

**THE METHODIST CHURCH
SUTTON CIRCUIT
LONDON DISTRICT 35/39**

Minutes of the Circuit Meeting Held on 21st May 2015
At EPSOM METHODIST CHURCH

Those present: Rev Dr Dave Dickinson (Chair), Rev Nicola Wooller, Rev Dr John Amankwatia, Miss Shirley Breeden, Mr Richard Smith (Circuit Treasurer), Mr Chee Hong Fui, Mrs Janet Angel, Mr Ravi Saravanamuttu, Miss Raj Kalsi (Secretary) and 17 members whose names are recorded.

1. Opening devotions

Rev Dave Dickinson led the meeting in a reflection and prayer.

2. Meeting Membership - confirmation of membership list

The membership list was confirmed as accurate with the following amendments: The Chair welcomed the following:

Jacqueline John as Deacon for Sutton Trinity

Geoff Gunton as replacement for Pam Nelson as an elected representative for Carshalton

Maureen Patel as Treasurer for Bandon Hill

The following withdrawals were noted from the meeting: Segun Akindele who is elected representative for Sutton Trinity and Jean Harvey who is elected representative for Bandon Hill. Alan Jameson has transferred from Wallington to Bandon Hill as elected representative.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Rev Dr Mark Wakelin, Rev Gillian Long, Rev Ernest Yu, Rev Anne Rusbridge, Rev Mark Williams, Rev Des Williamson, David Forty, Philip Sandiford, Nick White, Alan Jameson, Geoff Gunton, John Riley, Tom Styche, Audrey Saunderson, Maureen Patel, Gordon Fleming, David Worthington, Colin Batty, Christine Asirwatham and Stanley Jeyaraj.

4. Minutes of the meetings held on 3rd February 2015 (previously circulated)

The meeting accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd February 2015.

5. Matters arising

Culture of Invitation Day At Epsom Methodist Church on 4th July 2015

The Chair informed the meeting that flyers are being distributed to Churches in the next few days advertising this event. Michael Harvey is the speaker for this event. This conference would be a good preparation for those who would like to be involved in Back to Church Sunday in October this year. The programme is as follows:

1000-1100 Why we don't invite our friends to Church

Coffee and Stretch break

1115-1230 Exploring the present culture

Lunch

1315-1415 Emotional Mental and Physical strategies to becoming invitational

Coffee and Stretch break

1430-1500 Brief session on measuring progress

6. Leadership Team Report

The meeting received a report from the Circuit Leadership Team which was included in the agenda papers. The Chair encouraged members to attend the Welcome Service for Rosemary Richter at 7.30pm on Tuesday 1st of September at Carshalton Methodist Church.

7. Minister for Epsom Chinese Congregation

In the last two matching sessions a Minister for the Chinese congregation was not found and they have not had a Minister for over 18 months. The Chair informed the meeting that in the last ten days an opportunity seems to be opening as a result of the Malaysian conference intending to send a Mission Pastor to the British conference from January 2016 and two options available to us would include:

- 1) A Connexional panel would be convened in the autumn 2015 to meet the potential partner and if the criteria are met then the Pastor may meet the Epsom congregation at the same time. There is indication that the Epsom Congregation is the most eligible for this Pastor to work with.
- 2) Conversation with the Connexion suggested that another option would be for the Stewards of Chinese Congregation in Epsom to prepare a job description to advertise the opening. The individual from the Malaysian Conference will be encouraged to apply. If the individual is suitable they can be appointed, and later be given Recognised and Regarded status. There could be other applicants.

Questions from the floor included:

-If option two was considered would other individuals be allowed to apply?

-Who would deal with the immigration issues?

The Chair confirmed that other applications would be considered if the individual had suitable qualifications including the language requirements and expressed the belief that the Connexion would oversee work permit and immigration issues.

Circuit meeting agreed to authorise the Circuit Leadership Team to explore either or both options in consultation with the Connexion and District Chair.

8. Safeguarding

Report on training update included in the agenda papers, Raj emphasised that all those who are still in roles and completed training five years ago in 2010 will have to be retrained before the end of this year. List of names of those who need to be retrained have been send to Safeguarding Officers at each Church. The training courses will be held between September and November this year, venues and dates will be confirmed.

9. Leaders of Worship and Preachers

Nick White sent his apologies to the Meeting. The Leaders of Worship and Preachers report is included in the agenda papers. The Chair reported to the meeting that at the last meeting of Local Preachers and Worship Leaders on 12th May, confirmation was received of a satisfactory outcome for Rabin Lok's trial service. He has completed all units of the Faith and Worship Course and had his final interview. The meeting agreed to recommend Rabin Lok for Full Accreditation. The accreditation service for newly accredited Local Preachers is planned as an evening Circuit Service at Sutton Trinity on Sunday 22nd November.

10. Circuit Invitations Committee

The Chair felt that the Circuit Invitations Committee is a standing committee and therefore recommended that it needs to include representatives from all the Churches in the Circuit. Only Churches that are involved in the move need to be involved in the process in that particular year. Therefore this year the Circuit Invitations Committee will comprise of representative from Wallington, Banstead, Epsom and Cheam and one representative from a Church with is not directly involved in the process, namely David Gooch from Sutton Trinity. Normal practice is for Senior Steward at the Church to be a representative to the Invitations Committee, the Senior Steward can appoint someone else as representative if they want to.

11. Open forum – Being Fruitful

The Chair shared with meeting an address made by an American Pastor earlier this year at a District Chairs meeting, the address being about five characteristics of the work and life of a Church: hospitality, worship, faith development, mission & service and generosity. What if we were to add an adjective to each of these? The Chair offered his own questions related to these points for the meeting to consider:-

- 1) Radical hospitality. Most churches have learnt in the past that it is good practice of having a smiling person at the door to welcome people in with a handshake instead of pushing a newsletter into their hands. Does that welcome extend beyond the door, or all aspects of our Churches are open and welcoming, or are there areas where fellowship is so intense that it very difficult for new people to find their way in? When we usher people in and they ask us questions do we actually take them and escort them or do we simply point them to someone else to speak to? Especially if there are people who are different.
- 2) Passionate worship. Do we gather consciously on a Sunday morning with the expectation that something exciting is going to happen, that we are going to be enlightened and going to learn something and going to move deeper into God? Does our worship open a way to connect with God as well as with each other or is it all horizontal being friendly with each other? Passionate worship is not connected with a particular style, it is not about being evangelical or charismatic. Passionate worship can be formal because it is characterised by having high priority, it is to do with its contextualisation in drawing everything about the life of our Church together into what we offer to God when we gather. It is also about our preparation and not just a matter about turning up.
- 3) Intentional Faith. When we baptise a baby what is our expectation of the life and spiritual journey of that baby? When will we expect to see them again and how will we cater for them and help them through their faith in the junior Church and into adulthood? A lot of intentional faith development is about sending groups to confirmation classes and support groups in our Churches.
- 4) Risk-taking Mission and Service. What services do our Churches provide to our neighbourhoods? What mission are we engaged in at home and overseas? Many Churches find it easier to engage with Churches overseas because it is distant, and it is the streets around your Churches where mission and service becomes difficult.
- 5) Finally extravagant generosity. We live in the age of risk assessments, cost analysis, economic austerity and stewardship. All this language is important but quite different from the language of the Gospel. The Gospel is about the generosity of the gift of grace. Are we generous with our time, skills, money and our care?

The Chair asked the meeting to discuss with each other these five phrases and after the discussion feedback was as follows:

- Faith development is difficult because of diverse congregation, different people have different knowledge of the faith, some are starting their journey and some are way down the journey.
- Hospitality, there is normally a rota in each Church to welcome people at the door and therefore lack of continuity can be an issue. When new people are welcomed at the door they then disappear into the congregation, but should we be spontaneous and force these people in becoming part of the Church family immediately? Sometimes these people do not want to be forced they just want to slip into the congregation and want to be left alone until they are ready.
- Fellowship groups and bible study can be difficult because of different expectations, experiences, styles of learning and different stages of growth. Some people may not be as advanced as others and so are not at the same stage of growth spiritually.

The Chair asked the meeting members to take the discussion from this meeting back to their Churches and share them at Stewards Meeting, Church Council Meetings or any other appropriate groups in the Church.

12. Date and place of next meeting

Wednesday 9th September 2015, St John's Church Belmont, Coffee at 7.30pm, meeting at 8pm.

13. Closing devotions

The meeting closed by speaking together the words of the Grace.