

BELONGING COURSE BOOKLET

An introduction to Community Church
Who we are, where we're going and how we except to get there.

His Kingdom, Presence, Power & Glory

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COMMUNITY CHURCH BISHOPS STORTFORD

1. Introduction



Welcome

We are glad you are interested in finding out about our Church family. This booklet complements the Belonging course.

You are welcome to read through the material at any time, before and after attending the Belonging Course and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

We see joining a church community as a process of being built together and the Belonging Course as part of that process...



2.The story so far...

The church was founded in 1983 by 6 visionary people with a heart for an expression of church based firmly on the teaching of the New Testament.

During the 1990's we were able to buy and re-develop what became the Charis Centre following clear prophetic instruction and remarkable supernatural provision through specific freewill offerings that raised precisely the sums needed at the time. That's a story in itself!

With a consistent desire to build on the word of God and be led and equipped by the Spirit of God, the church has grown steadily over the years. Of course there have been ups and downs and challenges on the journey as we learn the ways of Jesus. We're not perfect!

The church's particular vision has developed over time and been shaped by weighed and accepted prophetic ministry, received through both church members and visiting ministries. We've always had a heart for authentic relationships with God and each other as we pursue the biblical mission to make disciples of all nations. Along the way we've been consistently blessed with the evident presence of God, fulfilling both biblical promise to be the dwelling place of God and prophetic encouragements that we carry 'a residential anointing'; that is the tangible expression of God's presence amongst us as we gather.



The church had journeyed with New Frontiers since the 1980s. However recently it has been time to change lanes to partner with a group of churches called Kingdom Legacy. Relational oversight and ongoing accountability for our leadership team continues to be of great importance. Oversight from an 'apostolic spiritual board' made up of men and women of God with proven lived gifting, call and character gives us both the upward call of God in Christ and the plumb line of external perspective and godly wisdom. Fellowship for our members, ministry leaders, staff and elders with other churches is a key part of our own continuing personal discipleship journeys.

We want everyone to take part in the life of the church in a completely voluntary way and not at all as a result of any sense of duty, obligation or pressure from anyone else. Jesus invites us to draw near and follow His ways. This means pursuing him first, being transformed in his presence and developing our God-given natural abilities and spiritual gifts to be used both in and outside of the church.

We believe we're all saved by grace as a response to God's initiative in our lives and faith in the saving work of Jesus - not by achieving some kind of success or level of right living. This motivates us to pursue God and know him more.

We all have a part to play and we hope you will want to join us on the journey to seeing God fulfil His purpose for us as a local church as we play our part alongside other churches in God's mission to the town, the nation and the world.



3.Our Vision

JESUS

His Kingdom, Presence, Power & Glory

His Kingdom, Presence, Power & Glory

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Vision

Our vision comes from Jesus' teaching on prayer and fellowship with him.

"Our Father in Heaven
Hallowed be your name
Your Kingdom come
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amen."
(Matthew 6:9-13)

"If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you."
(John 14:15-18)





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Vision

His Kingdom

It is God's good pleasure to give us the kingdom.
(Luke 12:32)

God's kingdom is ever-increasing.
(Isaiah 2:2,7,9 Daniel 2:34-45, Luke 1:33, Parables of the Kingdom, Revelation 7:9)

The global church is at the centre of God's plans.
(Ephesians 3:21)

Prophesied by Isaiah
(Isaiah 61:1-3)
Inauguarated by Jesus
(Luke 4)
Fulfilled through Jesus' church
(Matthew 16:18, Luke 12:32)

Entered into through salvation in Christ. Repentance, faith, baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit.
(Acts 2:36-39)

The kingdom of God is walking in love, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
(Romans 14:15-18)

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Vision

His Presence

The community of God is a dwelling for His presence.
(Ephesians 2:22)

His love empowers our life as individuals and community.
(Ephesians 3:4-19)

Unity in God demonstrates His message.
(John 17:22-23)

Loving obedience (John 14:21-23) and worship and praise leads to encounter (Psalm 22).

God invites us to know Him and enjoy Him.
(Psalm 16:11)





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Vision

His Power

Holy Spirit brings power to strengthen the believer and demonstrate the kingdom.
(Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 12)

We rely on the Gospel and the power of God instead of human wisdom.
(1 Corinthians 2:5)

We live in union with Christ through the power of Holy Spirit which leads to power, love and soundness of mind.
(Ephesians 3:16-21, 2 Timothy 1:5-7)

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Vision

His Glory

The church is to be ‘a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendour’.
(Isaiah 61:3, Matthew 5:13-16, Ephesians 3:20-21)

We pray that the glory of God would be displayed amongst us. ‘Arise shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.’
(Isaiah 60:1)

We lift up the person of Jesus in all ministry and testimony so that he is first in all things. ‘We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God, not from us.’
(2 Corinthians 4:7)



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4.The Mission

Worship God, Proclaim Christ, Demonstrate the Kingdom & Make Disciples

His Kingdom, Presence, Power & Glory

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Following the **Mission**

Our mission as a community is what Jesus said were the two greatest commandments and the great commission.
(Matthew 22:33-39 + 28:19-20)

Worship God

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."
(Matthew 22:39)

God's love displayed in creation, communicated in his word, demonstrated at the cross, and confirmed by his Spirit causes worship to rise in the hearts of his people. Therefore as the bride of Christ we express our love for God through obedience, heartfelt praise, worship, honour and thanksgiving throughout our lives and whatever the circumstances.

Proclaim Christ

Abiding in God's love compels us to proclaim the good news that the kingdom of God is at hand and we are all invited in.

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."
(2 Corinthians 5:14-21)

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Following the **Mission**

Therefore we proclaim the truth in love, without condemnation or judgement.

'How strange would it be if Bartimaeus who had been blind began to beat and condemn blind people because of their blindness!'
(John Piper)

Demonstrate the Kingdom

'Love your neighbor as yourself'
(Matthew 22:39)

'As you go, preach, saying "the kingdom of heaven is at hand; heal the sick, cleanse lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received freely give.'
(Matthew 10:7-8)

Therefore we share our faith by involving God in all our relationships. We connect with people and build community; remember the poor and feast with the lonely, seek justice and be generous of heart, looking out for the needs of others.

We don't evaluate and connect with people based on what we can see or hear but on what the Holy Spirit reveals in love.
(2 Corinthians 5:16)

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Following the **Mission**

Make Disciples

We are obedient to his commandment to be disciples and make disciples.
“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit… teaching them to observe things that I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
(Matthew 28:18-20)

Therefore we are to be a community of disciples, followers of Jesus who are being conformed to his image. We are to encourage one another, train and equip everyone and release gifting according to the character and calling of the individual. We position ourselves for discipleship, giving ourselves to being discipled and discipling others.

We are called not to settle for being an ordinary town church, but to be a church that trains and sends, like the Antioch church. We are to be a model church from which the gospel rings out across the region and touches nations. We are to be a house of prayer for the nations and a centre of training in leadership and worship.



5.Cultural Values

Find God, Depend on miracles, Love without compromise, Vulnerable in His hands, Rejoice and hope in Him

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Cultural Values

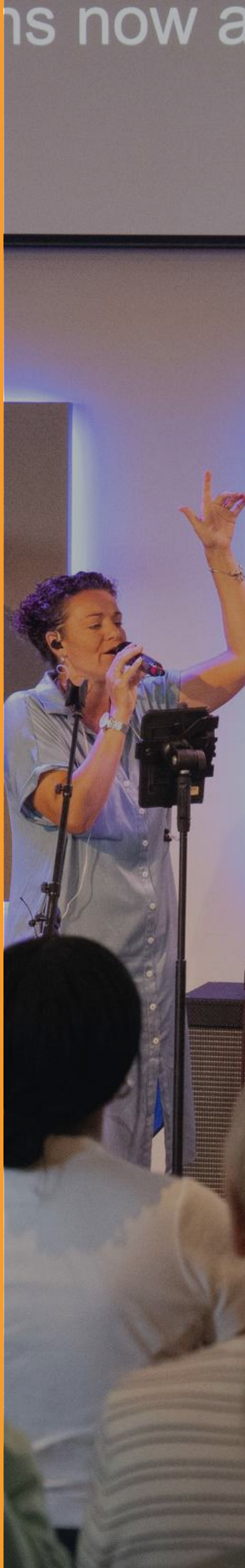
Like the walls of a building, our cultural values set the framework of a community and support our purpose and hope of a God filled future.
Our desired cultural values are characteristics of God and his kingdom.

Find God

Our first instinct is to seek God in all we do. Finding Him. He is the one we are pursuing, His presence comes first, then His will, His ways and His strength become central to us. We focus our attention on Him in devotion, worship and service.
(Psalms 27:4, John 15:4-7, Jeremiah 29:13)

Depend on Miracles

This follows on from finding God. All we do of value in the kingdom is depending on God, because he said, 'apart from me you can do nothing' (John 15:5). God's involvement in creation is miraculous. We have peace instead of fear, love instead of hate, wholeness instead of brokenness, and fruitfulness from our investment of gifts and talents. We focus on what he is doing and plan with His plans in mind, not our own limitations.
(Matthew 7:7-11, Isaiah 41:13, Proverbs 3:5-6, 2 Timothy 1:7)



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Love without Compromise

We are loved by God and the objects of his lavish affection. From this secure place we can love God and others without fear. This leads to wholehearted worship, obedience to Jesus' teaching and service of others whether it costs us or not.
(Matthew 22:37-40, Matthew 5:44, Romans 12:19-21, 2 Corinthians 5:20)

Vulnerable in His Hands

Confident in his love for us, we can be vulnerable by allowing ourselves to be fully known. We aim to give God full access to our hearts, minds and possessions, following his invitation into freedom, not fear. In community we seek to be disciples who are transformed by the renewing of our minds and empowered by the Holy Spirit. We are willing to "put ourselves out there" for God and each other.
(Psalms 139:23-24, James 4:6 & 5:16, Matthew 26:39)

Rejoice and Hope in Him

Our focus is on The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. We rejoice in who He is and who we are in Him. We celebrate the outrageous gift of eternal life and his involvement in our lives. Our hope is in His grace and mercy over our past, his guiding loving presence in the now and his faithful involvement in our futures. We submit the reality of our circumstances to the truth of who he is.
(Psalms 33:20-22, Romans 5:2, Romans 15:13)





‘Vision is fulfilled when mission is outworked,
Mission is outworked when values are lived,
Values are lived when foundations are strong.’



6. In Practice

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Putting it into Practice

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Discipleship

Discipleship is at the heart of our faith and relationship with Jesus. While it's essential, it can take many forms. Our small groups are one way that we give ourselves to being challenged and transformed within community. We encourage you to hear Jesus' invitation and follow him where he's leading you in your discipleship journey, in whatever form that takes at CCBS.
Visit our connect page online or speak to the welcome team on a Sunday to find out more about discipleship.

Serve on a Team

There are lots of teams you can be part of at CCBS to serve both the church and the wider community. Our heart is to be a people who each individually look for opportunities to use their gifts and resources to meet needs within the community and serve one another in love. If you have a dream in your heart and see a need in the community, we encourage you to seek God and talk to our leaders about how you can use what He has given you to serve and take action. Visit the Serving @ CCBS page on our website or contact the office to find out more.

A Community in Prayer

Community and private prayer is a central and powerful part of CCBS life. We have a variety of contexts for community prayer from contemplative to intercessory and prayer and prophecy evenings. Find out more on our website.

Training

We believe in equipping people for the context and calling they have in God. We advertise all our courses on our website, via eNews or you can speak with a staff member about upcoming opportunities.



7. Leadership

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Leadership

We believe that God provides people with leadership gifting to serve and their authority is to be respected by the church but not imposed upon it. The following biblical principles are applicable to all leadership roles but are applied here in context of eldership and ministry leadership roles at CCBS.

Principle 1: Jesus is our model of leadershhip

We seek to :
Find God's will for circumstances, not our own.
Be pleasing to God who tests our hearts.
Serve people not lord authority over them.
Be in community and fellowship not separated.
Model childlike faith and be vulnerable before others.
Parent the community as mothers and fathers would do for their children by caring, encouraging, comforting and urging lives lived worthy of God.
(Mark 9:35-45, Matthew 20:20-28, Ephesians 4:11-16,1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, Romans 16)

Principle 2: Leadership Called & Anointed by God

The spiritual gift of leadership is given by God to men and women who will help the church grow and thrive beyond the current generation. God has given this gift not to exalt individuals but to glorify himself when believers use his gifts to do his will. This gifting is given by the Father and the Son to the church for her members to be equipped for ministry.
(Acts 13:2, Romans 12:8, Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Corinthians 12:28)



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Leadership

Principle 3: Leadership is recognised by the community

Leaders are known by and have history with the community and are appointed by the leaders having had a period of consultation with the church and apostolic ministry.
(Acts 15:22-29, 1 Timothy 3:7)
People are invited to follow voluntarily.
(Hebrews 13:17, Acts 16:4, 1 Peter 5)

Principle 4: Leadership is by a group

The pattern of church leadership which develops in scripture is based on team not a single individual. We have an eldership team leader, but the whole eldership team lead the Church.
(Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23, 1 Timothy 5:17 & Romans 16)

Principle 5: Leadership is accountable

Leaders are to be open to different perspectives and challenge as well as being held in account for their lives and ministry affecting the church.
(1 Timothy 5:19-20, Galatians 2:11-14, James 3:1, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:2-3)

Elders are to serve the family of God by:

Praying, leading, teaching, protecting & keep watch, setting an example, equipping, training & releasing, correcting and living aware that they shall give an account before God.



Leadership

COMMUNITY CHURCH LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

CCBS sits within the Kingdom Legacy movement of churches which provides the flow or river of the Holy Spirit context for apostolic and prophetic connection..

The diagram below illustrates our leadership structure within the wider context of Kingdom Legacy and our relational connections with other churches and organisations such as Global Awakening and Iris Global.



The term 'muddy banks' comes from a prophetic word we received that said that our community borders are not like concrete but are rather like the muddy banks of a river, where we interact with other church movements and apostolic voices around the world.
(Adrian Horner, March 2019)

Leadership

The following table outlines the activity of each leadership area.

LEADERSHIP GROUP:
DELIVERY: Key leaders & influencers
WHO: Elders, Ministry Leadership Team (MLT), other staff & volunteers who carry significant leadership resonsibility or influence.
WHAT: Relational Connection, Awareness of others world, Feedback on vision and key strategic decisions. Prayer.

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TEAM:
DEVELOPMENT: Strategic vision (near future course corrections not fundamental approach) & management.
WHO: Ministry leaders (including elders who are ministry leaders).
WHAT: Develop detailed vision under the vision of the elders. Key management details. Issues where teams are 'stuck'. Prayer.

TRUSTEES:
ACCOUNTABILITY: Senior accountability team
WHO: Individuals with appropriate specialist skill set, capability and aligned vision to elders.
WHAT: Legal, Financial matters including overall salaries. Accountability for Elders on overall direction of Trust. Prayer.

ELDERS:
DIRECTION: Senior Governing body. Direction, Discipline, Devotion (word and prayer), Doctrine.
WHO: Staff and non-staff elders.
WHAT: Direction - Big Picture; Discipline - Church discipline issues; Devotion - personal and corporate, praying together, spiritual life of the church; Doctrine - key doctrinal issues

REFERENCE:
Mature Christians in a season of life that allows infrequent but invaluable involvement.



8. Finance

His Kingdom, Presence, Power & Glory

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Finance

The influence of money is at the heart of discipleship.

According to Jesus our heart is wherever we are putting our 'treasure', and the use of that treasure is an indicator of how we can be trusted with the riches of the kingdom of God. These riches are spiritual such as Holy Spirit gifts, authority and anointing for increase and impartation.
(Matthew 6:19-21 and Luke 16:1-13)

Principle 1: Honour God First

Handing the ownership and hope of possessions to God frees our hearts to take hold of Him and His blessings.
(Proverbs 3:9-10, Mark 10:17-22)

Principle 2: Sowing and Reaping

In 2 Corinthians 9, Paul describes our material possessions as seed that we can sow into the good work God has called us to. The blessing or "bounty" that follows includes both material and spiritual blessings, now and in the life to come. Like Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6, we are encouraged not to live in fear of lack, but to trust God and give generously from a willing heart, following the Holy Spirit's leading. Scripture shows that true generosity is expressed through practical action towards those in need, rather than simply through words or religious sentiment.
(2 Corinthians 9:6–15; Matthew 6:19–34; Deuteronomy 15:7–11; 1 John 3:16–18)

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Finance

Principle 3: Don't muzzle the ox

In Scripture and the earliest Christian writings, ministry should never be motivated by the desire for money or material gain. Paul warns against those who use godliness as a means of getting rich, while also teaching that those who faithfully labour in preaching and teaching are worthy of being supported. The principle is therefore one of integrity: ministry is not a means of personal financial gain, but genuine ministers should be appropriately supported by the community they serve.
(2 Corinthians 11:5–15; 1 Timothy 5:17–18; 1 Timothy 6:3–10; Deuteronomy 25:4; Didache 11:3–6.)

Principle 4: Support the ministry

Jesus affirmed the practice of the tithe (giving 10% to the ministry) whilst reminding people that it is a less weightier matter than justice, mercy and faithfulness. Paul defends his right to the principle of access to the offerings given by the community to God, even if he did not receive it, to ensure the gospel was not hindered.
There is no specific teaching on the amount to give in any New Testament teaching however the principle of the tithe preceded the law given to Israel (Genesis 14:18-20 - Abraham gives the first tithe in recognition of ministry of Melchizedek as a priest and king) and invites the believer into voluntary, generous, and joyful giving based on individual prosperity and conviction. Jesus appears to go further by commending the widow who gives a "mite" and declares that she has given more than the wealthy because she gave that which she relied on whereas others gave what they did not need. This presents the tithe principle as a beginning point not a destination for our generosity towards God.
(Matthew 23:23, 1 Corinthians 9:11-14, Genesis 14:18-20)

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Finance

Conclusion

We want to live in grace in this area as in every other area. We believe that the principle of a tithe to the local church is consistent with biblical teaching and practice, however we want money to be given freely and with genuine joy as a natural expression of the joining of our hearts to a common vision.
The leadership intentionally remain ignorant of what individuals give unless processing gifts and offerings are part of their employed activity.
That is between you and God.

Financial Management

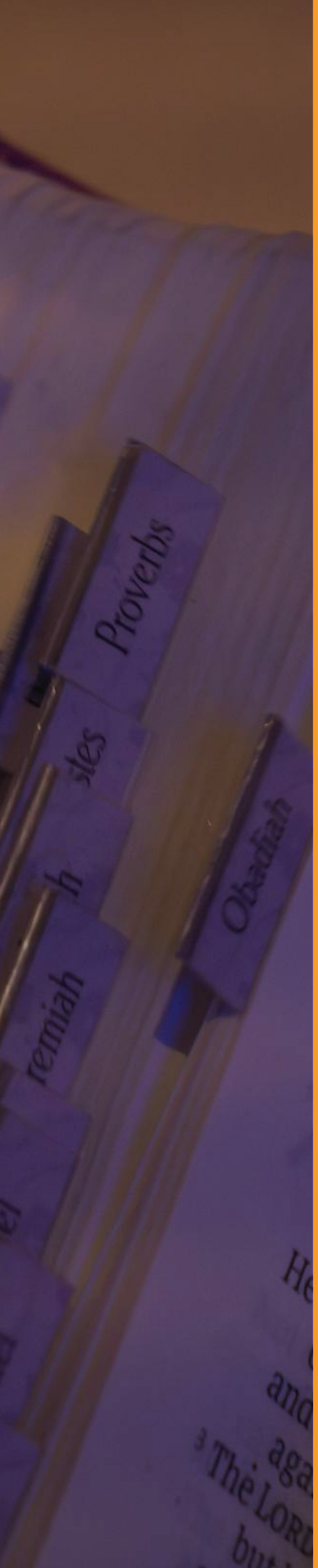
"We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men."
(1 Corinthians 8:20-21)

The trustees along with the bookkeeper and external auditor maintain the church finances which are reported to the charities commission. Financial reports are provided monthly and budgets and salaries are planned and agreed with the trustees and managed by budget holders with full accountability and record keeping. All payments are dual authorised and audited.



9. Theology

His Kingdom, Presence, Power & Glory



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Theology

A helpful tool, when thinking about theology is to divide it into three categories using the Blood, Ink and Pencil approach. Items written in blood are beliefs which we hold to as foundational to the Christian Faith and are unchanging truths. Ink identifies Doctrine we may disagree with as Christians but as a church we need to take a working position on and items in pencil (not included here) are opinions we have about certain biblical themes and personal preferences in church life.

BLOOD: Foundational and Absolute

- **Orthodox Creeds**
- **Apostles Creed**
- **Nicene Creed**
- **Athanasian Creed**
- **The Chalcedonian Creed**
- **Evangelical Alliance: Statement of Faith**

COMMUNITY CHURCH BISHOPS STORTFORD

Theology



The one true God who lives eternally in three persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.



The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.



The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God – fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.



The dignity of all people, made male and female in God's image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.

COMMUNITY CHURCH BISHOPS STORTFORD

Theology



The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ – born of the virgin Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.



The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.



The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection; his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.



The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.

COMMUNITY CHURCH BISHOPS STORTFORD

Theology



The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.



The church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers — given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.



The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.



COMMUNITY CHURCH BISHOPS STORTFORD

Theology

INK: Foundational but not a salvation issue

- Church governance = Elder led team.
- We are a multinational community, united by Christ, serving the Kingdom of God.
- Serving roles are based on gifting, call and character alone.
- Marriage is affirmed as being between male and female only.
- Spiritual gifts (including views that gifts are given to all in part, in specific moments or automatically).
- Reality of demonic influence in the world and the authority of Christ to set people free.
- Healing theology: God does heal and we are to seek him when in need. Healing is a significant part of the Kingdom of God advancing.
- Kingdom of God is advancing – we seek 'more not less'
- Preaching from the Word and being led by it to minister.
- Suffering, endurance, perseverance, grace and discipline are all part of the Christian life and discernment is required for understanding God's perspective.
- Our money is a gift from God and to be used for his glory but without compulsion.
- The Gospel includes God's wrath and judgement of sin and his Father's heart to rescue and save us from the kingdom of darkness.
- Association of signs and wonders to the Gospel. To accompany and validate the message of and the person of Jesus, not a validation of the believer.



Thank You

Thank you for engaging with our Belonging material.
We run Belonging Courses throughout the year to allow church attendees to meet with Elders and discuss the content of this course. If you would like to be included in the next course or you wish to speak to an elder directly about the content of this course please contact the church office: office@ccbs.org.uk 01279 465231

Belonging Course Response

This form gives you the opportunity to communicate your decision about membership with the Eldership Team at Community Church Bishops Stortford or ask for further support.

Scan or Click