

## Church Profile



- We are a friendly, welcoming and vibrant church with activities and ministries that serve our fellowship and the local community. We recognise that people worship in a variety of ways, and this is reflected in our different congregations which enable people of all ages and various backgrounds to fully belong.
- All people are valued, and we seek to support, nurture and encourage people through our small groups.
- As an evangelical church, we believe in the authority of the Bible and the importance of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- GBC has a heart for inclusivity, acceptance and justice which is reflected in our involvement with initiatives such as Foodbank, debt-counselling, mental health support and a pregnancy advice centre.
- Having completed significant extension and re-development of the building in 2015, which is used daily by both the church and external organisations, we are now planning the refurbishment of our main worship area.

***In May 2019, church members and friends met on a number of occasions for a Listening Week – to listen to each other and to hear from God to discern how He is leading us forward at GBC. This profile has been shaped by those discussions.***

## 1. Our Vision and Mission

Our Mission Statement is, 'Love God, Love Each Other, Make Disciples'. Belonging is really important to us and as we enjoy being church together we give thanks for the ways in which God is blessing us. We are keen to explore what is on God's heart for us in the coming years as we seek to take hold of the challenge to 'Guard the heart and Grow the edge'. We want to ensure that *all* are taught and disciplined well, wherever they are on their Christian journey. We also long to reach out even more into our community and to find effective ways for people to find friendship, faith and their own sense of belonging in the GBC family.

## 2. Qualities we seek in a Lead Pastor

We are looking for a person with a big heart for God and an active, shareable faith in the Living Lord Jesus. Beyond that we are looking for someone with a big heart for people, who can demonstrate:

- proven team leadership
- accessible and relevant preaching and teaching skills
- an ability to equip and encourage disciples
- strategically imaginative thinking

## 3. Our location and community

The history of Godmanchester dates back to Roman times. It is now an expanding town that has a population of about 7000 with 14% of those having been born outside the UK. A new housing development of 750 homes was started in 2017 and adds to the diverse choice of accommodation available which includes several supported housing sites. There are three primary schools in Godmanchester and two large secondary schools in nearby Huntingdon. London is 64 minutes away by train from Huntingdon.

The church was founded in 1845 and for over 140 years the congregation met at the Silver Street chapel, which was re-built in 1975. Due to significant expansion in numbers during the 1980s, our present building, a former factory, was acquired and adapted for church use in 1991.

## 4. Our Church Family

Our 2018 BUGB Annual Return reported that we have 164 church members with attendance at our Sunday services (or other main gatherings) as follows:

- 37 children under 11
- 27 young people aged 11-18
- 20 young adults aged 18-30
- 150 adults aged 30-65
- 90 adults aged over 65.

We are a multi-congregational church and we encourage everyone to belong to at least one of our congregations. While our Sunday Morning Celebration congregation is by far the largest, our other congregations are growing and there is no expectation that people will necessarily move on from these to Sunday mornings.



All age groups are well represented at our *Sunday Morning Celebration* service each week, from 10.30am – 12 midday, where we regularly have over 200 people worshipping together with a blend of formal and informal, traditional and modern worship styles. We have 4 worship bands and a number of gifted speakers: several of them preach and lead worship regularly at other local churches. Children and young people from 0-14 enjoy their age appropriate groups for an hour or so each Sunday morning. The Sunday morning sermons are recorded and are available on our website.



The *Songs of Praise* congregation meet on the third Sunday afternoon each month at 4.00pm for a shorter service with traditional hymns and songs, prayers, readings and a short talk. Average attendance is about 70, some of whom are also part of our Sunday morning congregation but with a growing number (30+ at the moment) of these mostly older friends joining us from the community and from our Tuesday Treat coffee morning. After the service we stay and have a proper afternoon tea all together.

*Messy Church*, for families, meets on the second Sunday afternoon each month at 4.00pm for a time of creativity, worship and eating together. About 25 families are usually involved, with a growing number attending from contact through our Littlefoot toddlers' group and through other networks and friendships in the community.

*Generation Rising*, our Youth congregation, gathers every Sunday evening at 7.00pm giving our young people the opportunity to meet with God in a way which makes sense to them, with a mix of music, creative arts, question time, prayer, group discussion and teaching. The young people are encouraged to be leaders of their own congregation in a variety of ways.

In addition to the four congregations above, we hold some additional services. At 7.00pm on *Sunday evenings*, we regularly have *Healing and Communion Services*, with opportunity for specific opportunities for prayer for spiritual, emotional and physical healing, and *Deeper*, a more informal gathering for worship and prayer.

As well as those living in Godmanchester itself, people also attend GBC from Huntingdon, St Ives and local villages. The congregation reflects the local demographics. We celebrate the diversity we do have and at an International Meal recently we enjoyed food together from 14 countries represented at GBC.

We enjoy spending time together and every other year, in June, we run 'The Mix'. For this, we take over a local farm and the camping fields and barns there and spend a whole weekend worshipping, learning, eating, ministering and having fun together!



We have worked hard in recent years on making sure people receive a good welcome at GBC and we get good feedback from those who visit and many decide to join us! We have a good online presence through our website and a number of people find their way to us through that. Others are drawn in through contacts and friendships made through our activities for those in the community, or just through networking and meeting people out and about where we are. Having activities to offer for all ages makes it easy for us to welcome people and invite them to join in with something where they can meet others and make friends. Our recent [Annual Review](#) gives a great overview of mission and ministry at GBC in 2018, and includes a number of testimonies.

## 5. Our theology and convictions

### *Spiritual ethos*

Our ethos is reflected in our Mission Statement: Love God, Love Each Other, Make Disciples.

As an evangelical church, we believe in the authority of the Bible and are committed to Biblical preaching, teaching and living. Our worship is grounded in Scripture and our desire is that we provide an opportunity for everyone to draw closer to God. We are open to the ministry and gifts of the Holy Spirit. We encourage prayer for each other with various opportunities to facilitate that ministry.

We believe each person is valued and seek to provide teaching, support and encouragement for all ages. We encourage believers in sharing their faith in their daily lives.

### *Leadership, gender and relationships*

Leadership and ministry are open to men and women. There are currently four women and eight men on the Leadership Team, which is well supported by the Church Membership. We seek to share leadership roles according to people's giftings and encourage all within GBC to serve each other and those in our wider community. The church seeks to be open and welcoming while holding a traditional Christian view of marriage and relationships.

### *Pastoral care and discipleship*

GBC is a big and busy place, so we actively encourage people to join a small group in order to build closer relationships with others for prayer and pastoral support as well as for Bible study.

Our small groups, prayer triplets and missional communities meet at various times throughout the week. They are the primary source of pastoral care within GBC. We also recognise there are those unable to attend a small group and seek to ensure all in our church family receive pastoral care.

We run a variety of programmes including Alpha, the Marriage Course, Parenting Courses, Shine, and Prayer courses.

### *Affiliations and mission links*

We have good relationships with other local churches and are members of Churches Together in Huntingdon and Godmanchester, the EBA, BUGB, and the EA. We prayerfully and financially support Home Mission and several overseas missions with direct links to members of GBC.

## 6. Church Leadership, staff and employment

Daniel Beckett, an accredited Baptist Youth Specialist, is our full time Youth and Children's Pastor and Ruth Blakey is our part-time (.7) Church Administrator. We also employ a part-time caretaker and a part-time cleaner. We have a gifted and committed Leadership Team of twelve who function as our charity trustees. We are currently in the process of exploring the possibility of changing our charitable status to become a CIO. We are well supported in all areas of ministry at GBC by able and committed volunteers.

### *Moderator*

Our moderator during the search process is the Revd Peter Nodding.

### *Finances*

The church's financial position is stable with income covering regular scheduled expenditure and leaving sufficient funds for additional projects. The reserves cover 6 months of salaries and have been built up from a low point 8 years ago, during which time a building project also completed that raised almost £300,000.

Our annual accounts from 2017 can be seen [here](#). (2018 to be published shortly)

### *Minister's support and accommodation*

Mutually acceptable Terms of Settlement will be arranged in accordance with BU guidelines. In terms of housing, as the church does not currently possess a manse these might include providing a rental property, assistance with the minister purchasing their own property or entering into a landlord/tenant agreement.

## **7. The challenges and opportunities ahead**

Our challenges and opportunities are all connected with growth! We want to find effective ways to achieve our mission by:

- creating strategies to increase opportunities for people in our networks and communities to begin and then grow their personal relationships with God
- focusing further on fruitful and challenging discipleship for all
- recognising and developing everyone's gifts
- solving the practical challenges of growth in an already large church that uses our buildings and resources throughout the week
- maximising use of new and developing technologies
- ensuring that what we are doing is God directed and that we are doing it well.