

Wantage Christian Fellowship Sunday Focus 20th May 2012
'Engaging With Church Growth'

52 people were present.

Following Worship, Rev Glyn Oliver preached on 'Faith' reading from Hebrews 10 v32-39.

- Faith is putting into action what you believe. Every healthy church should have some 'pre-faith' people in the congregation.
- 'Hanging-In-Faith': Everyone may have a season of this where we have weak faith. It's ok to be in this place as long as you don't stay there. If this is you then receive comfort where you are but be challenged not to remain there as lack of faith does become sin.
- 'Hanging-Around-Faith': Faith is the expectation of something hoped for and we often have to wait on God's timing. While we are waiting we should still be pressing forward with faith and giving of ourselves. Great faith is responding to God when it's hardest to do so.
- 'Hanging-On –Faith': This is about closeness with God and hanging on despite everything. It's about being in a safe and right place with God where we don't grow weary. It is a persevering, giving, living faith.
- As a growing church we will experience threat. We need to show confidence, endurance and obedience and through this we will achieve 'hanging-on-faith' and the life of worship which we are called to.

WCF Diary

June 3rd Jubilee Family Service
10th Final sermon in 1John
17th 'Your Story, Your Song'
24th Questions on a Postcard

On Monday 4th there is an Opening Ceremony Service to the Jubilee festivities, this is at 1pm on Grove Rugby Ground and Glyn will be speaking.

July 1st Dave White preaching
8th Alastair Clunie preaching
15th Mission service including Alex speaking from Balsam Trust
22nd/29th Possibility of a Baptism Service at the Charlton Centre with a portable Baptistry or at the Leisure Centre Pool.

The Holiday Bible Club 'Torch Bearers' is on from 23rd-26th July, let Glyn know if you can help.

August Four Olympic themed family services with a picnic or BBQ to follow the services on the 5th and the 19th.

September 2nd 6pm Paralympic Event 'Undeclared' led by Mark Craig and WCF at Wantage Parish Church.

14th 6pm Bonfire at Garlands Farm
30th 10.30am Sunday Focus

October 7th Harvest Thanksgiving Service

Another series of cafeworld is a possibility but has not been organised yet and would depend on support. We are able to use Costas for free although we sometimes pay speakers' travel expenses.

Finance

Brian Mitchell gave a report of WCF finances:

- In 2011 we were spending more money than was coming in. The Trustees usually set a negative budget assuming that we will receive more money than we have accounted for.
- This year our projected shortfall is about £15,000. The Trustees should maintain at least 3 months operating costs in the bank (about £9,000) but this is not usually the case.
- We trust in the Lord for funds but we also need to consider our situation seriously as we are growing and therefore incurring more costs. To maintain our growth it will cost more money and all money comes from the people attending WCF.
- Records show that the average giving per family in the church is in decline. The Bible says that we should give 10% of our income and we should be doing this for WCF. The future of the church is in our hands and we should be glorifying God through our giving. As a church we also tythe 10% to mission.

Thanks were given to Brian and Margaret for their work on the finances.

Glyn added that if we continue to grow to a regular congregation of over 100 then we will need more members of staff. As we grow 'small group' life becomes more important and we will also need more homes and leaders to run new groups.

The meeting was opened to general discussion.

Questions/Testimony

- The Elders clarified their belief that God will provide through the church members and we should not be seeking money from other sources e.g. grants. Fundraising is seen as a distraction from doing God's work.
- Please see Margaret for details of how to give monthly by direct debit, this helps with forward planning. WCF can also claim back Gift Aid on tax payers' money.
- Several hundred pounds is needed extra per month for us to break even. With Gift Aid we can claim 20% on top of what is given, so increases in giving can have a big impact.
- In the past The Lord has always provided for us financially and we are all challenged to use our money wisely.
- In the future we would hope to be able to fund different ministries and afford other staff members.
- Testimony was given of receiving blessings when being obedient to tithing.

The discussion was moved onto thoughts on the life of the church.

- It is planned to give all of the church the opportunity to attend an Elders Meeting over an extended period of time with the aim of improving communication in the church.
- New members of the church are supported through the 'First Steps' programme which has been running for about 2 years. This is not advertised anywhere and it was suggested that a leaflet/small info pack on the church for new people would be a good idea.
- Commitment to home groups is a good way of being able to share information with one another and build each other up. The Elders could also use the home group leaders to disseminate information to their groups and to feed questions back.
- It is important that the home group leaders continue to meet together regularly, as the congregation on a Sunday grows the role of small groups grows.
- On the question of getting to know people new to the church, it was asked whether we should have more events aimed at new people and a more rigid annual events calendar. It was felt that we need to stay flexible in terms of events that we are running and that lots of forward planning doesn't necessarily mean that people are more aware of what is going on. We could put some more information on the website aimed at new people.
- The Pastoral Care Team has recently transitioned to providing care through home groups as most of those involved were home group leaders. Glyn receives support from the Elders.
- Home groups are currently all on a Thursday as this is what was requested when a survey was done about 2 years ago, but there will be one running on a Wednesday from September and we will do our best to accommodate people.
- It was commented that the church was born out of prayer and fasting. Thanks was given for the prayer chain prayer requests and answers to prayer. Also to Samantha for compiling a list of exams being undertaken by our young people this summer. This is the lifeblood of the church and should be encouraged.
- The youth were encouraged to speak to the Elders at any time about things that they would like to see in the church.
- It was suggested that something recalling the history of the church should be put on the website. Any reflections to go to Glyn to be put together.
- It was commented that the church is very welcoming and family like with the range of ages, prayer chain etc. Glyn was thanked for his availability and the church for its sense of fellowship and range of gifts.
- The website is a very good way for people interested in WCF or considering coming along to access information in a non-threatening way. Could we possibly put some more info on it about upcoming events. Thanks was given to Mark Craig for all his hard work on this.

The meeting was concluded.