

# CHURCH PROFILE



January 2025  
Dorchester Baptist Church  
The Dorford Centre  
Bridport Road



A People.....  
With Christ at our centre:  
Reliant upon and **transformed** by His Spirit:  
Sharing God's **love** with the Community in which we live.

# Introduction

**W**e are a group of individuals who have been brought together by God with each of us sharing our common love for Him and a desire to do His work. As a Church we can look back with great thanks for the many ways we have been blessed both spiritually and financially. We are now looking forward to where He will lead us in our next season. The Church has agreed a vision which is Loving Jesus, Building Community, Blessing Dorchester.

We are agreed that worship, nurture and evangelism must be at the heart of gathering as Christ's Body. We also recognise that Bible teaching is the foundation of building up, equipping and inspiring our church family. We actively seek the work and gifts of the Holy Spirit. We try to cultivate a passionate love for the Lord, each other and for those in our community who do not yet know Jesus as their Lord and personal Saviour. We are conscious that there are large numbers of adults and children who come into our building every week, who have not yet made the joyful declaration: "Jesus Christ is Lord!"

## Our church as it is now

### The People

Being on the edge of the town centre, Dorchester Baptist Church is accessible for people arriving on foot and has a large council operated car park opposite for the many congregants who travel from further afield. Dorchester is the county town and, as such, is a focal point for the surrounding rural communities and villages. Our fellowship has regular new members and frequent visitors. The entire age range is represented in the congregation – from young families to the elderly. Dorchester and nearby Poundbury is a popular destination for retirees and we have greatly benefitted from gifted folks from many walks of life joining the fellowship.

Our current membership (not including our under 18s) numbers approximately 160 and, as such, is around the largest congregation in the town.

### The Church

The church building, at a focal point in Dorchester, at the "Top of Town" roundabout, was modernized around 17 years ago to increase the size and flexibility of the main sanctuary and create office space for our church family and Dorford Lettings as well

as upstairs meeting and activity rooms, serviced by an internal lift. The burning passion behind the renovation was to see the church premises serving and blessing important local services. The building is usually booked up during the week by the Dorset County Hospital, the local council, the local Police Constabulary, lots of local charities, etc. The building is in good repair.

## **The Locality**

Dorchester is an attractive rural market town in West Dorset. It has several first and middle schools and the enormous Thomas Hardy School for c. 2,000 pupils with students from year 9 to 13. All of the local schools have very good reputations. Dorchester houses the main council offices, and the district general hospital. The beautiful Dorset coastline is just 8 miles away. There are direct rail links to Southampton, London & Bristol.

The town is blessed with Anglican, Catholic and Evangelical/Charismatic churches, and there are strong links between the leaders of these churches.

## **The Services**

Our usual Sunday service has between 100-150 regularly attending. Our worship is predominantly contemporary with some more traditional songs and hymns led by a group of musicians. There are age-appropriate children and youth activities supported by volunteers during the service, and our children usually leave the service after the first 30 minutes.



The emphasis of our gathered times together is very much on Word and Spirit. We always seek to welcome the Holy Spirit, and we often have open times of prayer. In each service, we have a time of 'family news and celebration' where the congregants are encouraged to give testimony about their experiences of the Lord. This is also a time when we can pray for each other's needs.

We regularly have communion together and this is usually on the first Sunday of the month.

## Other Services

Alongside our regular worship services, we have lots going on for folks to join in with...

- **Prayer** - A new Sunday evening church prayer meeting and also a revival prayer time once a week.
- **Inclusive Church** – a quarterly afternoon service that is planned with and includes adults with learning difficulties by People First Dorset and the Friendship Club.
- **Café/Games evening** – a Thursday evening opportunity for socialising by our more vulnerable community.
- **Tea Services** – an afternoon time of reflection and worship followed by fellowship, teas and cakes.
- **Youth Services** – our young people plan and deliver a Sunday morning service approximately every half term. From musical worship to preaching, the younger team do it all. The services are hugely enjoyable and an important part of developing young leaders in our community.
- **Bethel Church** – an established Keralite Indian church conducting services in Malayalam. Bethel is a joyful and exuberant church with lots of young families. We rejoice that we have a lovely friendship with sisters and brothers from another continent.



## Our current leadership

### Team Leadership

We have Elders to work alongside our Senior Minister in providing vision and direction to our Church. The Elders, Deacons and Senior Minister make up the Trustees. Currently, our leadership team consists of 6 trustees.

We also have a part-time paid Pastoral Care Coordinator who oversees our pastoral care activities.



## Children and Youth

Our youth and children's work is a major part of what we do. We have age-appropriate groups on a Sunday morning, from creche babies through to 18-year-olds.

There is also a very popular mid-week youth group for our teenagers. In the dim and distant past, it was named, 'HEAT'... no-one can remember the origin of the acronym! Our outreach work includes our very large baby and toddler group, named 'Kids & Co'; also, Messy Church. The senior minister is regularly engaged in school's work. He was recently appointed as a chaplain to the local agricultural college (Kingston Maurward College) and is involved with chaplaincy work in two other local schools. The schools work is very ably supported by Dorset Youth For Christ (DYFC). Indeed, DBC has paid for a DYFC worker to be based at the church for one day per week and the youth worker goes into local schools to help with mentoring, assemblies, and youth pastoring.

Until the recent pandemic, we organised an annual holiday club. It is hoped that this will be restarted when staffing allows.

## Life Groups

As a large church, we recognise that it can become difficult for people to get to know one another better. Life Groups are one way of enabling closer friendships being formed. We currently have 8 different groups meeting weekly or fortnightly. One or two of the groups meet during the daytime. While there is an emphasis on prayer and bible study, Life Groups also allow time and space to socialise and make friends.

Groups are free to follow their own courses and some will follow the preaching series. All group leaders meet termly and are overseen by two dedicated senior church members. Around 50-60% of our membership attend Life Groups, and we believe that pastoral care and prayer support should start in these Life Groups.

We would like to see more people attending Life Groups, which we recognize requires more Life Group leaders and an ongoing clarification of the vision for these groups.

## Our other major activities

- We have a very successful toddlers' group (Kids & Co) held once a week in the Church, where we regularly see 120 children and parents/carers.
- We have a Messy Church every quarter where we have about 150 guests

- We have a packed and enjoyable Wednesday morning café – it caters to all ages provides some fine eating and drinking to folks who want to come out, meet people and make new friends.
- We partner with and house the local Food Bank. This is a busy and beautiful ministry that arose from one of the Church's house groups. It runs three days per week from the main church building.
- We partner with Dorchester Family Support and regularly assist with the distribution of food packages for struggling local families
- We partner with Safe Families and have several volunteers in the church who support families in distress
- We partner with Christians Against Poverty and regularly host events
- We are partners with People First Dorset who work on behalf of people with learning disabilities
- We partner with Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous and host all of the local meetings



In addition to our ministries, there are many other activities happening in our Church (our annual report provides a comprehensive list).

## A brief history of the church

**A**t the end of the English Civil War in 1645, a Cromwellian soldier, a Baptist by the name of Allen, stood up in Dorchester and delivered a sermon. This is generally regarded as the beginning of the Baptist movement in the town. The first recorded minister was Francis Bamfield who was imprisoned in 1662 for preaching within five miles of a town. He died many years later in Newgate prison for his faith.



Until 1830 Baptists in Dorchester met in various places including, it is believed, in premises on the corner of Durngate Street and Colliton Street where the area on the opposite corner is still recorded as “Sacred Ground”, presumably used as a burial ground. During that time services were few and far between, although baptisms were held in the River Frome close to where The White Hart once stood. Encouraged by Weymouth Baptist Church, a purpose-built chapel was built in 1830 in Fordington at the cost of £1,250. In 1859 Thomas

Hardy was invited to attend a prayer meeting.

A new chapel was mooted as early as 1872 but did not materialise until 1915. We are told that the chapel was “inconvenient, very draughty and very objectionable, especially during winter months”. It became known as Dorford being a combination of Dorchester and Fordington. The site was once the area where St Mary’s Church stood.

In 2005 Dorford was refurbished and became known as the Dorford Centre, home of the Dorchester Baptist Church. Our church possesses many artefacts, photographs, letters and memorabilia covering its long and interesting history.

## What we believe

**T** rue worship of God takes place when we offer ourselves completely to Him. We are called to change how we think and seek God’s way, rather than the way of the world in which we live. We are made joyful by the hope that Jesus Christ brings. The Holy Spirit helps us to endure suffering. We are a people dedicated to praying to God the Father. Love does not harm anyone. Love is at the centre of all that God asks us to do. It is wrong to judge each other. It is wrong to undermine each other. Jesus welcomes us and so we must be welcoming – this helps people see how wonderful God is.

## Our mission

We serve our Saviour Jesus by declaring His love and His salvation. We love and worship Him in Spirit and truth. We love and serve the community inside and outside of our walls. We seek the gracious empowerment of the Holy Spirit as we stand at the crossroads to bless, guide and welcome in His Name. The word, ‘Christian’ was used to describe Jesus Christ’s followers in the city of Antioch midway through the First Century AD. As time went on, this descriptive nickname spread in popularity. Today followers of Jesus are referred to as, ‘Christians’ in every part of the world. However, the very first followers of Christ referred to themselves as followers of ‘The Way’.

Faith in Jesus Christ makes us right with God and brings us peace with God. This is an undeserved gift from God. Jesus Christ died and rose from the dead. Through baptism, we die and rise again to live new lives in Him. There is no condemnation for those who belong to Jesus Christ. The life-giving Holy Spirit sets you free from the power of wrongdoing and death.

“Spreading God's love locally, nationally and to the world. Building God's kingdom in partnership with others and encouraging our church to get more involved in world mission.”

We have a mission team who keep the church informed of the mission work we are involved with and support. They also review areas of mission that we give to.

## Locally

As a Baptist Church, we initially fulfil our calling through local involvement in our community. Our building is always alive throughout the week with many local council, business, charity and community meetings, conferences and other activities taking place. These activities are helping us to become a focal point of our community.

We host the Dorchester Foodbank three times a week for those needing support, and we run CAP (Christians Against Poverty) money management courses.

## Nationally

We support Baptist Home Mission and Christian Aid week and several other local charities.

## Internationally

One of the international partners we support is BMS.

The other mission organisations we support have been selected because of personal links we have to these charities: Eagle Wings Ministries, Mercy Ships, WOW (World of Worth) and Pebbles, Choice Baptist Church, Kampala, Uganda.



## Financial information

The church became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 1st December 2017. A simpler and new constitution was therefore established, a key part of which was for the provision of Elders in addition to our Deacon structure.

Finances are on a sound footing with Bank reserves at the end of September 2024 currently standing at £160,000+.

Actual income to 30/09/24 amounted to £245k and actual expenditure totalled £257k.

There is no outstanding debt on the building or Baptist Union pension deficits - God has blessed us and that has all been cleared!

We hire our building out to numerous organisations each week and there is a healthy income from regular lettings. Our objective this financial year is to have a balanced budget.



## Dorford Lettings

This separate company, with its own directors who are church members, but owned by DBC, was set up when the Church building was modernised around 17 years ago. The building development allowed us to create a number of rooms that can be used for conferences/ meetings by, for example the council, NHS and local charities. This is part of our interaction and outreach in that the Church building is used every day by many non-church goers. It also supports the running costs of the church and there is a good net income from these lettings after the deduction of salaries for the team that supports lettings activity.

## The Person we are looking for

To work with the church to deliver its vision of:

***‘Loving Jesus, Building Community, Blessing Dorchester’.***

### Main Duties

- Commit to regular prayer for the Body of Christ at DBC

**Sunday services** – it will be expected that the Associate Minister will:

- Take a full and active role in the Sunday morning services. These duties might require service leading, involvement with youth and children’s ministries, planning alternative services (e.g. café services)
- Engage in occasional preaching – it is currently envisioned that the Senior Minister will preach three in every four services. This is entirely open to discussion and dependant on the giftings of the Associate Minister

To take a lead in the **pastoral ministry** of the church by:

- Building and nurturing a healthy church community
- Keeping track of members and, where possible, attendees to assist in their spiritual, physical, mental and emotional welfare
- Carrying out routine and emergency pastoral visits
- Visiting members with specific needs (frail, elderly, infirm, times of pastoral crisis, etc.) and helping to meet their needs

- Leading and being an integral part of the Pastoral Support Team
- Providing direction and support to all those in a leadership role in the church
- Working in partnership with the Senior Minister in the preparation and delivery of Sunday services

To coordinate the **support of families** in the church by:

- Maintaining and extending the work started with younger families (family contact through the outreach ministries of DBC)
- Actively engaging where possible with other churches in Dorchester with whom we share a common Gospel
- Establishing and developing opportunities for fellowship, worship, outreach and training within our community
- Keeping informed of and interfacing with events for families, locally and nationally
- Building positive relationships with leaders and helpers; providing for their pastoral care, offering, supervision, etc.
- Seeking opportunities for training and development for leaders and helpers

As a **staff team member**, engaging in other duties as required, including:

- Deputising for the Senior Minister
- To be on call for pastoral issues that may arise and to liaise with others as appropriate should this be necessary
- Attending Elders' and Deacons' Meetings, so as to be fully involved with church life at DBC
- To be a trustee of the church
- To work with the office team which is in the building throughout the week

**Accountability** and liaison with ministry team:

- All members of the Church leadership, employed and elected, are accountable to the Membership at the Church Meeting
- The Associate Minister will attend weekly meetings with the Senior Minister
- For general support and encouragement, the Associate Minister will be encouraged to have a mentor external to DBC

The Associate Minister will report to the Senior Minister – for pastoral matters and the general outworking of appointment.

All members of the church leadership must provide a satisfactory DBS check before commencement of employment.

The church and Senior Minister will seek to develop the Associate Minister in ways identified by both parties and the wider Baptist Union to ensure the Associate Minister

enjoys a full and satisfying ministry whilst at Dorchester Baptist Church. It is hoped that the time spent at DBC will prepare the Associate Minister for future ministry and service. This could be a full-time or part-time role.

The church has a Manse occupied by the Senior Minister so accommodation would require further discussion. Remuneration and housing can all be discussed, but DBC would expect to pay as a minimum, the level of stipend recommended by the Baptist Union.

## We will seek to appoint someone who.....

- is an ordained Baptist minister, a minister accredited by the Baptist Union of Great Britain, or is in the process of seeking accreditation
- has some experience of church ministry, including small group teaching, counselling and leading worship services
- has experience of providing pastoral support
- has experience in church-based family ministry
- has excellent interpersonal skills and is a good communicator
- works well in a team
- is enthusiastic, motivated, flexible and well organised
- is committed to the principles of safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults