



ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
1 January 2021 to 31 October 2021

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The report is compiled from material submitted by people with leadership responsibility within the church and edited and endorsed by the Trustees.	
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TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS FOR 2021

Trustees:

who served during the year to 31 October 2021 and remained in office at that date

Ex officio Trustee
Revd Phil Hibbert

Trustees to serve until the Annual General Meeting 2022

Karen Collins (re-elected at 2020 AGM)

Trustee to serve until the Annual General Meeting 2022

Simon Jeffs

Trustees to serve until the Annual General Meeting 2022

Rebecca Alba
Karen Collins (re-elected)
John Durrant
Sue Sanders

Officers:

Secretary Karen Collins
Treasurer Simon Jeffs

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Lloyds Banking Group
Boverton Road,
Llantwit Major CF61 1XZ

Baptists Together Deposit Accounts

REPORT FOR JANUARY 2021 TO OCTOBER 2021

Overview of 2021 – the year of the pandemic

Bethel, along with almost every other organisation on the planet, has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. All normal functioning continued to be disrupted through 2021. Everybody reading this report will be familiar with the measures under which we had to operate, the various adaptations necessary, the move to on-line working and the opportunities between lockdowns for some socially distanced meetings. Flexibility, ingenuity, and working as a community have been the watchwords over this period. Through all this we believe that God has shown us many things about the fragility of our lives, our interdependence, a new appreciation of what really are the priorities and providing an environment for change.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Church Meetings seek the mind of Christ in matters relating to mission, policy, budget and strategy. We are delighted that Church Meetings are inclusive of all those associated with the Church, although only Church Members can take decisions on matters relating to mission, policy, budget and strategy.

Deacons (all Deacons are Trustees) are appointed at an Annual General Meeting for a maximum of two three-year terms after which they are required to take a sabbatical. The Officers (who must be Trustees) are appointed annually at the Annual General Meeting. At the AGM in May 2021 there were no new deacons elected, and therefore the number of trustees was five in addition to Revd Phil Hibbert.

The Church employs Revd Phillip Hibbert as full-time minister and a part time Admin Support Worker, Mrs Helen Berrill. There is a contract for cleaning the premises.

In addition, many members of the Church family devote a large amount of time working to fulfil the priorities of the Church, the day-to-day functioning of the Church and the maintenance of the premises.

The Trustees are very appreciative of all those involved, in whatever capacity they serve.

The Trustees meet monthly and also make extensive use of email. In 2021, following much detailed work on a new Constitution and associated procedures, the Church finally made the transition to CIO and is now Bethel Baptist Church, Llantwit Major. Trustees have also undertaken extensive research to develop a new vision and medium term strategy for the Church (see below for more detail), a detailed review of all policies with a particular focus on confidentiality and risk management.

OUR MISSION, PURPOSE and ACTIVITIES

The mission statement of the Church is:

Seeking to know Jesus and serving to make him known.

In our Constitution:

The principal purpose of the Church is the advancement of the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination. The Church may also

advance education and carry out other charitable purposes in the United Kingdom and/or other parts of the world.

Our activities may include but are not restricted to:

- a) regular public worship, prayer, Bible study, preaching and teaching;
- b) baptism, as defined in the Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle;
- c) the Communion of the Lord's Supper which shall normally be observed at least once a month;
- d) evangelism and mission, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally;
- e) the teaching, encouragement, welcome and inclusion of young people;
- f) nurture and growth of Christian disciples;
- g) education and training for Christian and community service;
- h) giving and encouraging pastoral care;
- i) supporting and encouraging charitable social action in the United Kingdom and abroad;
- j) encouraging relationships with and supporting Baptists and other Christians.

The Trustees have ensured that the Church has operated only in accord with its Purpose and Activities as identified in the Constitution.

VISION 2022 AND BEYOND

As a result of the extensive research initiated by the Leadership Team, the following outline Vision for 2022 and beyond was agreed ready for discussion with Church members

'Bethel is a church that aims to grow loving the community of Jesus-followers who live and share His message. We believe that Jesus shows the clearest picture of who God is and what he is like. He shows us God's love, enables us to be reconciled and shows how best to live with purpose as part of a community.

Community - We aim to be a loving family of Jesus-followers that create a sense of belonging and is passionate about the Gospel. We want to share the message of God's love and rescue of humanity in Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and display the ongoing good news of God's Kingdom by how we live.

Purpose - We are each called to live intentional, purpose-filled everyday lives in step with God's Spirit. All that we do together as an all-age, diverse community is aimed at helping everyone to follow Jesus' example, and thereby live our ordinary lives in extra-ordinary ways.'

Further work was being undertaken to look at the practical ways of being Jesus-followers.

PROGRESS TOWARDS THE PRIORITIES

The Leadership Team regularly reviews the mission outcomes and activities of the Church and has explored a range of administrative and mission matters to ensure the smooth running of the Church. These matters can be divided broadly into strategic and analytical and monitoring and evaluation but all under the responsibility to respond

to regulations from the Welsh Government in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic

The strategic and analytical have included:

- a) renovation, maintenance and development of the premises and ensuring its safety for users;
- b) preparing, implementing and monitoring an annual budget; and identifying any longer-term financial commitments or liabilities
- c) pastoral matters;
- d) assessing and approving, as appropriate, outreach initiatives;
- e) our approach to mission beyond Llantwit Major and the establishment of links to BMS World Mission;
- f) partnership working with other organisations in Llantwit Major.

The monitoring and evaluation have included:

- a) the annual appraisal of the Minister and the Administrative Support Worker;
- b) review of the Church cleaning contract;
- c) overseeing revisions to the membership roll;
- d) reviewing policies such as *Safe to Grow* (child safeguarding) and *Safe to Belong* (vulnerable adults);
- e) reviewing and updating the data protection policy;
- f) reviewing the security arrangements for the premises;
- h) reviewing the programme of events associated with the major events in the Christian calendar such as Christmas and Easter, and other activities with which the Church is formally involved, to identify improvements for the future.

REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES

Prayer Meetings

Thursday

We probably are a core group of approximately 16 people but we rarely meet as more than 12. Throughout 2021 we have been able to meet in the Chapel. It has been wonderful to continue to meet together and join in on what God is doing.

Home Groups

Home groups have struggled throughout the pandemic and as restrictions have lifted, these have begun to restart.

Brothers and Bibles – First and Third Tuesdays of each Month

Not so much a bible study but an informal group of men who want to explore what God is saying through the scriptures. We meet at Bethel every first and third Tuesday of the month; 7.30pm to 8.30pm. We have been just two and we have been fifteen in number; as long as there is more than one then God is there in the midst of us. We follow a scripture; at the moment we are reading through the gospel of John. However, if anyone comes with a different text, or questions, we are happy to engage with that. Hearing God is important to us! No one has 'the right interpretation'. No one is there to teach or correct another. What we hope for is fellowship of the Holy Spirit and with one another. We like to start on time and finish on time. We begin with prayer, and we take time before we finish to pray for those people, situations and needs that are in our hearts.

Wednesday Morning Ladies Bible Study

As with most aspects of normal life, 2021 proved to be a challenge for us as a group.

We had tried to return to our weekly meetings in the Spring and Summer but had little success in a sustained period of continuity due to different COVID restrictions. However, in September we settled happily back into our normal rhythm where we followed a 12-week study in Romans entitled "The only way to be Good". We found this to be a very interesting and challenging study which we thoroughly enjoyed.

We have varied in number from around 12 to 23 or 24. Sadly due to the very cold conditions and COVID rules, some of our members felt unable to suffer the cold and they were greatly missed. On a positive note, we have also had some new ladies join with us and we continue to issue an open invitation to any new ladies who will be assured of a very warm welcome from the entire group.

Wednesday Evening Small Group

This group did three sessions looking at and praying about how as Christians we should respond to climatic change and its effects on populations worldwide, especially in vulnerable and emerging countries.

We then moved onto working through BEMA podcasts and have been challenged by re-reading Genesis this time through an eastern lens and have deepened our understanding of this book by learning the context in which it was written. We have appreciated the support and guidance of Simon Jeffs and Sheila Welford on our journey so far. We meet in the homes of group members. Attendance ranges from 6 to 12.

Pastoral Support

The welfare and wellbeing of people associated with our Church is a key priority along with that of other members of the local community. With an awareness of increasing need amongst our local congregation and friends we devised a comprehensive pastoral system whereby each person was linked into a support group. Contact was mainly by telephone or doorstep conversations. These formal pastoral arrangements were in practice supplemented by much informal support and help provided by individuals in the Church. We have continued during the pandemic to be aware of the economic consequences for individuals and have used our Benevolent Fund, to help those who have been adversely affected by the loss of income and resources.

Prayer is very often a key element of pastoral support either directly with the person concerned or through the prayer chain which has continued to operate all year. Plans are in place to restart prayer before the service and prayer ministry afterwards.

Children's and Youth Work

I think that it's fair to say that the pandemic has hit the children's and youth work hard. That does not mean nothing is happening. In fact, a lot has happened!

Sunday Club has reorganised again and again in the last year. The volunteers have had to adapt to having lots of children of varying ages one week, to having none the next week, while we operated a fortnightly attendance list. Those who attend the local comprehensive schools ,now have their own group with meetings that alternate

between the Sunday worship service and their own dedicated group.

We are grateful for the commitment and flexibility of all the volunteers that run these groups.

Youth Group on Fridays has continued throughout the pandemic, either via Zoom, outside in the courtyard at church or in the hall. It's a small but committed group and we have had some lovely times together growing in our walk with Jesus.

Dementia Café

While Dementia Café has not run formally since March 2020, there has been a lot of support for those who need it via phone calls etc. We are also pleased to announce that plans are in place to restart the café.

Friends and Neighbours – FAN

FAN has groups across South Wales. During group time, folk listen to each other and talk about non-controversial topics, agreed in advance, to allow less confident speakers and folk whose first language is not English, to prepare the topic if they so wish. After meetings clients often go together for refreshments locally. The aim is to reduce loneliness and enable participants to make friends. Initially from September 2021 (post lockdown), FAN at Bethel met on Tuesdays from 10.00 to 11.00 ; average attendance has been 6.

Repair Café

The Repair Café has been in operation since October 2018, operating as both a unique Bethel outreach activity and as a Repair Café Wales member under their insurance and constitution. After Covid lockdown was lifted in spring 2021, we initially operated under a marquee at the White Lion for a couple of months and then relocated back to Bethel from July onwards. For the 8 months of operation we have seen around 75 items for repair from a wide community demographic, with typically five to eight volunteers involved each time, a mix of Church members, and non-Bethel attendees. We've had very positive feedback from our customers, who see at first hand the unique way in which we show love and make a positive impact in our community through a combination of environmental and education disciplines. We also receive donations for our repair activity and this makes the Repair Café a cashflow positive activity. Thanks to all those who have helped!

Foodbank

The Llantwit Major centre of the Vale Foodbank, under the umbrella of the Trussell Trust, is a beacon of cooperation between the churches in the town and individuals and community groups. 2021 saw the Llantwit Major centre celebrate its seventh year of faithful service to the community in the Western Vale. To cope with the Covid pandemic and the associated lockdown, the centre provided a delivery service to support people in economic crisis. Although the centre staff based in the Bethel premises were not able to provide in-person assistance, recipients of the groceries and other essential items responded with gratitude on the doorstep to the items they received. Follow-up telephone calls were also made by centre staff to clients to explore a range of welfare matters. A generosity of spirit continued amongst our donors during

the pandemic to meet the well-documented financial hardship experienced by vulnerable members of the community.

During September preparations were made, including the production of a comprehensive risk assessment, for the centre to open on site and welcome clients in-person. A significant number of the clients felt that they wanted the delivery service to continue, and this was arranged, whilst other clients valued meeting face-to-face albeit taking the necessary precautions such as social distancing and face covering. There is often mention in the prayers of our volunteers of the emotional stress that clients experience in coming into the foodbank to seek support – a sign of the empathy of our volunteers.

The number of vouchers fulfilled during the period 1 January to 31 October was 85 of which 64 were deliveries. 131 adults and 95 children were supported. In 54% of the cases, the primary cause was 'low income' and in 40% the primary cause was 'benefit issues'.

Mission beyond Llantwit Major

The Church has supported several activities that relate to mission beyond Llantwit Major, physically, financially and through prayer. This includes continued financial support for the Douglas family in Nepal (BMS World Mission), Rachelle Sperling (Pioneers) who has a coordinating and pastoral role with many missionaries in the field, and support for Missional Links.

The Church has also given one-off payments to Operation Agri, South Wales Baptist College, Home Mission, Open Doors working with persecuted Christians, World Vision and Operation Christmas Child

Partnerships

The Church is a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Baptist Union of Wales and the East Glamorgan Baptist Association. The Church will normally promote, encourage, support and advance the work of the Baptist Union and BMS World Mission through prayer and through financial contributions. When it is able the Church will also support local Baptist gatherings.

The Church is pleased to cooperate with other Churches in Llantwit Major and more widely through the Vale Partnership. There is a commitment to be embedded in the community to enable us to show the love of Jesus to those in need. There are good links with Llantwit Major Town Council through the Town Study Group.

We have been blessed with a comprehensive suite of premises and we welcome the opportunity of letting these premises to community groups who are seeking to meet local needs and are in line with our mission strategy. While the activity of most of our regular premises users has been in abeyance we look forward to the time when we can host their meetings again.

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE 2021

2021 has proved similar to the previous year in an initial Covid lockdown challenge, followed by the same facilities maintenance issues that we faced in 2020. The key long term issues we are aware of are:-

- Chapel sub-floor. The area of concern expanded in 2021 to multiple positions rather than just the SE corner, one of which had to be repaired. This caused the initial surveyor's report to be invalid. Discussion with the architect and other qualified experts indicated we misdiagnosed the issue initially and condensation may be a significant problem. This is being addressed by use of dehumidifiers short term, but needs an engineered solution long term – possibly to fill the sub floor with concrete.
- We continue to monitor damp in the walls in the Church SE corner, but have not seen any evidence that this is getting worse, or even a problem at this time. Evidence of decay was seen in the roof timbers some years ago in that area, so we are trying to identify and assess the problem.
- Wall repair – at some point we will need to look at the wall on Commercial Street although this does not seem to be urgent.

Again we are thankful for the volunteers that make up the maintenance team and the varied skills they bring.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

OVERVIEW

We are thankful to God for the faithfulness and generosity of the congregation throughout this period with its continuing Covid restrictions and difficulties.

The table of receipts and payments is attached below. The General Fund closing balance includes £40,020 on deposit with the Baptist Union. This both assists other churches and pays a better rate of interest than the deposit accounts we hold with commercial banks.

RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees regard the balance of £97,939 carried forward in the General Fund as adequate and ensure that the Church maintains a minimum reserve of £35,000 at all times.

EXAMINATION OF ACCOUNTS

The Church accounts for the period 1 January 2021 to 31 October 2021 have been independently examined and agreed by Joanna Beresford.

Receipts and Payments 1 January 2021 to 31 October 2021.

Receipts	General Fund	Building Fund	Benevolent Fund	Total
Offerings				
Gifts to the Church	71,879	2,500		74,379
Gifts for Mission Beyond Llantwit	27			27
Gifts for Local Outreach			1,100	1,100
Income tax recovered on gifts	18,366	772		19,138
Refunds				
Interest from bank accounts				
Sundries				
Total	90,272	3,272	1,100	94,644
Payments				
Ministry	42,596			42,596
Worship Activities	1,804			1,804
Mission Beyond Llantwit	4,661			4,661
Local Outreach	699		1,200	1,899
Property Maintenance/Refurbishment	504			504
Utilities	3,191			3,191
Cleaning	2,100			2,100
Insurance	883			883
Office costs	2,892			2,892
Total	59,330		1,200	60,530
Surplus for the period	30,942	3,272	-100	
Closing balances 31st October	97,939	34,852	6,539	139,330