

EMBA DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS 2021

The EMBA board of Directors currently comprises twelve trustees. Eight positions are elected by EMBA churches at the AGM for a term of three years (staff positions are ex-officio and we currently have one co-opted Director).

As the 2020 AGM had to be cancelled due to Covid-19, the five nominated Directors then, were duly appointed by the Directors under Bye-Law 1e:

'The Directors shall have the power to fill any vacancy that may arise between Annual General Meetings. A person so appointed to fill the vacancy will serve only until the following Annual General Meeting.'

In line with the Bye-Laws, those appointed are only eligible to serve until the 2021 AGM. All five Directors are willing to continue to serve.

Five nominations have been received for the five vacancies on the Board of Directors. You may therefore vote for as many nominees as you wish.

Revd Hannah Colk

Nominated by the deacons of Robert Hall Memorial Baptist Church, Leicestershire

Christian Conversion

I grew up in Nottingham, as part of Thomas Helwys Baptist Church, in Lenton. This was where I came to faith and the areas diverse population, where students, ex-offenders and drug addicts lived alongside a dwindling number of families had a profound effect on my understanding of faith, society and God, and gave me an abiding passion for social justice. My family were heavily involved in the Church as I grew up, which meant that I was too, and after briefly and very unsuccessfully trying to convince myself that God didn't exist. When I was 11, I finally realised that He did and that my life meant nothing without him. My journey of faith has been an extraordinary and exciting rollercoaster with amazing highs and heart-breaking lows, where daily I have fallen more in awful love with Jesus.

Christian Experience/Ministry

I have had three very different pastorates. In my first I was working bi-vocationally as associate minister of a Church in the very centre of Bristol, above Tesco and opposite a shopping centre. In my second, I was full-time associate minister of a medium sized Baptist Church in Wolverhampton. The Church had sites in the city centre, just outside the centre and for a time, had oversight of a church in the suburbs. This meant that within the one role there was a huge diversity of experiences and lessons to be learnt. My third and current pastorate is at Robert Hall Memorial BC which is on the Narborough Road in Leicester. This is both similar and completely different to anything I have experienced before. Each role has had its own challenges and delights. I have seen (and continue to see) God at work amongst each congregation. I have also experienced God consistently taking me out of my comfort zone and developing me as a minister. In my personal life, my experience of relationship breakdown,

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divorce and remarriage has, I hope given me an ability to accept and care for people without judgement, viewing them through God's eyes, modelling His compassion and living in the light of His forgiveness.

Vision for the wider church

I think the church as a whole, particularly within the UK is facing a number of challenges and opportunities. On a practical level changes within Charity law and health and safety regulation is leading churches into new territory. This has the potential to develop a Spirit of fear which may cause churches to become increasingly inward focused. I would love to see churches engaging positively with other agencies and looking with Godly eyes for opportunities to be 'the yeast in the dough'. One of the defining words of my ministry has been 'relationships'. I believe that it is within the context of relationships that every aspect of the Christian life must be led. I love to see churches developing authentic Christ centred discipleship within their communities, where people are able to be vulnerable with one another, in order that all might deepen their faith and draw nearer to Christ. I believe that scripture is the powerful, dynamic and living word of God, and that the church should not be afraid to struggle, wrestle and dialogue with the text in order to deepen our understanding of the message of God. I believe that the Church through scripture needs to engage with the surrounding culture in authentic ways, which loses nothing of the power and uniqueness of the gospel and challenges rather than alienating. I passionately believe that loss of identity is endemic within society. The world constantly strives to find definition and identity through relationships, materialism and a quest for worldly beauty and acceptance. As the church, I feel that we have a message that the world needs to hear. We need to proclaim that humankind is defined by the God who created it rather than the world in which it is placed. As Christians we should exemplify this message and mission of God. We need to be communities where; love, peace, justice, compassion, acceptance, humility and harmony are modelled.

Mrs Ellie Cox

Nominated by the leadership of Oadby Baptist Church, Leicestershire

I grew up in a Christian family in rural Shropshire, attending the Sunday School at the local C of E parish church, where I was Christened and later Confirmed. At the age of 15, I was invited to attend a local youth group run by my uncle and auntie, who attended a nearby evangelical church. As part of this youth group we attended the Soul Survivor summer festivals, which is where I first met with the Holy Spirit. It was during this summer I came to know Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. I then joined, and later became a member, of Hope Church Oswestry.

I actively got involved with the youth group at Hope by joining the worship band, helping with Sunday morning kids groups and later occasionally leading and preaching at All-Age Services.

In 2012 I joined the gap year programme, Soul61, run by Soul Survivor Church, Watford. During this year I was an intern at one of their church plants, helping with everything from cleaning to leading services, and kids work to alpha courses. During this gap year we also had 2 days a week of theology seminars. It was from these seminars that I discovered a

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deeper passion for studying the Bible and theology. As a result, I applied to London School of Theology, where I studied for a BA in Theology from 2013-2016, graduating with a First-Class degree.

It was during my time at LST that I met my now husband, Tom, who at the time was exploring a call into Baptist Ministry. After I graduated, we married and I moved to live with Tom in Bewdley, where he was Minister-in-Training. After completing his training, we were called to Oadby Baptist Church, where we have now been since September 2017.

I thoroughly enjoy being part of the church family, and especially getting to know those in a different age bracket from myself. At Oadby Baptist Church, I am currently on the youth work team, helping at the youth club and Sunday morning groups. I am also part of the drama group, Paradox, who perform drama/dramatic readings throughout the year. Being married to the minister also brings its own challenges and joys.

Outside of church, I am currently working as the Executive Assistant to the Bishop of Leicester, having previously worked in the Diocesan offices, which has helped me gain a greater understanding of the Anglican Church too.

My vision for the wider church is that we are the hope for this nation. I believe it is vital we connect with our local communities, neighbours, friends and family to spread the good news about Jesus. Our country is filled with people who are living in poverty and I believe it is up to us as the Church to bring joy, peace and hope to this nation, by living out our faith in action and working to bringing the Kingdom of God nearer to those who are yet to know his love for themselves.

Revd Sam Hackett

Nominated by the members of Ruddington Baptist Church, Nottinghamshire

My conversion took place at the age of 13 when attending a Soul Survivor camp. This was the first time I had a recognised encounter with the Holy Spirit and the stories I had grown up with suddenly became a reality. God was not just a story book character; He was real and was at work in my life. Following this experience, I was baptised at the age of 14.

Two years later I found myself at another Soul Survivor camp. Here, during a prayer time, I heard an audible voice in my ear whisper 'you're going to be a minister'. I turned around and there was no one there. I then went on a journey of exploring and running away from this call to ministry. The minister of the church I was attending helped me explore this call by putting me on every single rota; making coffee, moving chairs, sweeping floors and so on. He later told me that 'serving others is at the heart of Christian ministry.' This is something I have never forgotten and still shapes my ministry today.

I ended up doing a gap year working as an intern at Tabernacle Baptist Church (Penarth, South Wales). This was a year of immense challenge and growth which involved serving and leading both practically and spiritually. I also faced a time of physical illness which was difficult but faith building. During this year I accepted God's call and started my studies the following academic year at the South Wales Baptist College and Cardiff University. I thoroughly enjoyed my studies taking an interest in modules on 'The history of Christian Spirituality' and writing a dissertation on an 'holistic approach to Christian mission.' During

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my time at college I found myself on 3 placements at Bethel Baptist Church (Cardiff), Mount Pleasant Baptist Church (Blackwood, South Wales) and at The Living Room addiction centre (Cardiff).

Having successfully completed my studies I was ordained and inducted as minister of Ruddington Baptist Church in Nottinghamshire. I am now in my seventh year and continue to enjoy serving God in this place. I am passionate about building Christ centred community in which young and old can find a safe space to grow and flourish in life and faith. I have a heart for reaching out to the wider community and as a 'Pastor' I hold firmly to a quote I once read which said, 'pastoral care is the most effective form of Christian mission.' I seek to make this a reality in all the regular outreach activities of the church and in the building of relationships with local businesses, café owners, schools and other community groups. Two of the highlights of my time at Ruddington Baptist Church have been the development of shared work with the other local churches and the setting up of a Renew Wellbeing centre in partnership with a local café owner. I have been encouraged by this unity and by seeing how much more is possible when we put aside our differences and pride and work together for God's Kingdom. My vision for the wider church would be shaped by my heart for mission and my desire to see the Kingdom of God built by the taking down of barriers and an encouragement to work in partnership with others; sharing our resources and supporting each other in building God's Kingdom here in the East Midlands and on earth as in heaven.

I thank the EMBA and Ruddington Baptist Church for this opportunity to stand for the position of EMBA Director and look forward to serving the association in this way if appointed.

Revd Martin Hills

Nominated by the leadership of Oundle Baptist Church, Peterborough

Christian Conversion

I gave my life to Christ aged 14 at a Mission England event in Ipswich. My family encouraged me to attend church (primarily Boy's Brigade) although they were not regular church attenders themselves. Between the age of 14 and 17 my faith didn't really go anywhere. This changed on 8th April 1987 after an accident at work. God demonstrated His love for me through His church. I spent three weeks in hospital and discovered what it meant to be a part of the family of God with no limitations. Since then my Christian life has been a journey of highs and lows as I have sought to follow Jesus.

Christian Experience/Ministry

My service in the church started with working amongst young people. I lead midweek youth clubs and was involved with teaching groups on a Sunday. Over time I felt called into youth ministry and in 1997 I became a trainee youth worker. On completion of my training I left church-based ministry to work for a charity working with young people involved in substance misuse. I went back to church-based ministry in 2006 to become Youth Minister for Central Baptist Church, Chelmsford. I was ordained as a Youth Specialist Minister in 2009 and following the retirement of the Senior Minister (2014) I was asked to co-lead the church whilst they sought a new Team leader. During this period the church affirmed my calling to pastoral ministry and my name was transferred to the pastoral list with the BU. I moved

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from Chelmsford to my current church in Oundle in the Autumn of 2016. I have led 2 youth mission trips – one to Malawi and one to Lebanon, in both cases working with the local church in practical and spiritual ways.

Vision for the wider church

I have a passion for the local church, God's people living in community together, committed and covenanted to one another. I also have a passion to see the wider Christian community come together to support and work alongside one another to share the Gospel to our communities. I believe there is strength to be found in our diversity and that our differences can be used to unite our mission rather than divide us. My passion is always to look at how the local church can connect with the community it seeks to serve, both in terms of practical support and spiritual input.

As part of my commitment to the wider Baptist movement I co-lead a local Baptist ministers cluster and have previously served as part of the Ministerial Recognition Committee of the EBA.

Any other comments

I am married with four children. Carita, my wife, is fully supportive of my ministry and is heavily involved in the life of the church with me. Two of my children live away from home – one of them is training with the Met Police, the other lives and works in Reading. The two others live with us – one working in a local children's nursery the other just about to sit his GCSE's. To relax I enjoy cycling, kite flying (where space allows) and getting away from it all in the caravan. Through my son I have connections with the local town cricket club, I have occasionally been spotted with the pads on 'helping out'. It is a great way for me to spend time with those outside of the church and build community links.

Revd Matt Jones

Nominated by the members of Westdale Lane Baptist Church, Mapperley, Nottinghamshire

Having come to faith through a gradual and progressing journey which benefitted from family and church influence from a young age and a number of specific experiences throughout my childhood and teenage years, I would identify that my moment of conversion took place during an evangelistic event back in 1985.

Since that time, my 'adventure' with God has had highs and lows. In my late teenage years I began to explore whether God was calling me to some kind of full time ministry and following a year of theological development at Cliff College, I became a full time church youth-worker – initially at Mansfield Road Baptist Church before moving to Central Methodist Mission, Nottingham. These experiences of full time ministry led me to consider the wider aspects of calling, and after 6 years in youth-work I began ministerial training, undertaking 2 years at Queen's College Birmingham and 1 year at Bristol Baptist College.

Completing my training in 2002, I moved to Derby where I fulfilled 6 years of ministry before moving to Lancashire for a further 3 years. During this time, I, along with my family, had faced numerous challenges and struggles and it was then that I left full time ministry. We relocated to Nottingham, the place that had always felt most like home to my wife, Sarah,

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and me. Since then, I have worked and continue to work for Nottingham City Council in a number of management roles within Adult Social Care.

In recent years, I have found immense value in working in a public sector role, alongside exercising some aspects of ministry as a church member at Westdale Lane Baptist Church. This has given me new opportunities to consider what it means to be called to something. Furthermore, balancing a 'day job' with family life and church life has been a positive learning experience which has opened my eyes to many of the pressures faced by those within our churches.

Two years ago I took on the role of moderator at Daybrook Baptist Church to support them during their pastoral vacancy. This is a further move into uncharted territory for me, but again a positive learning experience.

I am married to Sarah, and have been for over 23 years, and together we have 3 sons, all teenagers, and 2 dogs. We're a noisy and often musical household and we all enjoy listening to and playing music in various forms.

Throughout my life and ministry I have always been committed to seeing Christians and church communities empowered to fulfil their calling, regardless of size and availability of resources. God's example of being incarnate is a model that I believe remains hugely relevant to how we exercise our mission today, and I am optimistic that churches can fulfil this in their local communities, however simply that may be. As some churches may face decline, and as financial demands increase the challenges faced by such churches, we need to explore new ways of ministering, thinking creatively about the opportunities that God presents to us.

It is easy to feel small, sometimes we feel battered, faltering and inadequate – God is bigger than our insecurities and failings and I long to see our association and churches liberated in confidence of what God can do.
