



## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

held on Thursday 7 February 2019 at Abbey Lane United Reformed Church

Present: Rev. Caroline Vodden, Rosemary Timms (Secretary), Rev. John Goddard, John Capper, Capt. Katrina Thurlow, Val Bowtle, Ted Jackson, Jean Mead, Margaret Hurst, and Emma Turner.

The council wished to record their appreciation to Jonathan, in his absence, for his chairmanship over the last two years.

Opening devotions were led by Caroline focusing on Psalm 100 and some liturgy from the Iona Community.

1. Apologies: were received from Rev. Jonathan Burton, Rev. David Tomlinson, Father David Clemens, Suzan Bouton, Kathryn Fiddock, Helen O'Neill, and Elizabeth Tindley,
2. Consideration of the Agenda.  
No additional items were added.
3. Minutes of last meeting.  
The minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 were approved and were signed.
4. Matter Arising and Review of Events
  1. **Late Night Shopping:** The stall provided a simple low key visual presence and it was possible to have some real conversations with a few people. Might be helpful to ask additional volunteers next year. Suggestions for 2019 included dressing up as a character from the nativity and mingling with the crowds and 'angel bombing'.
  2. **United Service at St Mary's:** Thanks were expressed to Caroline for preaching and St Mary's for hosting the service. The offering was £689.02: £344.51 for VBS and £344.51 for Christian Aid.  
  
Next year the United Service would be on 19<sup>th</sup> January and would be hosted by the URC.
  3. **Agape Meal at St Mary's:** It was a lovely occasion which raised £200 for Christian Aid.  
  
Next year the Agape Meal would be on 23<sup>rd</sup> January and would be hosted by the Society of Friends,
  4. **Prayer for the Nation at St Mary's:** This event was most welcome given everything that is happening in the UK.

5. Future Dates

1. **VBS Sunday on 24<sup>th</sup> February:** This year they will celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. There should be some feedback from Jonathan on the future of the event by the next meeting.
2. **World Day of Prayer on 1<sup>st</sup> March:** This was being hosted by Saffron Walden Community Church and would be at 2.00 p.m. (note the time is not the same as in previous years)
3. **Lent Groups:** The theme this year is 'Women of the Gospel Story' with sessions on 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> March, and 3<sup>rd</sup> April. There is a fifth session on the 10<sup>th</sup> April when Caroline will share some of her experiences while on sabbatical on the Camino de Santiago de Compostela. Posters were available to take away.
4. **Christian Aid Week:** This year the house to house collection will be from 12<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> May:
5. **Pentecost – Thy Kingdom Come:** This prayer event on 9<sup>th</sup> June is being organised by St Mary's and will run from 2.00 p.m. 'til 4.00 p.m. (not 5.00 p.m. as previously envisaged)
6. **More in Common on the Common on 22<sup>nd</sup> June:** The event this year runs between 12 noon and 3.00 p.m. and families are invited to bring a picnic. We understand that there will be live music (from Joanna Eden and others) and children's activities.

6. Easter 2019

1. **Easter Publicity:** Rosemary would ask Lisa Knight if she would co-ordinate our joint advert and CTSW members/leaders were asked to ensure that Lisa has all the information in good time.
2. **Walk of Witness on 19<sup>th</sup> April:** John Goddard agreed to organise it in the same format as in recent years: assembling in the URC Car park at 10.30 a.m. and processing from there along the usual route to St Mary's. John would ask Ged if he would be willing to organise stewards again. John was hoping to involve more people in the carrying of the cross.

7. Finance

John circulated the 2018 finance statements for the general account and the Christian Aid account which had been independently examined by Ged Pearce. Thanks were expressed to Ged and it was agreed to ask him if he was willing to do the review again next year. It was agreed to keep the church subscriptions at £75.00.

8. News from Churches

- **URC:** The church is out of bounds during building work and they would appreciate prayers as the builders have gone into administration. They will be hosting the Railway Exhibition on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February, will again invite people to sing 'Stainer's Crucifixion' on Good Friday and will be holding a Spring Fair in May.
- **Salvation Army:** Unfortunately some lead has been stolen from the roof. Katrina shared that they have been reviewing their five mission areas. They have also been in dialogue with the Catholic Church about local responses to rough sleepers. It was suggested that they also talk to the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- **Society of Friends:** Ted shared that they are adopting a new charity this year 'Combatants for Peace' and they also support 'Sanctuary Everywhere'.

- ***Baptist Church:*** The current sermon series is focused on ‘The Return of the Prodigal’. The Thursday evening sessions continue and once a month the focus will be the history of Christianity. A Barn Dance is taking place on 9<sup>th</sup> March and everyone is welcome to come along.
- ***Saffron Walden Community Church:*** The building work will mean they worship in the Town Hall from 1<sup>st</sup> April until August and some midweek activities may also be relocated elsewhere. They will be running a series of four marriage enrichment sessions in March.

8. *Any Other Business*

Noted that the Foodbank has now moved to Stansted House on Shire Hill and will be paying rent. They will welcome additional financial support as well as goods going forward.

No other items were raised.

9. *Dates of Meetings*

Having our meetings on the first Thursday of the month would be difficult for Jonathan and it was agreed to change to the second Thursday of the month. Rosemary would circulate a revised list of dates with the minutes of this meeting.

The next meeting would be Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

Caroline closed the meeting with prayer.