



A little bit about us:

A few paragraphs will never adequately describe a church. But so that you can get a sense of who we are and what we're about, we'll give it a go...

Neighbourhood Church turned 13 this year! We started in 2007 as a house church of 4 people. God grew us over the first few years, and in October 2010 we were given an old church building. So since then, that's been our base.

We try and keep things pretty simple...and to that end our logo reminds us of three key things...kind of our DNA.

The heart reminds of our MESSAGE...the gospel...the good news about God's love for a broken world.

The word **church** reminds us of our IDENTITY...that first and foremost we are a people...not a building, not an institution, not an event... but a people... a family. As God calls individuals into relationship with himself, he calls them into a community... a people belonging to God.

The word **neighbourhood** reminds us of our MISSION... that, as John 1:14 puts it, just as in Jesus, **God took on flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood**, we too are called to live out our faith right where God has placed us...in our homes, our streets, our places of work, our schools... our neighbourhoods.

In addition to our logo, we often describe ourselves this way: ***We are a growing church of ordinary people who love God and discovering what this means for our lives. We're not perfect, but are together committed to learning what it means to follow Jesus.***

Sure, there's more to us, but that gives you a little flavour!

Theology:

We intentionally don't have a long doctrinal statement.

We would be (we think) slap bang in the middle of the theological spectrum: the person and work of Jesus is crucial to us; we love Scripture and are firmly grounded in it - the bible is the basis to our teaching; we are open and desiring of the things of the Holy Spirit; we welcome the richness of spiritual traditions from across the Church; and we value (to steal a phrase) **a generous orthodoxy**... understanding that not everyone is necessarily at the same point on every theological issue. The oft-quoted phrase "*in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity*" would describe us well.

We are members of the Evangelical Alliance, and proclaim the Apostles' Creed.

Current church life:

Before COVID-19 our church life would probably be very similar to most churches.

We place an emphasis on the Sunday gathering, but talk about it very much in terms of it being the time when the church (the people) gather, to be built up, fed and encouraged... to be re-orientated around God story... in order to scatter back out into the world... onto our **frontlines** (that's a term we use a lot... it comes from the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity).

We offered a range of small groups- Men's; Women's; & mixed groups. Most groups meet for a fixed term, and then we would restart.

We offer Alpha a couple of times a year; run the CAP money course; and have run parenting courses, and hosted a drug and alcohol awareness evening.

And then we also offer mid-week activities for the community such as a weekly coffee shop, and a parent and toddler singing group.

In addition, we run Neighbourhood Sessions -musical evenings featuring acoustic artists - 3 or 4 times a year; occasional quiz nights; and community focused events at Christmas.

We try and balance church activities with leaving people space to have an 'outside-church' life ... recognising that it's on a person's **frontline** that mission is going to happen.

In January 2020 we employed a part time youth worker- he was with us until August, and although it was a short time, we now have the foundations of a youth ministry in place... around 10 secondary school children and a team of 4-5 adults who are invested in them. We want to see this work continue and develop, and would love someone to oversee it; plus, get alongside the leaders and support, encourage and equip them.

A bit of back-story:

Every person... every organisation has a back-story, and we're no different. And whilst it's really hard to fully describe our back-story here, it might be helpful to know a little bit, just so you can get a sense of our ethos, values and culture.

Neighbourhood Church was birthed out of a sense of God's call to do something different - to start a church for people who, for whatever reason, didn't connect with more traditional church. There was no set-in-stone vision... more of a feeling our way.

This call to do church differently was really a response to God stirring Simon's heart through a course on missional leadership. He was discovering God's heartbeat for the local church... not as an event on a Sunday, but as a community of people learning what it was to live on mission with God.

In the early days, different strands were coming together to shape us: Understanding *missio dei*- the mission of God- was part of this; a quote by Lesslie Newbiggin about the church being **a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the Kingdom of God**; and a book called Total Church (Steve Timmis and Tim Chester) were all shaping our understanding about the coming together of gospel and community.

There's probably more, but that will give you a little flavour. People, mission, community, family, local... are all words that speak into us as a church.

Gospel:

We know that different churches will understand and communicate the gospel in different ways. We don't have any short, pithy gospel statement, but what is important to us is that any gospel includes the call to follow Jesus.

The gospel... is the good news of all that God has done, and is doing, and will do, through Jesus - his life, death and resurrection - to restore and reconcile all things to himself, and make all things new. On the cross, Jesus deals with our sin and brokenness, calling us back into relationship with our Heavenly Father.

We think the gospel only makes sense within the big story of Scripture... so we talk often about the true story of Scripture.

When Jesus began his ministry, he announced the arrival of the Kingdom, calling people to "repent and believe the good news". This was followed with a call to "follow him".

So we are more concerned with discipleship than we are with 'conversions'. That might sound odd, but we want to somehow communicate that a conversion that doesn't lead into discipleship isn't the kind of conversion that Jesus had in mind.

Understanding that, then feeds into our vision for ministry - which is all about life-on-life. Discipleship happens together... in relationship. Discipleship happens as together we are surrendered to God's word, committed to spurring each other on as we live as follows of Jesus.

Our vision for the future:

God has been good to us, and has blessed us with slow but steady growth. We are now a church of about 110 people (adults and children), overseen by our pastor, our leadership team and trustees.

We are established in our community, running twice weekly parent and toddler groups, a weekly coffee shop, parenting and marriage events, Alpha, and various social events. In addition, a lot of local families use the building for children's parties, and a wide range of community groups use our buildings.

We want to keep being the church God wants us to be... loving those around us... and providing a safe and welcoming community for people of all ages to explore faith. As God leads people to us, we want to welcome them, nurture them, and see them respond to Jesus' call to follow him.

This isn't a neat linear work... this is messy... takes time... and a commitment to people and place. We are committed to the long-haul, and to the patient work of growing disciples.

We are eagerly looking for someone to join us and to share in this vision and work. To an extent, the role can be shaped around the person - but there are some broad areas we would be wanting the person to be responsible for. So, overseeing the existing youth ministry and providing oversight, support and direction to the leaders; building on our existing work with families, both within and outside of the church; playing a full part in pastoral care and discipleship; leading and teaching in our Sunday gathering; and scope for other things in accordance with gifts and experiences of the specific individual.

For us, it is more about finding the right person- someone who gets us as a church and wants to be part of what God is doing; and comes with a servant-heart and eagerness to get stuck into people's lives in line with 1 Thessalonians 2:8.

This introduction to us as Neighbourhood Church has been written to give you just a little insight into who we are. It should be read in conjunction with the job description, with special reference to the four C's of Competence, Character, Chemistry, and Calling. For information on the specifics of how to apply please see the end of the job description.