults in Year 6 and above. These included running a milkshake bar, football in church, film nights, talks about faith and God and giving the youngsters opportunities to explore God. She was grateful to her team of helpers as the youngsters look to them as role models. She had seen growth in the groups being run on Wednesdays (Ignite) and Sundays which she found exciting. She also enjoyed discipling the young.

Ruth Farthing expressed her appreciation for all the effort and encouragement that Claire was putting into her role.

Julian Brierley asked about discipleship and Claire explained how she was giving guitar lessons to two young girls and mentoring them at the same time.

Sarah Johnson asked about how people could get involved in mentoring and Claire replied that volunteers would be most welcome and if anyone was interested, to see her.

Mikey Harrowing asked whether she had a 10 year plan for Youth Work to which Claire replied that she had ideas on empowering the young to be more involved with projects such as The Noise and that her heart was for being alongside and there for the younger ones.

5. Vicar's Report

Chris began his report by thanking the Staff team, Leadership team and DCC for all their work over the last year.

He felt that there was a good connection between the Children's and Youth Ministries, now, with both of the Ministers wanting to see people loving Jesus, and it was clear that children's work was thriving.

He drew the congregation's attention to the Lent course and devotional as well as the Advent devotional and thanked Sarah Johnson and Mary Wilson for organising these; they had proved hugely successful.

Although last year's financial forecast had not been good, God had been gracious and the shortfall was actually much less than had been predicted as people had felt moved to tithe more.

He thanked Rosemary Blanchard and Sue Andrews for all their hard work in running the Community Lunch for so many years and said that the future of activities at St Matt's would need a change of direction.

He turned to the future and what the nature of our church meant by asking two questions: "Do we sustain church or does it sustain us?" and "Do we build church or does God build it?" We try to attract people to our church because we want them to know about Jesus. However, there was a danger in doing attractive things: where is the focus? God or the attraction? Our lives can be consumed by church so perhaps it's time to be different and not fill our lives with church activities. We are called to go; Jesus went to where people were and didn't expect them to come to him. This frees us to be all we are, where we are. We need to ask ourselves "How should I be serving Him?" We perhaps need to free up time to actually live our lives.

He touched on the outcome of the Vision Evening held at the beginning of the year from which 3 main ideas arose:

- a. Creating a café in the Church Centre
- b. Creating a foodbank
- c. Creating a skills register.

He was in discussion with the proponents of these ideas to see how we could take them forward.

At the end of Chris' presentation, Kirsty from the Hostel in Colebrook Road got up and said "Thank you" to everyone who takes cakes to them. It means a lot to the Hostel.

Chris Shaw said that he liked hearing people's testimonies about going and being disciples and asked for Chris' thoughts on "going" (e.g. the café). Mikey Harrowing voiced a similar question and Chris replied that St Matt's focussed on doing things in and for our community rather than the wider Tunbridge Wells community.

Jessica Brierley gave a testimony about blessing their road on Palm Sunday with branches because Tabitha had been moved to do so.

Finance

Giles presented the budget for last year which resulted in a £3.5k deficit rather than the predicted £20K. He hoped to get the accounts and his report on the website shortly. Deferred spending, efficiency savings, sales from Bee's mugs and people increasing their giving had all helped to reduce the deficit.

There was a projected shortfall of £8.5K in this year's budget, principally owing to the need for a new sound desk, currently costed at £5K. Now that there was a full complement of staff and more Children's and Youth Work happening, there were inevitably costs associated with that. Spending was currently on target, though.

He announced he would be looking to step down as Treasurer, having done it for the past 19 years.

There were no questions.

The meeting closed with an offering song and a blessing.