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**Bethel  
Baptist  
Church**  
**Llantwit Major**  
OC Registered Charity no. 183745

## **ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS**

### **1 November 2021 to 31 October 2022**

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## TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS FOR 2021-22

### Trustees:

Who served during the year to 31 October 2022 and remained in office at that date

Ex officio Trustee  
Revd Phil Hibbert

Trustees to serve until the Annual General Meeting 2023

John Durrant  
Sue Sanders

Trustee to serve until the Annual General Meeting 2024

Sheila Welford  
Joshua Harding-Jones  
Shelley Tandy

Trustees to serve until the Annual General Meeting 2025

Ian Beresford  
Rebecca Elliott

### Officers:

Secretary John Durrant

Treasurer Simon Jeffs until June; Ian Beresford

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### Bankers:

The Co-Operative Bank  
PO Box 250  
Delf House  
Southway  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 6WT

Lloyds Banking Group  
Boverton Road,  
Llantwit Major CF61 1XZ

Baptists Together Deposit Accounts

## REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2021 TO OCTOBER 2022

### OVERVIEW OF 2022 – COMING OUT OF THE COVID PANDEMIC

During the period of this report we began to move from Covid restrictions to opening up. Facemasks were still required during 2021 as we went shopping etc. and by Christmas 2021 there were still restrictions on large group meetings, however, we were able to arrange carols outside with unrestricted numbers. During early 2022 restrictions in Wales remained for group meetings. It was possible to have unrestricted attendance at worship services, however, mask wearing and good ventilation was required, and the congregation had to bring their own bread and wine for Communion. The facemask mandate for schools and most public places, such as cinemas, museums and places of worship were lifted from 28 February. There was still the requirement to carry out workplace risk assessments. In April there was further evidence that the NHS was under strain and studies showed an unprecedented demand for mental health services. In May 2022 the last of Wales's Covid regulations was ended. We benefited from the initial and booster vaccination programmes.

Although some degree of normality has returned, we recognise that we are living in a post-pandemic world with a developing set of political, cultural, social and economic issues. We are situated in a post Christian community: societal and individual behaviours are different to those of 2019 before the pandemic for instance, people are increasingly using social media but not necessarily engaging with one another. We have begun to experience increases in the cost of living

Perhaps three contributions stand out in the period: the inspiring work of God's Spirit, the impact of science, and the dedicated service of people. As a church, along with so many other people and organisations, we have been a beneficiary.

### PEOPLE ASSOCIATED WITH OUR CHURCH

A snapshot was taken of the people associated with our Church.

Attendance at Sunday worship:

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Children (Under 11)     | 5  |
| Young People (11 to 18) | 3  |
| Young Adults (18 to 30) | 0  |
| Other Adults (30 to 65) | 30 |
| Seniors (Over 65)       | 41 |

Some people have not returned to in-person activities including Sunday worship services. We recognise that a number of people participate in Sunday worship through the internet and we are seeking how we might be community with them.

People associated with our Church:

|                |    |
|----------------|----|
| Church Members | 68 |
|----------------|----|

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Children (Under 11)     | 40 |
| Young People (11 to 18) | 8  |
| Believers' Baptisms     | 0  |

It is difficult to report the number of participants at Communion because of the impact of Covid regulations, however, by October 2022 the average was 60, significantly lower than the number pre-pandemic.

We had 68 members and have been privileged to welcome new people into our congregation.

We recognise that our discipleship programmes need reviewing and updating as some small groups have not been re-established.

## **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 June 2022 four new deacons were elected, and therefore the number of trustees was seven in addition to Revd Phil Hibbert. It is taking time for the new diaconate to be clear about roles and responsibilities.

The Church employs Revd Phillip Hibbert as full-time minister and a part time Administrative 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.

## **TRUSTEES' MEETINGS**

The Trustees meet monthly and also make extensive use of email. With a significant number of new deacons from June 2022, there has been a continuing reflection on the roles and responsibilities of individuals within the team to meet the requirements of the church as a charitable incorporated organisation.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Trustees have reviewed a range of risks associated with the work of the Church; there is still some further assessment required. The Trustees confirm that they know of no serious incidents relating to the Church which require formal reporting.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Trustees have ensured the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation have been met. The Trustees regard the Church's database as confidential and information held is for the sole use of the Church in pursuit of its purposes. Names and addresses and other information on the database will not be revealed to third parties.

## **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 Vision for 2022 and beyond was agreed by Church members in November 2021.

'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.'

The four outcomes from the vision which are the focus of this report are:

- To be passionate about the Gospel (sharing the message of God's love and how we live)
- To be in step with God's Spirit
- To live with purpose
- To have a sense of belonging

Although these outcomes are distinct, they are interconnected; therefore, the following commentary on them will reflect this. It is important to stress that we are not emphasising our human achievements; we wish to recognise that we are open to the marginal and unexpected blessings arising from our reliance on God. We hope that there will be sufficient evaluation of not only *what* we do but also *how* we do it – a focus on the way we are together, the quality of our being and our relating – *how* we are church.

## **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. During the period covered by this report the Team continued 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 and implementing an annual budget; and identifying any longer-term financial commitments or liabilities;
- c) making changes to our bankers to ensure a more effective service;
- d) pastoral matters and establishing Connect Groups;
- e) internal and external communications;
- f) transfer of membership from the East Glamorgan to the South Wales Baptist Association;
- g) identifying new audio/visual equipment;
- h) undertaking a quinquennial review of the condition of the premises;

- i) assessing and approving, as appropriate, outreach initiatives;
- j) addressing the lack of engagement with young people in the community;
- k) our approach to mission beyond Llantwit Major;
- l) considering how support might be provided to Ukrainian refugees in Llantwit Major;
- m) considering whether to apply to become a Fairtrade church;
- n) partnership working with other organisations in Llantwit Major, especially in the context of the cost of living crisis.

The monitoring and evaluation have included:

- a) monitoring the annual budget;
- b) reviewing pastoral support;
- c) overseeing good practice to reduce the spread of Covid;
- d) engaging with Lynnette Thorne regarding her call to ministry;
- e) review of the Church cleaning contract;
- f) overseeing revisions to the membership roll;
- g) reviewing policies such as *Safe to Grow* (child safeguarding) and *Safe to Belong* (vulnerable adults);
- h) reviewing and updating the data protection policy;
- i) reviewing the maintenance arrangements of the premises;
- j) reviewing our risk assessment;
- k) identifying the need for safeguarding, first aid and food hygiene training;
- l) 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.

The following people, as representatives of the various church groups/activities, have contributed to this report.

| <b>Group</b>                                     | <b>Correspondent</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Sunday worship                                   | Phil Hibbert         |
| Ministry (to include schools)                    | Phil Hibbert         |
| Sunday Club                                      |                      |
| Prayer meetings (Thursday and monthly Saturdays) | Joanna Beresford     |
| Small group (Wednesday morning)                  | Meryl Merritt        |
| Small group (Wednesday evening)                  | Shelley Tandy        |
| Friday Club                                      | Phil Hibbert         |
| Youth Sunday                                     | Rebecca Elliott      |
| Strategy for children and youth worker           | Josh Harding-Jones   |
| Foodbank                                         | John Durrant         |
| Men's activities                                 | Ian Beresford        |
| Outreach                                         | Phil Hibbert         |
| Mission beyond Llantwit Major                    |                      |

| Group                                   | Correspondent                  |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Repair Cafe                             | Tim Bunce                      |
| Discipleship                            |                                |
| Pastoral Team including Connect Groups  | Sue Sanders and Sheila Welford |
| Warm Space                              | Shelley Tandy                  |
| Renew Wellbeing                         | John Durrant                   |
| Language support for Ukrainian refugees | Shelley Tandy                  |
| Health and Safety                       | Owen Davies                    |
| Premises                                | Tim Bunce                      |
| Administrative Support                  | Helen Berrill                  |
| Leadership Team                         | John Durrant                   |

## REPORT IN RESPECT OF THE PRIORITY OUTCOMES

### **To be passionate about the Gospel (sharing the message of God's love and how we live)**

Phil, our minister, has seen one of his key roles as supporting and enabling others to undertake outreach. Elsewhere in this report is evidence of this outreach e.g. Renew Wellbeing Café, Warm Space and Foodbank. In the summer we were able to organise a Summer Club with support from members of Fort Worth Baptist Church, USA via Missional Links. The Club attracted 20 children and engaged with unchurched parents. Regrettably there has been little continuing contact and the hoped for increase in numbers for Friday Club did not materialise.

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. 2022 saw the Llantwit Major centre celebrate its eighth year of faithful service to the community in the Western Vale. The centre staff, now numbering 20 in total, based in the Bethel premises have been pleased again, following the relaxation of the Covid regulations, to provide in-person assistance to those in need, especially in response to the cost of living crisis. Follow-up telephone calls have also been made by centre staff to clients to explore a range of welfare matters. A generosity of spirit has continued amongst our donors to meet the well-documented financial hardship experienced by vulnerable members of the community. 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. 180 vouchers were fulfilled during the period 1 November to 31 October; with 231 adults and 273 children supported. Without exception, clients have expressed their appreciation of the support that is available.

Following a lengthy period of preparation the Renew Wellbeing Café opened in June to provide a quiet space for those people with mild mental health difficulties and/or

those people who are lonely. It is a place where it is OK to be not OK. A range of activities are available including crafts, board games and jigsaws, quizzes, conversation, and importantly a time for prayer and reflection. The Café has also been registered as Warm Space as a response to the cost of living crisis. There are ten regular hosts who have undertaken training and serve on a rota; these are complemented by four other volunteers. There are nearly 30 friends who have attended since we opened and we have seen nearly 20 on occasions. Friends have been encouraged to participate and have made short presentations, played the piano and have joined in musical sessions. New friendships have been established and others have blossomed. Comments from friends have included: *I look forward to Tuesday afternoon; I find friendship as I am on my own; there is a warm atmosphere; we can connect with people; we enjoy conversation; it is inclusive; I enjoy getting out; it is safe; I enjoy the reflections; it is encouraging; it is enlightening; it is supportive; there are good refreshments.* Suffice it to say that the hosts have also been encouraged as they have participated in the activities, conversations and the opportunities for reflection; indeed Renew provides a time and space for the hosts to maintain their own wellbeing.

As energy, food and interest rates rose during the autumn, the Leadership Team considered whether and how churches in Llantwit Major could work alongside local secular organisations to provide complementary Warm Spaces for people struggling with the increased cost of living in our community. An audit of existing community support was carried out and there was liaison between the Churches Together in Llantwit: Bethel, St Illtud's, Tabernacle, and Our Lady and St Illtyd, and secular organisations. A programme of Warm Spaces in Llantwit was drawn up, covering all week days and some Saturdays. The rationale behind Bethel's role in this provision, irrespective of whether high or low numbers of people were to attend has been: *To Love our Neighbours Near and Far*. The groundwork for setting up the Warm Spaces was completed in readiness for the opening up of the provision after the period of this report.

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, Open Doors working with persecuted Christians and support for Missional Links. The Church has also made one-off donations to Christian Aid, Cardiff Baptist College, Home Mission and Tearfund as well as supporting emergency and relief appeals. We recognise that our communications with some of these agencies and organisations could be improved and we are seeking to rectify this.

### **To be in step with God's Spirit**

Sunday Club, for children up to the age of 11 years has resumed after the pandemic. New resources are being used to stimulate and encourage our children in their development of faith. A wide range of craft and other activities are provided to engage and interest the children. A team of volunteers organises the sessions. Attendance usually numbers between 5 and 12. The wide age range and different levels of understanding bring challenges to those who are leading and helping in the

sessions. The Sunday Club sessions are complemented by our monthly *4every1* worship services and our family sessions within our weekly Sunday worship. .

Discussions were held at the end of summer 2021 to discuss starting a Sunday morning meeting for young people – those of secondary school age, approximately 11-16 years old. It was agreed to prepare a session every second week, partly due to volunteer numbers and partly to act as a bridge between attending a youth session each week and moving to the position where young people remain in worship services. A leader and a team of helpers host between 1-6 young people in the group; the most usual is two in-person and two online.

The group aims to give young people a space to feel they belong and are free to ask questions, to share our passion about the gospel and to grow in their own relationship with Jesus. It is also about building relationships with each other as well as with other members of the church so they feel encouraged and guided on their journey of faith.

We follow a Scripture Union guidebook, however, leaders may choose to do a different session at times. More recently we have had guest members of the congregation to share their testimonies. This has been a great way for the young people to get to know others from the church family and they have been encouraged to ask questions.

We started a WhatsApp group for leaders early on for ease of communication and planning and have been having Sunday night WhatsApp video calls about once every two months to check-in and pray together. More recently we started a WhatsApp group for the young people and parents where plans, ideas and questions may be posted. We plan to organise some social events possibly outdoors or/and joining with other youth in the area in the future and this will be a good way to spread the word.

We are blessed to have these young people as part of our congregation and it has been a joy to coordinate such a dedicated team of volunteers in this work. Please continue to pray for the young people, leaders and helpers.

The weekly Thursday morning prayer meetings can be considered as the heartbeat of the church and without them we would grow and function to a significantly lesser degree. It was wonderful to be able to meet on line during Covid if not a little challenging. There are sometimes as many as 14 or 15 people who attend. We include immediate prayer requests both from within the church and further afield, often covering current news we have heard that morning. It has been so good to be able to have prayer requests sent via the WhatsApp group as it enables us to pray constructively and relevantly on immediate receipt of the request. Those of us who do not receive these messages are invited to join that group.

Prayer meetings are also held on the first Saturday of the month. These meetings are well attended with usually 10 to 15 people. The sessions allow a time for those who are unable to attend the weekly meeting to meet as a church body to pray. Although these meetings have only been running for 8 months they have been well received. Various opportunities are provided to explore different experiences of

praying including specific subjects about which to pray. These meetings are flexible and people may come for a short period of time or for a full hour. There is never any pressure to pray aloud. There is a continuing open invitation for everyone to attend.

Prayer has restarted before the Sunday service; informal prayer ministry is available after morning worship.

At meetings for prayer and in individual praying we are open to God's Spirit leading, encouraging and inspiring us. Prayer is also a medium through which we can thank God for his continuing activity in our world and in our lives and is also a means through which we can respond to our own prayer requests.

Proposals were formulated and agreed to appoint a children and youth worker as soon as possible after Easter 2023. In late 2021, a working group was set up by the Leadership Team to discuss the role of Mission Support and to report back with any recommendations.

Following a needs analysis it was concluded that the church needed someone who had the passion, time and training to reach the current generation of local young people and to grow the work within the church. There was also a need for someone to provide leadership and vision to the existing volunteer base with the expectation of increasing the number of volunteers and developing their skills. The ideal scenario was to employ a children and youth worker in a full-time role, with the responsibility to manage and resource the children and youth ministry in the church, with also the freedom to grow the ministry in ways that were tailored to the youth worker's strengths and in line with the church's vision statement. It was agreed that the role would contribute to achieving the vision of the church and include: (i) managing and resourcing the under 18's ministry for Sunday Club; (ii) launching and initiating non-Sunday activities for under 11's; (iii) contributing to and growing the under 18's non-Sunday activities; (iv) facilitating and contributing to the growth of links and activities in the community; (v) contributing to the running of specific under 18's events throughout the year. Formal approval for the post was given by the Church Meeting on 30 October with encouragement given to making the necessary administrative arrangements for the appointment.

### **To live with purpose**

Our worship is at the centre of being a community of purpose. We have been more intentional about creating teams for leading worship with support from the deacons. The role of welcomer has become an important feature of making initial contact with people attending worship services. Our worship reflects a diversity of approach and content whilst maintaining a flow and being coherent. Preaching has been Spirit led, focused on Scripture and has covered a wide range of themes and practical applications. We have sought to ensure inclusivity by live streaming and recording our services to enable the congregation to participate in worship at times which are convenient. Arrangements have mostly gone smoothly, although we recognise there is still more to achieve in terms of the robustness of the technology.

The main focus of the Ladies Bible Study Wednesday Group is to not only study the Bible, but to help and encourage each other to apply these truths into our everyday

lives. We have studied: (i) Paul's letter to the Romans which taught us that God puts people right with Himself; it is through faith from beginning to end; (ii) the letter to the Hebrews which confirmed that the Christian walk is all about entering and living by faith; (iii) the book of Jonah which showed us that God's love and compassion is for all people, even the wicked people of Nineveh – God Cares; and (iv) the book of Isaiah, which has shown us how we can trust in all the promises of God. We were amazed every week by how much we were learning to understand some of the scriptures which before had seemed so difficult.

The group has welcomed all who choose to attend and has indeed brought people closer together with a sense of belonging. We have suffered the loss of dear ones in this period where some have moved away and dear Janet went to Glory. It has also been with sadness that due to ill health or mobility difficulties we have lost some of our older ladies, but in our hearts they still belong to our group. Solid friendships have been formed with many meeting at other times in the week. This is fellowship, in the name of Jesus.

The feedback from most of the ladies is that Wednesday morning is a very important date in the calendar and only circumstances beyond our control would prevent us from attending.

Our group always begins with a coffee and a chat where people catch up with each other. We open in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to guide us and lead us into a solid hour of Bible Study. This always has lively moments of sharing and open discussion where all are encouraged to participate.

Our numbers have fluctuated from around 22 at our biggest to a solid core of a regular 12-15. It is important to stress this is an open meeting where all are welcome, for instance in some weeks, we have welcomed visiting ladies who like to attend when they are in Llantwit.

COVID restrictions curtailed some of our socialising but we did manage to have a wonderful Christmas lunch and entertainment. We felt that afternoon our God was smiling down on us as we had such an enjoyable time.

We conclude that studying the Bible together is an uplifting, encouraging and profitable way to spend our Wednesday mornings, where we learn more and grow closer to our Magnificent God.

A small group meeting on Wednesday evenings started with 12 members during the Conference of the Parties (COP) summit 2021 and so for the first few sessions we were asking ourselves what being good stewards of God's creation meant, and how we could practically carry out that stewardship role. Early in 2022, we moved on to BEMA podcasts, learning who the initial recipients of Genesis to Ruth were and how these books would have been understood by them in the light of their spiritual, human and natural environments. We have enjoyed BEMA's 'helicopter' approach and will return to BEMA but are now looking at Paul's letter to the Ephesians using The Bible Project Classroom. Currently there are eight members of the group.

Leadership and coordination of the men's work has transitioned from Geoff Squance to Ian Beresford following their recent attendance at a CVM leadership event in Cardiff. The strong relationship with Christian Vision for Men (CVM) has been the bedrock for much of our men's work in the recent past.

The 'Beer and Bibles' initiative in the local pubs in Llantwit involved men having a drink and simply discussing a topic or subject from the bible was curtailed because of Covid. As we came out of lockdown, the group agreed to meet in the Bethel Hall to take a passage of scripture and discuss it in an informal way. The group meets every other Tuesday evening and over the last few months we have been working through the Gospel of John and have recently moved on to look at the Gospel of Luke.

A men's weekend away in the Brecon Beacons was organised in September 2022. The 'Bunkhouse' near Trecastle was available for our exclusive use providing basic accommodation which was warm and welcoming with a log burner and a well equipped kitchen. We did not go hungry!! The weather was excellent, with no rain, and so we were able to get out for walks and to have a barbecue. We also held a film night one evening. However, rigging up a bedsheet as a projector screen did test our technical abilities somewhat! Dave Stewart led a number of short, reflective bible studies throughout the weekend. Ten of the men from Bethel attended the weekend and we all agreed it was an excellent time together and something we would like to do again during the coming year. The 'Bunkhouse' has accommodation for 14 people, with further space to camp in the grounds.

We continue to hold Men's Breakfasts on an ad hoc basis with the last one being held at the Blacksmith Arms, Llanmaes, in November. This is an event where we usually get between 20-30 men attending. It is difficult to evaluate which has the most influence: the pull of a full cooked breakfast, the company or the reflection. It is intended to hold more Men's Breakfast events during the coming year.

Although there are a number of events and activities specifically aimed at men, in this coming year we would like to do more, and to coordinate and publicise these activities in a more cohesive way. The new church website gives us the opportunity to do this and to be more structured and planned in our approach to events, coordinating individual events into a more cohesive men's programme. We are blessed with the men we have in Bethel, who have a passion for God and are keen to support one another in 'tackling life together'. Our desire is to develop a Godly, passionate community of men, who can be open and honest with one another and who reflect Jesus in the way we live.

### **To have a sense of belonging**

Our Pastoral Group is in the process of development. The intention is to provide a point of contact so our fellowship can access pastoral care for themselves or others. We interpret pastoral care as spiritual emotional and social support. We are available for home visits or if preferred a companionable walk or a trip to a coffee shop, we wish to offer something flexible and individualised but always keeping God at the centre of these interventions. We are meeting together on a monthly basis,

were we take the opportunity to review our interventions perhaps making adjustments should these become apparent.

One of the secondary purposes of this group is to provide support and encouragement to individuals who are already deeply engaged in providing pastoral care. We have introduced Connect Groups as a first line of contact for establishing closer relationships, helping people with their journeys of faith, providing information and support as well as arranging group activities and meetings. Each member of the congregation is a member of one of the seven Connect Groups. We are very aware that our fellowship has a wealth of members who are providing an active range of informal support to groups and individuals already, within and beyond Connect Groups, friendship family and fellowship groups, and we ask whether we can prayerfully support and encourage those providing such support.

A further aim is people should have their needs met; God wants us to take care of each other.

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.

Our Friday Club for children aged 5-11 regularly attracts about six children each week. Although the numbers are low the children and parents are appreciative of the games, crafts and Bible stories. There is also a sense of building community between the church and parents and between parents and parents.

Our schools outreach provides many and varied opportunities to share the gospel. Participating in school assemblies not only engages children but also staff. Links are being established with the respective communities which provide opportunities for engagement and belonging. The 'Old Friends' initiative with St Illtyd's Primary School is also building community and providing an environment in which to share faith. The school and the children as well as members of the church congregation are appreciative of the time for intergenerational learning. It is hoped that this initiative will lead to closer links with the school.

In response to the English language needs of Ukrainian refugees arriving in Llantwit Major in May 2022, we ran English language classes at two levels, throughout June, July and August. Classes were delivered by fully qualified teachers and aimed to deliver essential skills and language during the summer period when no public sector English language classes were running. A fifteen-minute gap between classes was left to allow students to chat, help each other and welcome new arrivals. Ongoing attendance and informal feedback were evidence of the usefulness of these classes.

We have been blessed with a comprehensive suite of premises and we welcome the opportunity of letting these premises to community groups, such as Llanilltud Ladies and the Archaeology Group, which are seeking to meet local needs and are in line with our mission strategy. This enables us to present our faith in an

informal way to users; the impact is difficult to judge and may be intangible.

Helen, our Administrative Support Worker, is a key person in ensuring the ministry and mission of the church works smoothly. She fulfils an important role in supporting our minister and the Leadership Team to ensure the church functions efficiently. Helen oversees general correspondence, emails, phone calls and setting up appointments. Good communications are important in keeping the church updated with various weekly activities and news of the congregation; these are achieved through the preparation and publication of notice sheets, maintaining rotas and ensuring resources are available when required. The role has been extended to include corresponding with and booking guest speakers and also maintaining the payroll.

The Repair Café has completed another successful year, its fourth, operating as both a unique Bethel Outreach activity and as a Repair Cafe Wales (RCW) member under their insurance and operating rules. In 2022 we have seen around 150 items for repair, an increase from 2021 which was more seriously Covid impacted. Typically each session has 10-20 customers and between 5-10 volunteers present. We operate across the full social spectrum, so our customers, and volunteers, are from a range of backgrounds, and with a range of material and spiritual needs. Some come just for a chat, some come to get their items fixed, while others come to help their community.

The proportion of Bethel participants is now a minority, but some excellent 'fixers' have come from the community with some additional, quality mending skills that have improved our service in 2022. This has led to a number of new friendships that would not otherwise have occurred, and in addition in 2022, three volunteers have expanded their repair activities to include helping at Restore, a Christian run charity in Barry. on a one day/week basis, greatly expanding our outreach potential as well as beneficial impact to customers.

We continue to receive very positive feedback from our customers, many of whom have benefitted by seeing their items repaired in front of them. It is such a great way to show Christian love by fixing a customer's cherished item, and being rewarded by comments like *Wow, that hasn't worked for years!*

We have had occasional prayer sessions at the start of our Repair Café activity, and we are thankful to those that have prayed on Thursday or Saturday mornings for us. We feel that we operate with a Christian purpose – analogy with Jesus as a carpenter and Paul as tent maker – or a 'Faith in Action' model. We operate as an informal team with a coordinator, consistent with RCW model, but there is much cooperative working during each session and sometimes beyond.

There are currently around 7 Bethel volunteers involved, among a team of about 15. Our café provision will expand to Barry in 2023 as the Barry based volunteers we have are planning a startup there, increasing provision and customer choice.

The Church values partnerships and networks and is a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Baptist Union of Wales. With changes to our ministry and mission we have recently resigned from the East Glamorgan Baptist

Association and are making application to join the South Wales Baptist Association. The Church will normally promote, encourage, support and advance the work of the Baptist Unions 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.

## **FACILITIES MAINTENANCE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The premises group has sought to keep the premises looking in good shape and in good/safe state of repair. If done right, the average member of congregation will not notice broken items getting fixed, floors being cleaned, hedges being cut and other general maintenance. As such 'premises maintenance' is not an outreach activity, or immediately linked to Bethel vision, but is essential to facilitate use of the premises for its program of activities and for external group use.

Short term maintenance issues in the 2022 reporting year have included a gas boiler fault in the Hall (new regulator required), repairs to Vestry windows, as well as Chapel sub-floor repair when the Chapel was out of action for 5 days with no impact on Sunday activity.

We commissioned a quinquennial review of the premises; this has identified some individual issues and has also indicated that there would be advantages in assessing some longer term developments. The most significant medium term issues include:

- a) Chapel sub-floor. Although we have achieved a good/solid short term 'fix' in 2022 the underlying problem has not been addressed. We are hoping and praying that we will not need to take the floor up again for a year or two, while using dehumidifiers to reduce the condensation problem. Money had been budgeted for a complete fix in 2022, this money has not been spent.
- b) Monitoring for damp in the chapel We have not seen any evidence that it is deteriorating. The south east corner roof was identified as a problem several years ago but there is no current evidence of a problem or water ingress. Walls in the vestry however have been identified as a damp spot, possibly the result of heating being disconnected many years ago. An oil radiator provides some remedial heating now.
- c) Chapel boiler replacement. Regular and annual boiler checks suggests this has limited life left and will need to be replaced in the next five years.

The health and safety of our premises has been reviewed during the year. In the quinquennial review of the premises we were alerted to a range of challenges associated with being the custodians of premises some of which are nearly 200 years old. For instance we have been reminded of having two low doorways into the vestry. We are vigilant when using the upstairs of the chapel because of the low balcony rail. Electrical testing of equipment has been managed.

Although not completed in the timeframe of this report, we commissioned an extensive fire assessment of the premises resulting in a number of matters being rectified.

On average there are 2-3 people involved each week in premises maintenance activities. We are thankful for their varied skills and time commitment.

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

### **Overview**

The church accounting year of 1 November 2021 to 31 October 2022 covered a period when most of the activities returned to pre-Covid period. We remain thankful to God for the faithfulness and generosity of the members and congregation. The majority of donations are given on-line,

The church transferred current account banking from the HSBC, which started charging for charity accounts, to the Co-operative Bank, which do not charge. The majority of the funds are held in *Baptists Together* deposit accounts which assist other churches requiring a loan.

The table of receipts and payments is set out below. The Mission Beyond Llantwit payments include some items relating to the previous accounting period carried over into the financial year of this report. The table below indicates an increase of £10,000 in the carry forward from the report for 1 January 2021 to 31 October 2021. This figure was identified through the examination process in this report year and was the result of under reporting an investment in one of the *Baptists Together* deposit accounts.

Overall the church finances remain in a healthy position which will enable the ministry work to be expanded, with an additional staff member in the coming year to focus on children and youth work.

### **Reserves Policy**

The Trustees regard the balance of nearly £137,000 carried forward in the General Fund as adequate to make preparations for the ministry and mission plans in the 2022/23 financial year while maintaining a minimum reserve of £35,000.

## **EXAMINATION OF ACCOUNTS**

The church accounts for the period 1 November 2021 to 31 October 2022 have been independently examined and agreed by:

Mr NTP Harris ACIB  
Llanmaes  
CF61 2XR

Date: 25 March 2023

# RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS 1 NOVEMBER 2021 TO 31 OCTOBER 2022

|                                                 | General Fund<br>£ | Building Fund<br>£ | Benevolent Fund<br>£ | Total<br>£     |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| <b>Receipts</b>                                 |                   |                    |                      |                |
| Offerings                                       | 91,248            | 2,750              |                      | 93,998         |
| Gifts to the church                             | 5,145             |                    |                      | 5,145          |
| Gifts for Mission<br>Beyond Llantwit            | 795               |                    |                      | 795            |
| Gifts for local<br>outreach                     | 1,000             |                    |                      | 1,000          |
| Income tax<br>recovered on gifts                | 16,215            | 687                |                      | 16,902         |
| Refunds                                         | 395               |                    |                      | 395            |
| Interest from bank<br>accounts                  | 689               |                    |                      | 689            |
| Sundries                                        | 84                |                    |                      | 84             |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>115,571</b>    | <b>3,437</b>       | <b>0</b>             | <b>119,008</b> |
|                                                 |                   |                    |                      |                |
| <b>Payments</b>                                 |                   |                    |                      |                |
| Ministry                                        | 51,470            |                    |                      | 51,470         |
| Worship activities                              | 6,486             |                    |                      | 6,486          |
| Mission beyond<br>Llantwit                      | 12,302            |                    |                      | 12,302         |
| Local outreach                                  | 1,163             |                    | 1,852                | 3,015          |
| Property<br>maintenance/<br>refurbishment       | 2,885             |                    |                      | 2,885          |
| Utilities                                       | 5,154             |                    |                      | 5,154          |
| Cleaning                                        | 2,700             |                    |                      | 2,700          |
| Insurance                                       | 1,139             |                    |                      | 1,139          |
| Office costs                                    | 3,322             |                    |                      | ..3,322        |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>86,621</b>     | <b>0</b>           | <b>1,852</b>         | <b>88,473</b>  |
|                                                 |                   |                    |                      |                |
| <b>Surplus for the<br/>period</b>               | <b>28,950</b>     | <b>3,437</b>       | <b>-1,852</b>        | <b>30,535</b>  |
|                                                 |                   |                    |                      |                |
| <b>Opening<br/>balances 1<br/>November 2021</b> | <b>107,939</b>    | <b>34,852</b>      | <b>6,539</b>         | <b>149,330</b> |
| <b>Closing balances<br/>31 October 2022</b>     | <b>136,889</b>    | <b>38,289</b>      | <b>4,687</b>         | <b>179,865</b> |