



Pastoral Leadership Team Update

Sunday 21st August 2022

The new Pastoral Leadership team¹ were introduced on Sunday 6th March 2022 and if you are new to the church they are:

Aaron and Lynsey Dowds – Senior Pastors
Alan and Sally Kelly - Elders
Tim and Mel Thomson - Elders
Stuart and Gill Hannah - Elders

Since then, we have been meeting regularly, praying and planning how best to navigate the church as we come out of lockdown and covid restrictions to meet together again in person but stay online too. We believe this is the start of a new and fruitful season for us and the Christian church everywhere as people across the world are trying to make sense of all that has happened and seeking again true meaning, hope and purpose for their lives in the face of global pandemics, catastrophic wars and the challenge of climate change.

Today, we want to update you on a strategic change that is happening. Aaron, our Senior Pastor, has accepted an opportunity, to move to four days a week working in his pharmacy role and reducing his church employment down from three days to one day per week.

As a leadership team we are supportive of this decision for two main reasons:

- Firstly, it aligns with what we believe is the biblical model for local church, whereby a team of Elders and deacons share responsibility for the leadership of the wider body of members and shepherd/pastor, oversee, lead, and care for the local church. The pastoral leadership team were established to share the responsibility of leadership for this church.
- Secondly, it reduces the overall expenditure of the church releasing finances to help us return to a healthy financial position coming out of Covid. It will hopefully allow expenditure to be transferred to other missional or pastoral needs and opportunities.

Aaron will continue in his role as Senior Pastor but will be able to share more of this role across the leadership team. His continued employment of one day per week will allow the more managerial and administrative side of the role to continue to be fulfilled.

We also want to share the priorities we see for the Vine church for the remainder of this year and into 2023. These priorities are:

1. **Mission - to “BLESS” our city and the nations.** We want to support the local community as it faces the challenge of the cost-of-living crisis, especially higher energy bills. Recently, our local MSP, Shirley-Anne Somerville, wrote to us expressing her concerns about these issues and asked if we could work together with her team to help, and specifically, as she put it to *“see local community church halls used as “warm, safe places” where people could go to if they can’t afford to heat their homes?”*

¹ <https://www.thevinechurch.com/about/pastoral-leadership-team/>



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We replied to say that we share the same concerns and already have on offer for the community the “Revive Wellbeing Hub & Café” run by our own Mel Thomsons’ Embracing Life charity. It operates in our building three days per week offering the community a place to meet and share in free activities and wellbeing sessions. We are also looking into the idea of doing a free hot meal once per week from our cafe where people can eat in a warm, friendly and safe environment.

Mel is meeting with Shirley Ann and her team to move this forward. As a Leadership Team we feel this a strong nudge from the Lord to continue to open up this amazing building we have here to serve His purposes even more, and for us as a church to focus our energies and talents on the missional opportunity right on our doorstep. Over the next few months, we will continue to serve the local community as best we can.

2. **Spiritual growth – to help people grow spiritually in community.** The Leadership Team also want to develop more ways for our members to connect together in person. As we all gain more confidence and desire to meet together with one-another following the two years of Covid, we want to try new ways to do this. So, we are planning a few things:

- We are starting a 10-week teaching series on Sunday mornings focusing on the “one-anothers” we read about in the New Testament explaining to the early church what they were to focus on as a new Christ following community: Loving one another, caring for one another, encouraging one another, and many other “one-anothers” that we will explore in more detail together through this series.
- Between now and Christmas we are going to organise some church wide gatherings during the week, apart from a Sunday, to meet together for fellowship, friendship, fun and food.
- We will also be reviewing opportunities for our church to meet together in smaller groups and we hope to see one or two ideas move forward in the next few months.

Thank you for your support and engagement through this new season. Please let us know your thoughts and ask any questions you would like to by emailing the church office at:

mail@thevinechurch.net

or chat to any of the Pastoral Leadership Team.