

## **THE CHURCH MEETING**

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2025**

### **The New Life Church -Engagement**

The Trustees, meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> September, unanimously supported this proposal. It is clear there would be stages in this development, beginning with the hiring of the premises, and the ability of individuals to attend each other's services, to sharing worship and other activities from time and, perhaps if appropriate, eventually uniting fully the two congregations. These different stages would take time and prayer. They would need to be appropriate and with God's guidance felt by both congregations to be the right way to go. At this stage we are only considering engagement with the Church in the hiring of the premises and with the opportunity to attend each other's services if individuals should wish to do so.

As noted previously, 'if and when the Church agreed to this proposal, Trinity would make an application to the Methodist Church to enable this engagement. The Methodist Church would look at any application and it would make the final decision.' The Church building belongs to the Methodist Church but of course the URC would be kept informed and would be likely to support such an initiative.

The statement of faith of the New Life Church accords with Christian belief. There are some differences of worship and practice e.g. The New Life Church practises adult baptism, Trinity is licensed for same sex marriages supported by both Methodist and URC Churches. One of the Nepalese sister churches is already using a Methodist Church elsewhere. If the Methodist Church approves of the proposal, it is clear that there will be a number of logistical issues to solve.

#### **Additional information shared with the Church Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> July**

One of the reasons for the proposal is that the majority of the New Life Church members live in Abingdon. Some of the children are on roll at Carswell School. Trinity would therefore be a local church for the majority of the congregation.

The general message from the New Life Church is one of wanting to accept what we are currently doing and hoping that we will accept their current practice. In getting to know each other and our forms of worship, the Nepalese Church members would wish to come and join Trinity at worship from time to time and Trinity members would be able to attend their worship.

There are certain aspects of worship and practice which would need further discussion and consideration, for example:

- Baptism – the Church practises adult baptism, often at 16, but is flexible and if a child wanted to be baptised at 12 years old, this could be done.

- Prayer – New Life Church believe in speaking in tongues, which is biblical, and they do in their services; but Elder Chandra Sunwar had made it clear that if they joined us for worship and nobody was speaking in tongues they would be unlikely to do so.
- Holy Communion: there could be differences in practice here
- Trinity is licensed for same sex marriages
- The once-a-month meeting, on the first Saturday of the month, would be for prayer and fasting.

**Some logistical problems which would need to be negotiated:**

- The times the New Life Church would want to be in the Church and Hall – fellowship during coffee is important for Trinity and occasionally a Church Meeting follows this (two or three times a year).
- The use of the AV system –this would need to be shared and there would need to be training for the New Life Church to manage this.
- Trinity holds occasional afternoon services in the church on a Saturday or Sunday, and possibly in the summer months an evening service - the times of these would need to be considered in relation to the New Life Church's needs.
- Currently there are a number of bookings from the community which could conflict with New Life Church's requested use of both Church and Conduit Centre. Loss of income would probably be covered by the New Life Church's contribution but the hiring of premises is a service to the community and a point of contact with outside users. In the past 12 months there have been 15 Sunday Conduit Centre afternoon bookings which would clash with what the New Life Church is requesting.
- There have been few baptisms this year but, in the past, the Hall has been held open in case the family want to book it for a party afterwards – that party could extend into the New Life Church's time in the afternoon.
- If adult baptism by immersion was required, the Baptist Church could be approached?
- Over the past year, there have been 28 Saturday bookings in the Conduit Centre, so this would allow space for the monthly Saturday prayer and fasting requested.
- Any agreement would presumably need to honour any bookings made for 2026.

The Trustees.

09-09-25