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**MINUTES: ANNUAL GENERAL CHURCH MEETING: Sunday 20th June 2021 at 6.00pm**

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| 1 | **Welcome**  Rev Andrew Prout (AP) welcomed and thanked all for attending, including the Superintendent minister Rev Rosemary Fletcher, and those attending for the first time, including Emma Williams and Maggie Dodd, the two newly appointed lay workers.  AP noted that the format of the AGM was not as wished for, being held on Zoom. The meeting had been postponed from May in the hope that it could be held in person, but ongoing restrictions have not made it possible. He noted that it was legally important that the church met. |
| 2 | **Apologies and Attendance Record**  **Attendance**  **Those present:** Rev Andrew Prout, Angela Spriggs (note-taker), Eric Bridgstock, Pip Davies, Val Parker, Chris Kitchin, Jan Kitchin, Maggie Dodd, Anne Wall, Rosemary Fletcher, Denise Willingham, Emma Williams, Christine Ford, Caroline Tough, Chris Tough, Johanna Mason, Gina Woodhead, Hilary Moore, Cliff Moore, Marion Eaton, Ros Hancock, Chris Hancock, Lianne Weidmann  **Apologies were received from:**  Freda Gray  Colin Rowe and Mary Groves  Napoleon Yorke-Andrews  Lianne Weidmann (for beginning)  David and Louise Mullins  Devotions were held. |
| 3 | **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 19 May 2019**  Rev Andrew Prout noted that at the time of the previous AGM in May 2019 the Church was beginning to explore employment of an Anna Chaplain and Children and Family Worker. It was good to see this project come into fruition with both posts being filled.  He noted the wonderful time of fellowship of the 125 celebrations which were about to begin at the last AGM.  AP expressed gratitude to Jackie Vivian for stepping in to take the minutes of the last AGM in the absence of a Church Council Secretary. The minutes were unanimously accepted as a true and correct record. |
| 4 | **Any Matters Arising (Not Appearing Elsewhere on the Agenda)**  None |
| 5 | **Remembrance of Members who have died since the last Annual General Meeting.**  The meeting remembered and held in prayer the following people who have sadly died since the last AGM and the beginning of the pandemic: Andrew Robertson, George Selvarajan, David Jones, Yvonne Winter, Glynn Lewis, Sheila Fowler, Geoff Burdett, Margaret Tims, Alan Davey, John Carty, Graham Hill, Tara Samson, Reg Hancock and Sheila Wallace. Rev Andrew Prout noted that it has been a very difficult time in Church’s life. Because both these members and friends of the Church had died in time of pandemic, the Church has not been able to gather as normal at the time of death. |
| 6 | **Election of Church Stewards and Representatives to the Church Council**  All six Church Stewards have agreed to stand next year. AP thanked the Stewards for their hard work over the past year. They have had to carry a tremendous load. He thanked in particular Denise Willingham, as Senior Church Steward, stating that he could not have managed without her support. Denise said that it had been a privilege, and that the Stewards could not have done their work without him. AP noted that Denise Willingham was to step down as Senior Steward. The Stewards would decide her successor among themselves.  Chris Hancock and Helen Jeffrey have asked to stand down as Church Council representatives from the congregation. They were first elected in 2009 and 2005 respectively. Rev Prout thanked them for their long stint of service. He noted that Graham Danbury, Ros Hancock, Caroline Tough, Chris Kitchin have said that they are happy to continue. All have served less than 6 years. Another potential representative from the congregation had been approached but had not committed. If they decide to stand they can be approved by the Church Council on 30th June.  Church Council members in attendance have been asked to vote by returning the voting form previously attached to the notices to the Manse or the Church by the following Sunday to maintain anonymity. They can also be emailed to Angela Spriggs, Church Council Secretary. Post Meeting note: All the Church Stewards and each of the representatives seeking to serve a further year were re-elected with the sufficient majority. |
| 7 | **Annual Report including Statement of Accounts 2019-20**  Rev Prout expressed gratitude to Angela Spriggs for pulling together the Annual Report. He noted that it makes encouraging reading, setting out all the Church had managed to do despite the pandemic. The report will be submitted to the Church Council for formal approval before submission to the Charity Commission.  Rev Prout noted that the statement of the accounts 2019 – 2020 have been independently examined and signed off. Rev Prout expressed gratitude to Eric Bridgstock for all his work on these. He noted that circumstances have been very difficult during the pandemic, but that there has been huge generosity among the Church members and adherents.  The accounts reflect the Church’s gaining a new heating system for approximately £30,000 which has wiped out a surplus from previous accounts. There has been a decline in lettings income but collections are above budget as members have shifted to direct debit. The accounts are extremely healthy.  **Post-meeting note:**  The Treasurer apologises for an error in the 2nd Quarter Finance Summary on page 9 of the Annual Report.  The first item under Payments (Circuit Assessment) accounts for only one quarter’s assessment (hence it shows 25% of budget instead of 50%).  The actual spend should be**£26,400**, making the Total Payments**£48,470** and the Surplus**£18,324**.  The procurement of a new boiler and heating system during Q3, and the ongoing employment of the two Lay Workers, should take the surplus for the year near to the planned figure of**-£33,375**.  The Annual Report has been corrected accordingly. |
| 8 | **The Impact of Covid-19 and Emerging from the Pandemic Positively**  Rev Prout provided personal reflections on the impact on COVID on the Church, and how the Church might look forward. He noted the huge pastoral impact of the pandemic. Very many people had died. Members of the Church had faced the brunt of the pandemic in many ways: as front line workers; difficult health and wellbeing of family and friends; including those who have suffered from COVID-19; in facing changing circumstances caused by the pandemic. He noted that other members have had surgery delayed, and still others have not felt able to physically attend church service to date. Rev Prout commended Gina Woodhead and the pastoral team for all their work during the pandemic. He noted its ongoing pastoral impact.  Evangeline Selvarajan sought to organise a memorial service for George. Caroline and Chris were looking forward to the marriage of their daughter to Alice. The Children and Families worker Emma Williams (nee Haggis) has married having had her wedding delayed by the pandemic. Betty Burdett was moving away to live near her daughter.  Rev Prout noted the pandemic’s impact on all activities, including Network Fellowship, Babies and Toddlers, and Sunday Club. He noted that many activities may look different when they restart. Sunday Club has already started in a different format.  He noted that the pandemic had impacted on the work of the Children and Families Worker and the Anna Chaplain. The Children and Families Worker Emma has worked under restrictions for her entire time in post which has been difficult and challenging. However both are settling in.  Rev Prout read out a thank you card to the Church from Emma and Callum for the present sent on occasion of their wedding. He stated that it was a great blessing to have Emma and Callum with us.  On worship Rev Prout gave a tribute to preachers, leaders, church stewards, those who hand delivered the notice and service sheets, and particularly Chris Hancock for making the service available online each week. He expressed deep gratitude for all the work done.  Rev Prout discussed how the Church could emerge from pandemic. He noted the advantages of the move to digital service projection which the pandemic necessitated. The services offered opportunities for mission. Those unable to attend in person valued being able to share the services in their own home. Those unable to attend funerals in person were grateful to be able to share in live feeds. Rev Prout stated that the services must continue in both digital and physical format.  Rev Prout proposed that the Church needed to move forward in 4 areas:   1. The development of an all age space, where all feel welcomed and can contribute. The employment of the Children and Families Worker and Anna Chaplain supports this objective well and increases the Church’s capacity to support the congregation at each stage of life. It is hoped that the congregation will have the opportunity with members of MRMC to speak to Emma and Maggie in person on the afternoon of 10th and evening of 11th August. They will discuss the work they have done and their hopes for the future, both MRMC and HRMC. The number of young people involved is currently very small. The Church is currently without a Sunday club coordinator. Numbers involved in Brigade are very small. It is hoped to hold Holiday at Home in August, with an afternoon at HRMC and 2 mornings with lunch at MRMC – details to be confirmed. Volunteers will be needed. Maggie has arranged meetings in other people’s gardens. The Church will look to do the same with children and families. The management team is working with the Children and Families worker to identify priorities over the next year. Emma’s work to date is as summarised in the Annual Report. 2. To create an inclusive space, which embraces all irrespective of gender or race, and including people on the margins. From September the Church will be supporting the Deacon with work on the Salisbury Estate, where there are many socially deprived families. The St Albans churches take this project under their umbrella on that date. 3. To develop the Church as an Eco-space. It was noted that the Church needs to have voice in this space. The Church Council has already done work on this space. It is important for the Church’s credibility in the community. 4. To develop the Church as a discipling space, where people are introduced to Jesus Christ and encouraged on that journey. Rev Prout intends to reflect on this area when on sabbatical in the Autumn. He noted that this may involve doing things differently to before.   Rev Prout noted that the Church had received and welcomed Helen Wallace to the Church in the past year. The service was moving, meaningful, although numbers were limited because of the pandemic.  Rev Prout discussed the arrangements for staffing in the Circuit and the Church from 2022, when Rev Rosemary Fletcher sits down. The Circuit will reduce its ministerial staff from 5 to 4, consisting of 3 presbyters and a Deacon. The Circuit has agreed that the two St Albans Churches will share a minister and will work together increasingly. HRMC’s minister will no longer have responsibility for Shenley and Radlett Churches. The superintendency will move to Potters Bar. At least half of the Deacon’s time will be allocated to the St Albans ministry, including the work at Salisbury Village. Emma Williams and Maggie Dodd will of course be working for the St Albans Churches. The two Churches will have 50% of a deacon’s time. Deacon Linda Kinchenton is currently going through the re-invitation process. She is seeking to move to a new station in September 2022. The Circuit is therefore seeking a new deacon. Rev Ali Facey, currently minister at Potters Bar, has confirmed that she will be moving in 2022. Her successor will be responsible for Radlett, Potters Bar, Shenley, and the Superintendency. Rev Rosemary Fletcher will be looking after Rev Prout’s section during his sabbatical in the Autumn. Rev Fletcher expressed gratitude for all that Rev Prout did for her during the time of her sabbatical in January to March earlier this year.  Rev Prout opened the floor to the meeting for reflections. He stated that they would glean ideas from the questionnaire which was distributed the previous summer.  Chris Hancock noted that the digital space might be used more creatively for different styles of worship. For instance he has missed more contemplative meetings that used to be held in the evenings.  Andrew Prout noted that in recent services there had been some moving testimonies. Opportunities for testimonies could be provided in agape services.  Gina Woodhead stated that it was wonderful having Maggie Dodd in post. The teas held in gardens had been successful. She thanked everyone who had helped with these.  The meeting discussed thoughts and ideas for increasing and maintaining access to services and providing opportunities to sing which have been greatly missed during lockdown:  The songs recorded during lockdown will be put on CD for people to listen to in their own homes (Chris Hancock).  Chris Hancock will provide Maggie Dodd and Gina Woodhead with a link to all the hymns recorded on the website.  Services can be put on DVD for Maggie to circulate to those unable to attend. The Church will need to have a feel for how many people would like this service.  Val Parker stated that the copyright will need to be checked before hymns and songs are reproduced and distributed.  It was proposed that the church sang at least one hymn, potentially the last, outside in the car park.  It was noted that the Church continues to reach out to those at home but who do not have access to the internet.  Chris Hancock noted that the Church had a weak spot in promoting itself on social media. The Church lacks a champion or expert here. It was suggested that this may be suited to young people. However, Emma Williams noted that most of the young people in the Church were under the age of permitted use of Whatsapp.    Marion Eaton noted that the Zoom house groups held during the pandemic had not been widely publicised which represented a missed opportunity. Rev Prout proposed that in the future at least one house group should be held on Zoom. He noted that, for instance, Angela Andrews had been able to join house groups from the Gambia.  Rev Rosemary Fletcher stated that the Church needed to look at where the current gaps are in house group provision, and to look to hold more joint house groups between the two St Albans Churches.  Denise noted that there was an opportunity to look at the meeting times for all groups, and the makeup of groups. Some groups have been meeting for a long time and provided a great deal of support for those involved, but this made it difficult for others to join. She proposed, for instance, having Lent and Advent groups which are different from the normal house groups, where all the groups are mixed up so that they meet other people.  Andrew stated that over summer the Church will look at how best to support those families where Sunday morning is not a good time for them. Those with thoughts and ideas were encouraged to speak to Denise, Andrew Prout, Maggie Dodd, and Emma Williams. |
| 9 | **Note of Opportunity to hear from Maggie and Emma**  There will be an opportunity to hear about the work of Maggie and Emma on the evening of August 10th at MRMC and afternoon of August 11th at HRMC. Linda Kinchenton will also provide details of the work at Salisbury village, and provide an opportunity to get involved. |
| 10 | **Note of Andrew’s Sabbatical Sept – Nov 2021 and Arrangements for Cover**  Rev Andrew Prout will be on Sabbatical from Sept – Nov 2021. He hoped to walk some of Camino pilgrimage in Spain in October and November. He will also appraise his resources collated over 20 years of ministry, particularly with disciplining in mind, to look at different models of undertaking the task. |
| 11 | **Any Other Business**  None |

**Closing devotions were held.**