

Blisworth Baptist Church



CHURCH HANDBOOK

A simple introduction to how our Church operates.

WELCOME TO BLISWORTH BAPTIST CHURCH

The fact that you are reading this handbook means that you have visited Blisworth Baptist Church and want to know about its work and activities.

As a Baptist Church we are committed to sharing the good news of God's love for people, and this will happen through teaching and explaining the Christian faith as well as practical action.

As a newcomer to Blisworth Baptist Church we want to tell you about our activities – so that you can join in!

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe that:

- God – who is eternally Father, Son and Holy Spirit – created from nothing everything that exists. Every human being is accountable to Him.
- God has spoken through the Bible, which is the trustworthy record of His message to mankind, and our ultimate authority in all matters of life and faith.
- All people fall short of God's moral perfection, and violate his standards and values. Our sin alienates us from God and places us under his judgement.
- In Jesus, God became man. Jesus' death and resurrection offer the one and only basis for the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God and the gift of eternal life.
- All of these gifts of grace are received on the basis of personal trust in Christ and commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord.
- Christian baptism by immersion celebrates God's grace to us in Jesus; it expresses decisive personal faith in the life of the person baptised; and it affirms our belonging, both to the church of Jesus Christ in the world and within the life of a particular church fellowship.
- God sends his Holy Spirit into the life of each Christian believer to illuminate our understanding of his word and ways, to empower us to

develop Christ-like character and to equip us to serve Him in the church and world.

- Through the Holy Spirit, and on the basis of all that Christ has done for us, each Christian has a direct personal relationship with the Father, and a part to play both in the ministry of the church and in sharing our faith with those who are not yet Christians.
- Jesus Christ will one day return to earth in glory, to judge the world, to renew creation and to complete the work he has begun in us.



WHAT WE DO

Blisworth Baptist Church is a small church so we concentrate on just a few activities, but we try to do them well.

Our normal Sunday services are held at 10.30am. The format of the services normally contains notices, a time of worship, prayers (including open prayer) and a sermon. On the first Sunday of each month we also celebrate the Lord's Supper (Communion) together. Special services are organised around the Christmas and Easter periods, and to mark other events such as Harvest and Remembrance.

We can provide activities for children during our morning service; and we also organise a Toddlers' Group on Friday mornings, where youngsters can play, whilst their parents, grand-parents or carers can enjoy refreshment and converse with each other.

Members of the Church Fellowship are encouraged to join one of our three "Home Groups" that meet during the week on a fortnightly basis. These are based in Blisworth, Towcester and Northampton. As well as providing opportunities for great social interaction these also enable everyone to support each other, to explore the Bible and spiritual matters together, to worship and to pray within a smaller group and within a more intimate setting.

Using technology and the internet, the Church gathers for a monthly prayer meeting (via Zoom) on the first Tuesday of every month.

On Tuesday mornings the Coffee House is open for members of the community to visit for refreshment and social interaction.

The Church carries out dedications, weddings and funerals. We also organise a number of social activities, such as film evenings, quizzes and monthly walking groups.

We use the internet on a regular basis to connect with people who are unable to attend our activities in person, so Zoom allows us to have hybrid services and meetings together.

A typical week at Blisworth Baptist Church includes:

Sunday Sunday Morning Service (at 10.30am)

Monday

Tuesday Coffee House open for the Community (10.00 -12.00)

Prayer Evening via Zoom at 7.30 pm (first Tuesday of the month)

Wednesday "Home Groups" (the actual days & times vary for each of these three groups)

Thursday Walking Group (once per month)

Friday Toddlers' Group (10.00 – 12.00)

Saturday Men's Breakfast (8.30am on the last Saturday of the month)

The facilities at our church building are also available for hire, at very reasonable prices, and a variety of different community groups take advantage of this.



WHO'S WHO

Becoming part of a new community of Christians can be an opportunity to make new friends. It also requires some understanding of who people are, and what they do.

The church has a part-time Pastor and an Assistant Pastor, called Keith Barker and Lee Hillyard respectively. You will get to know these two quite quickly because they will make it a priority to meet you, because we want to know how our Church can help you, and to ensure that any questions are answered. Keith and Lee's contact details are at the end of this handbook.

Everyone else in the Church is a volunteer, using their time to help run the Church and its activities. There are many people and many tasks – and everyone is important.

The Church has a group that has overall responsibility for leading the Church. These people are legally known as the Trustees, and within our Church we also call them Deacons and Elders. (Their photographs can be found on the notice board or on the Church website.) Their names are:

Pastor: Keith Barker Assistant Pastor: Lee Hillyard

Elders: Brian Ash Ruth Brown

Deacons: Diane Atkinson Tony Maycock

Ray Payne (Secretary) Christine Pinfold (Treasurer)

Mike White

(N.B. Elders support the Pastor in overseeing the spiritual life of the church, including preaching, teaching, pastoral care and prayer. Deacons may also be involved in these spiritual matters, but they will also have gifts and skills in practical areas for which they have been appointed.)

Children's and young people's activities are organised by Lee Hillyard.

Pastoral care in the Church is organised by Ruth Brown, working with the Pastor, Assistant Pastor and several of the Deacons. If you need help and support, then please contact Ruth, Keith or Lee (see contact details at the end).

The Designated Person for Safeguarding, and the Data Protection Trustee, is Ray Payne (see contact details at the end of the handbook).



Pastor: Keith Barker



Assistant Pastor: Lee Hillyard

COMMUNICATION – SHARING INFORMATION

Information about the church and its activities appear on the website. In addition, there is a monthly newsletter, which is emailed or posted to everyone, along with regular news updates, reminders and prayer requests. This information is sent to everyone who has provided their contact details to the Church.

The Church has a Contact List containing people's names and contact details and, where permission has been given, this is shared amongst the members and regular attendees of the Church. This data is only used for church purposes and can be removed at any time.

(All personal data that is provided is used and protected in compliance with the Church's Data Protection Policy, and in line with UK Data Protection Regulations.)

VOLUNTEERING AND JOINING IN

There are many activities where we need extra help. We want to encourage you to join in and will try to find an opportunity for you to help, and make new friends.

There are some parts of Church life where we need to take special care. Where activities involve children or vulnerable adults we need to make sure that the people who help are suitable, so if you are asked to take any responsibility for these activities we will need to speak to you in more detail about the Church's policies concerning the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

SAFETY

Safety is always important and we do our best to make sure the Church premises are safe. However, we realise that accidents can happen. Please let one of the Church Leaders know if there is a problem.

If you need the First Aid kit, then one is kept in the Coffee House and one in the Leisure Hall. We have trained first aiders, and those with first aid experience, who can help if this is needed.

The Church has a fire evacuation procedure – in an emergency please follow the instructions on the printed notices. Fire extinguishers are also located around the building, but we hope that you will never need to use them!

Nobody should be using step ladders or undertaking any kind of maintenance or building work whilst they are on their own in the building. More details of the Church's Health and Safety Policy can be found on the website, or in the Coffee House.

JOINING BLISWORTH BAPTIST CHURCH

Blisworth Baptist Church is organised through a Church Members' Meeting – and you will not be surprised to know that individual people become members of the Church. For people who have recently become Christians this may well include being baptised by immersion as a sign of their new found faith in Jesus Christ.

Belonging to a Baptist Church involves some responsibilities. As well as having the opportunity to participate in Church Members' Meetings there is a responsibility to listen carefully to what others are saying, speaking carefully, and helping to make good decisions about the life and work of the Church.

When people want to join the Church they are usually visited by two of the Church Members (of whom at least one will be a Church Leader) who will ask some questions about the applicant's Christian journey. They will report back to the Leadership Team, and then hopefully make a recommendation to the next Church Members' Meeting that the person is accepted in to membership of the Church.

From time to time people move house and can no longer be members of the Church. Usually those choose another Church and their membership is transferred. On other occasions people do not want to continue with their membership so they may resign. Sometimes people are missing for a long time and even though we encourage them to return, this does not happen. At this stage the membership list would need to be adjusted.

Further information about Church Membership can be found in Clause 12 of the Constitution (on pages 8 & 9).

MEMBERS CHOOSING THEIR LEADERS AND PASTORS

The Pastors, Deacons and Elders (all Trustees) in a Baptist Church are chosen by the Church members. Therefore, there are processes for appointing people to these important positions of responsibility.

Once a Pastor has been appointed that person normally serves the Church until the time when they resign or retire. Very rarely will a Pastor be asked to leave the Church by the Church Members' Meeting. The Leaders [the Deacons and Elders] of Blisworth Baptist Church are appointed from among the members. They usually serve for a period of three years. To make it easier to ensure continuity one third of the Leaders retire each year, so that over a three year cycle each leader has stood down and either been re-appointed or replaced.

The election of the Church Leaders normally takes place at the AGM, in April, but the process will begin much earlier. Several weeks beforehand, Church members will be asked to nominate individuals who might be suitable to serve as leaders. A list of candidates will be prepared, including details of their role if elected (i.e. secretary, treasurer, deacon or elder) and at the Church Members' Meeting a secret vote will be taken. To be appointed as a Leader (a Trustee) of Blisworth Baptist Church the candidates must receive votes from at least 70% of those members voting.

If there is a need to change one of the Leaders' roles mid-term, then the Pastor should firstly gain the support of the Leadership Team (the Trustees) for the proposal, and then seek the Church members' blessing, support and approval by a show of hands at the next possible meeting.

Further information and details on all of these governance matters can be found in the Church's governing document (called the Constitution). If you have any questions about this you should ask the Secretary, Ray Payne.

All members receive a copy of the Constitution and a copy is also available to view on the Church website.

MONEY

The Church receives income from donations made by members and individuals who attend the Church. Tax payers are encouraged to complete a Gift Aid declaration so that tax can be recovered, giving added benefit to the Church and increasing its income.

In this Church we aim to follow the following principles in managing our money:

1. To give a percentage of our income to Home Mission (the funds of the Baptist Union of Great Britain) and to BMS World Mission.
2. To give a further percentage of our income to support other external charities – decisions about this are made by the members (with Leaders' proposals).
3. All of our money is used to advance the Christian faith. As well as aiming to tithe (10%) of our income to the above charities, we also have many payments that are practical and are associated with the organisation and maintenance of the Church. Our principle expenses include:
 - Paying our Pastor(s).
 - Buying materials to be used in our young people's work.
 - Paying gas, electricity and water bills.
 - Maintaining the Church grounds and buildings.
 - Reimbursing reasonable expenses to those who volunteer for the Church, especially for carrying out administrative and voluntary tasks, and when they are asked to attend conferences or other events on our behalf.

JOINING IN – AND YOUR IDEAS

We hope you will like and enjoy attending Blisworth Baptist Church. We hope that you will find friends and be able to join in some of our activities.

We welcome your ideas and suggestions. Normally new ideas are discussed at a Church Members' Meeting (non-members are invited to attend, but they are

unable to vote on any matter), but if you have any thoughts or suggestions then please feel free to speak with any one of the Church Leaders.

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Keith Barker (Pastor) 07912 478227

Lee Hillyard (Assistant Pastor) 07764 461671

Ruth Brown (Elder, Pastoral Co-ordinator) 07703 146556

(Email: Pastoralcare@BlisworthBaptistChurch.org)

Ray Payne (Secretary, Safeguarding DPS) 07718 425314

Website: www.BlisworthBaptistChurch.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BlisworthBC>



Blisworth Baptist Church is a Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Charity Number 1192810

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