

An overview of Biggleswade and Biggleswade Baptist Church

Biggleswade is a Market Town (the charter dating back to 1227) with a population currently around 18,500 forecast to grow in the next two to three years to over 20,000 as a large new estate is built on the Eastern side of the town. It is situated on the East Coast Mainline (Kings Cross) and on the A1 with the consequence that a significant proportion of residents either commute to London or work in larger towns south of Biggleswade. A large retail park is at the southern end of the Town and is occupied by major retailers (M&S, Next, Laura Ashley etc). The Town forms a focus for a number of the surrounding villages and provides large supermarket facilities for the local area (Sainsbury's, ASDA, Aldi, etc).



Biggleswade Baptist Church (BBC) was founded in 1771 and moved to its current site in 1968. The buildings have been extended to provide modern catering facilities and a suite of connected multi-functional rooms in addition to the main church worship area. The buildings are used extensively by organisations within the Town. Current membership is 134 and attendance on Sunday mornings is around 200. The congregation has a wide age profile from folks at or approaching 90 to young families and singles. Around 40 young people between the ages of 0 and 15 form part of our Sunday morning congregation. Approximately a quarter of the congregation travel into Biggleswade from the surrounding villages. Over the last 10 years, the wider church family has increased at a faster rate than the growth in average Sunday service attendance although recently it has been necessary to introduce two services on Sunday mornings (9am and 11am) to provide sufficient seating capacity for the growing congregation. BBC has a 3-bed manse house on the same site as the main church building. The house has been completely refurbished and redecorated within the last year A Church Office, providing two studies and a central reception area which is staffed part-time, is adjacent to the main church building.



Church life as it is now; activities and organisations

BBC has a varied monthly activity schedule. On Sundays the worship services at 9am and 11am encompasses the whole church community. Normally the children and young people participate in the first half hour of the service and then leave for their own programme. Refreshments (tea coffee and biscuits!) are available between the two services. Evening services tend to offer a more varied programme, including communion, celebration/worship and Tea Time (Messy) church. Typically preaching has been undertaken by the Minister approximately 5 out of 8 Sundays, Elders 1/8, Guests 2/8. Services are led by members of the Leadership Team and music team leaders. The music team usually includes keyboard, guitar, bass, violin, drums and two or three vocalists, leading the congregation in contemporary worship.

A mid-week service (Worship On Wednesdays) provides an opportunity for some 20 to 30 of the older folks together with an increasing number of others that are free on a Wednesday afternoon to get together for a time of worship and fellowship.

Eleven Small Groups, including a 'Beta' follow-up to Alpha, meet during the week, with an average total of active participants approaching 110. We seek to encourage all church attendees to belong to a Small Group.

A recently appointed full time church and community worker provides support for the small groups and an increasing involvement in the development of the wider church ministries within the expanding town.

Recently the office facilities have been opened on Tuesday mornings and Thursday evenings to enable healing ministry and prayer to be offered, this together with additional prayer groups are areas we seek to develop.

Other activities include the Alpha course which completed a 12 week session at the end of November and a Holiday Bible Club during the school summer holidays which is normally oversubscribed and attracts 250 children (aged reception – year 8).

Throughout the year informal breakfast meetings - with a full cooked breakfast -on Saturday mornings provide an opportunity independently for men and ladies to share time together and a monthly Breakfast Club for youngsters.

There is a team of volunteers working with the young people in Sunday Club and other youth related activities during the week.

A 'Listening Café' facility runs on Friday mornings providing an opportunity for anyone to drop in for a chat. This has been extended recently with links to local housing associations using the opportunity for contact with their clients. BBC has also hosted a number of Jobs Fairs in conjunction with these associations and Central Bedfordshire Council.

The Early Years group for parents, babies and toddlers provides a meeting place for over 130 families, the majority of whom do not have any other church connections. This runs on Tuesday mornings and afternoons.

Children aged from 3-13 meet during morning church for Sunday club. There is also a monthly Saturday Breakfast club for school years 3 to 6.

BBC works with the other churches in the Town within the Churches Together in Biggleswade network. Under the auspices of this network the town's Good Friday and Christmas activities are co-ordinated and the group has also organised a town fun day and participates regularly in the town carnival parade. Ten percent of the regular church income is used to contribute towards the support of Home Mission, BMS, MAF, Wycliffe and Untangled. Where possible the church has personal links with these organisations.

The church runs the Biggleswade Food Bank working with local agencies to support the scheme.

Governance

BBC is a registered charity using the basic BU constitution and is a member of the Evangelical Alliance. The leadership team (7 deacons and three elders) are trustees. Responsibilities within the life of the church are shared between the leadership team: currently we have Prophetic, Pastoral, Evangelism, Facilities and Admin teams, further details of activities and events are listed on the church web site www.bbchurch.org.uk

Biggleswade Baptist Church Vision, Values and Future Ministry

The town of Biggleswade is growing rapidly and we believe that BBC is challenged to offer the good news of Jesus Christ to this community and the relevance of the gospel to everyday lives.

Together with the whole Church membership, we have reviewed our Vision and Values and these are summarized below:

Our Mission Statement: To know Jesus and to make Him known

Our vision and purpose is to be a church which glorifies God, shares Jesus and experiences the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit. (God centred)

We seek to be that church by:

- Praying regularly, earnestly and effectively (Prayer)
- Loving one another and especially caring for the vulnerable (Love for others and Justice)
- Endeavoring to be non-judgmental in our sharing of God's love (Inclusive love)
- Introducing people to Jesus (Evangelism)
- Growing together in following Jesus (Discipleship)
- Supporting and building each other up (Encouragement and Collaboration)
- Providing Biblical teaching that is applied to people's daily lives (Word & Spirit, Relevance)
- Engaging in worship that enables us to glorify God (Word and Spirit)
- Recognizing the needs and contributions of all people of all ages (Participation)
- Providing relevant and appropriate activities for children and youth (Relevance)

What we value:

We value all ages, recognising that all ages can have a relationship with Christ, and have something to offer their community.

We value our local community, in Biggleswade and surrounding villages.

We value the wider communities in which we are involved, often further afield, in our places of work, extended families and friendship groups.

We value our Sunday and midweek opportunities for worship, teaching, fellowship and prayer as a means to help us achieve our mission.

We value our pastoral work, both within the church family and for those outside where we can share Christ's love, presence and hope.

We value our children's work and youth work, as we seek to show young people the reality of the joy of a life with Christ.

We value church membership and the mutually beneficial commitment between individuals and the fellowship as a means to help us achieve our mission.

Pastoral note from our current minister -Rev Steven Anderson

I have had a relatively short ministry at Biggleswade Baptist, just 18 months, due to a very clear 'word from the Lord' to return to Scotland where I had ministered in various capacities for 29 years.

My time at Biggleswade has been very blessed – the church has grown well and steadily, such that we needed to move to two morning services. We have also recently appointed a Church and Community Worker who is highly gifted, very capable and a delight to work alongside.

The church is in a healthy position with a very committed group of Elders and Leadership team, a good mix of ages and backgrounds, a great children's work and very good, growing youth work. The church is very active and the various ministries are well run, with the general administration of church life being most ably co-ordinated by the administrator, Alison Ertl.

Over recent months the momentum has been growing, and there is great potential and possibilities for continued growth in several directions. I do believe the church is ready and ripe for a long and fruitful ministry.

Rev. Steven Anderson
Lead Minister, Biggleswade Baptist Church 2016-2018.

What we believe we are looking for in our next Lead Minister.

- Under the directing and gifting of the Holy Spirit to enable the equipping and mentoring of our corporate and personal evangelism in a growing community.
- Bible based teacher and preacher.
- A pastor, with a heart for people in the church family and wider community. An ability to lead and motivate prayer.
- Experience of addressing the challenges of double services and possibly second site activities in the context of increasing church attendance would be helpful.
- Willingness to evaluate current growth and explore how best to incorporate this growth into the body of the church
- Time spent in secular employment would be valuable as would the ability to support those in secular employment.
- A desire to be part of a team and experience of, and heart for, mentoring /discipling and developing new leaders.
- Able to subscribe to the Evangelical Alliance and Baptist Union basis of faith.

For additional information please contact one of our elders: john.ingrey@ntlworld.com