**Wellspring - Year 1 (2014/5)**

**Introduction**

An initial Annual Congregational Meeting for Wellspring was held on the 25th September, 2014 – following an inspirational LEP Inauguration on the preceding Sunday. After describing the different ways in which an LEP would be organised and run (in contrast to Baptist or Methodist procedures), the ACM re-visited our Ecumenical Vision Statement which had been agreed and authorised as an appropriate ‘foundation document’ by our Sponsoring Body (Churches Together for Derbyshire) - to whom, as an LEP, we are accountable. The document presents a four-fold structure of Worship, Caring, Outreach and Finance/Property, andunderlines our commitment to these four priority areas - both to exploit opportunities to ‘do church differently’ but also to maintain the bedrock traditions of our root denominations. Small groups explored some of the implications of this.

The election of Trustees followed, with Barbara Wilson, Bill Bowmer, Jenny Few, John Proctor, Paul Heppleston and Sue Watts being voted on.The Trustees subsequently co-opted Ali Ball and Val Ruddock as Trustees, and appointed (from their number) Barbara Wilson as Secretary. Since none of the Trustees were available to accept the role of Treasurer, Rob Few, though not a Trustee, was approached and agreed to function as Wellspring Treasurer on behalf of the Trustees –once the existing Baptist and Methodist financial arrangements had been revised and funds integrated into a new Wellspring account. The Revs. Robert Foster and John Bayes, as Wellspring ministers, were members of the Trustees *ex officio.*

At their first meeting, the Trustees agreed that Working Groups be established to concentrate on each of the four main areas identified in Wellspring’s ‘ecumenical vision statement’. Their recommendations would be reported back to Trustees’ meetings for further consideration and decision.(Other persons could be invited to contributeto these Working Groups as required.) The groups would initiallybe convened and chaired as follows:- Worship - Jenny Few; Pastoral Care - Sue Watts; Outreach - Barbara Wilson;Buildings & Finance -Bill Bowmer.

The year has proceeded with Congregational Meetings (open both to Members and ‘supporters’) held at two-monthly intervals. Trustees’ Meetings have been held each month.

This report below simply gives a series of illustrations from each of our four priority areas as to some of the most important and memorable developments of 2014/15 – contributed by those Trustees and Officers who are deeply involved. This format is chosen to convey something of the character of our teamwork at Wellspring; what the Report thereby lacks in fluidity it may hopefully supplement by an impression of vision, enjoyment and multiple personal input/output!

*[Further detail, of course, can be had from the Minutes of Congregational Meetings (kept by Hilary Adams) and from the Minutes of Trustee Meetings (kept by Barbara Wilson).]*

1. **Worship**

After worshipping together since June 2013, we’re getting used to being together!

**Many positives**-  flexible worship space, though we haven’t yet made as much use of the possibilities as we might; appreciation of different worship styles; a growing openness to and confidence in learning new songs/hymns; appreciation of Holy Communion done differently.A sense of one-ness and integration, and a buzz of fellowship and friendship most Sundays!Paul, especially, is enthusiastic about the possibilities of broadening our musical input, both within the worship times and at other opportunities too. And we now have a new keyboard! (And we really appreciate our ‘keyboard musicians’ – Paul, Sheila and Ann)

And then we must mention . . . The significance of the prayer for the preacher at the front, enabling a change of mood to one of quiet expectancy.

We value variety but have also appreciated the consistency in teaching by using the lectionary themes, especially when led by John and Robert.  We have identified a team of in-house worship leaders - Sue, Barbara, Jenny, Paul, James, Alison and Trevor, Ali and Sheila.

**Highlights**

---Godfreyhole w/e - being *'church in a marquee'*!

---Our birthday w/e, with posh picnic.

---First infant baptism, a real fusion of Baptist and Methodist; the response of newcomers who sense the good vibes.

**Challenges  -**the temptation to get too comfortable and set in our ways; how we will connect to the circuit once we have a full time minister.

**2. Pastoral Care**

* A wonderful opportunity to bring together members and friends of the congregation and those in the wider community who were connected with the church, under the pastoral care of Wellspring.
* To start this work, the pastoral working Group identified 15 people, who subsequently agreed to become main carers, and we were thrilled when everyone accepted the challenge and we then met to discuss how we would proceed.
* The main carers were to make contact with the members in their groups; (on average 6 to 8 individuals per group, 2 main carers for each of 8 groups).
* An encouraging time of ‘getting to know each other’ resulted in groups meeting informally for tea/coffee in homes or local cafes or similar.
* Eventually more names were added to the groups.
* Pastoral care is important; letting people know they are cared for, thought of, prayed for and visited, practical help given.
* But also care for our spiritual wellbeing; discipleship is equally important, so two Home Groups have been formed, hopefully to develop this care.
* The joy of welcoming new people into church and eventually into the pastoral care network.

There is still plenty of work to be done - for instance, how we reach everyone through a prayer-tree network or how we keep everybody informed through the newsletter.

**3. Reaching Out**

Wellspring’s activity in this regard falls into a number of categories –

- Big events, like Margaret Ferguson’s Gospel Workshop, Seth Bathurst’s Solomon, and Simeon Wood playing the bicycle pump and walking stick! Lovely people, who still keep in touch with Wellspring. Added to which we have Wirksworth annual events – Community Quiz – Eco Centre - Well-dressing - Festival Venue – Charities Fayre.

- The Website (under Paul’s oversight) has had a valuable role in sharing our life and style. - Twice weekly ‘Coffee Stop’ remains popular with occasional bric-a-brac, book and plant sales.- - Lots of singing – themed nights, Songs for a New Church, Cross Ways. Planning is now in progress for ‘traditional’ Christmas celebrations.- - Central collection point in Wirksworth for Harvest – Christmas Shoe Box appeal – and supplies for Derby Refugee Centre.- Courses – Creating a Safer space and Food Prep Hygiene. Originally with FareShare in mind – we remain committed to this idea and aim for the project to begin, in some form, during 2016. - In conjunction with the Rotary the ‘Thanks for the Memory’ Café has been a great success from the first meeting when we thought maybe six people would turn up! We average about forty folk, who clearly enjoy the format, of craft, tea and song. We are excited about the Christmas Party on December 14th!

And for the **Brigades** . . .

Numbers have remained fairly static with some new Junior girls but we have lost some Senior girls. Brigaders have so much homework, and we are unable to do our badge work as there is no internet currently at the church, therefore they rarely attend GB nights.

Boys and girls merged in September 2015.  Boys have now increased to 6.

Activities undertaken include:

Journey to the centre of the Christmas Pudding (Christmas  2014)

The Great Hot Cross Bun Hunt (Easter 2015)

Trooping of the Colour (June 2015)

Annual Display and presentation evening (July 2015)

Light Party (October 2015)

Bonfire and Firework (November 2015)

Remembrance Day Parade (November 2015)

**4. Property & Finance**

Again, as with the other reports above, the brevity of this section masks the huge amount of work put in – especially by Bill, John and Rob.

Important developments during 2014/15 include:

- The massive effort people made to empty the Baptist chapel prior to sale and move useful equipment to Wood St.

- The subsequent improvements to heating, lighting and toilets at Wood St.

- Expensive repairs to the lift (£3255)

- Repainting outdoor noticeboard and woodwork (James Hinnells)

- Removal and sale of redundant pipe work and a lot of other quiet premises work at Wood St (John Proctor)

- Initial drawing up of varied plans for our new extension – and consultation with DDDC (Peter Slack).

ADMIN

- Negotiation of the sale of the Baptist chapel (Bill).

- Consent to use some of the Proceeds of Sale of the Baptist chapel to exit the Baptist Ministers' Pension Fund deficit.

- Consent to use some of the Proceeds of Sale of the Baptist chapel to improve the Wood St premises

- Recognition of Wellspring as a charity by HMRC (Geoffrey).

- Negotiation (at last) of a basis for deciding how much we should pay per month as the assessment to the Methodist circuit (Sue and Robert).

- The long-awaited conclusion of the Sharing Agreement for the Wood St premises (Rob & Robert)

FINANCE

-The unexpectedly large sale price of the Baptist chapel (c.£155 000 net).

- The pledging of extra giving which should enable us to support a full-time minister without dipping into reserves. *[More about this on Thursday]*

 The opening of a Wellspring bank account in May, after several months of

frustration for Kevin Turville, Geoffrey Batstone and particularly Paul Heppleston.

- The subsequent merging of three bank accounts.

Successful applications for grants by John Proctor (£700 in Sept'15 for premises improvement) and by Sue Watts (£200 in July for freezer) together with a lot of ongoing search work by Paul.

**And then . . . not forgetting**

**Ministry**

It has been quite difficult both for the present ministers themselves and for the church to operate with two non-local part-time ministers.  Nevertheless, through good communication, Robert and John have worked well together - with one another, and with the Trustees. The Trustees are developing well as a group and working more and more effectively together, thereby preparing themselves for their new minister/team leader, who will thus find it easier to work collaboratively with Trustees and others.  There is still room for further development – especially in terms of drawing more people into the working groups and various Wellspring initiatives, but the Trustees are aware of this and we would hope that this will be one of the areas of significant development in the coming year.

All in all, it is an immensely promising situation in which to find ourselves at the end of 2015 – being in the position of being able to call our first Wellspring Minister, barely twelve months after Inauguration. This is largely due to the vision and sacrificial giving of our people and their willingness to support this Wellspring venture into the future.