



Hoddesdon Baptist Church Profile

HODDESDON BAPTIST CHURCH PROFILE

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Context, vision and leadership

Hoddesdon Baptist Church (HBC) is regularly identified by visitors as a warm, friendly, caring community that welcomes and values individuals of all ages and backgrounds. It is a community of believers that, in spite of its age profile, is comprised of people who are at very different points in their individual walk with Christ. Nevertheless it is a community that has as its agreed statement of purpose the aim to be, 'By God's grace and power, a worshipping, serving people, committed to following and becoming like Jesus and to helping others do the same.'

HBC has a long tradition of supporting overseas missionaries from amongst its own ranks and from its continued association with All Nations Christian College, just a few miles up the road. However we recognise that the great commission is not something to be delegated. Between 2009 and 2015 Chris Johnson, the minister at the time, initiated a process that has helped the church family to develop its understanding and engagement with mission as an individual response to the opportunities presented by our personal life circumstances.

This was enabled through participation in programmes such as *Confidence in the Gospel* and *Inside Out* and utilising LICC's material *Life on the Frontline* and *Fruitfulness on the Frontline*. As a result, commitment to an outward facing focus for the church as a whole has strengthened and individual language and understanding has gradually and perceptibly moved, for the majority of the fellowship, to one of a missional perspective. This shift in culture will always be a 'work in progress' but the church has continued to engage with LICC material, notably recently through the *Whole Life Worship* series.

This focus on mission has also been reflected in a five year plan, developed with the church membership and the leadership team, including Elaine Youngman who was our Minister in Training from 2015 to 2018. This plan identified a number of objectives for 2020 that the church family believed, after discussion and prayer, would define the sort of church that God wanted us to become.

They were that HBC would be:

- a community of intentional, whole-life, disciple making disciples
- a growing presence in our local area
- growing numerically and comprised of all ages
- led by an effective paid and unpaid leadership group.

Some encouraging progress towards these objectives has been made, for example, the number of invitational events put on by the church in the last few years, along with the response of our immediate neighbours to them, has been positive in raising the church's profile.

Similarly, it was accepted by the church that the focus of the leadership could not, and should not, remain one of maintenance, but that a clear distinction needed to be made between vision and strategic leadership focussed on mission, and that required to enable the church to function. Consequently deacons have spent a considerable amount of time examining different structures that would support both missional and maintenance functions and have recently drafted a revised leadership structure with revised responsibilities, the implications of which are still being worked through. The nine deacons will continue to review this at their monthly meetings.

Although there is a strong sense of expectancy and enthusiasm about what God can and will do through the collective and individual witness of members, there is also a growing realisation that

even with God’s grace, energy levels with an ever ageing church family will diminish and thus the future cannot be one of just treading water and aiming for the status quo. The acceptance of this changing dynamic has also brought into clearer focus the very real possibilities and legitimacy of a ministry towards third agers notwithstanding the desire to be an all age church.

People profile

There are 78 names on the members’ list. Membership is open both to those who have been baptised by immersion and those who, for ‘reasons of conscience’ (Trust Deed of 1902), have not been baptised, but have made a similar commitment in another part of the Christian church, however deacons must have been baptised by immersion.

The majority of the members live within one mile of the church. Excluding those who are sick and disabled, elderly, carers or mission partners based overseas, around 64 members are regularly present on a Sunday morning, together with a further 20 or so non-members, who have chosen to be listed in the church directory. Average adult Sunday morning attendance in 2017 was 61, and for the first half of 2018 this was running at 59. Sunday evening events average 10-15, although World Mission evenings tend to attract around 20-25.

There are seven primary school aged children and nine secondary school aged young people, all from church families.

The breakdown of adults attending on a Sunday morning:

<u>Age range</u>	<u>80-89</u>	<u>70-79</u>	<u>60-69</u>	<u>50-59</u>	<u>40-49</u>	<u>30-39</u>	
Male	4	17	5	7	2	1	
Female	5	20	7	5	8	3	
Total both	9	37	12	12	10	4	84
	11%	44%	14%	14%	12%	5%	100%



Current weekly church programme

Sunday morning service 10.00am to 11.30am

This is followed by tea/coffee. There is a crèche available, and groups for primary and secondary aged children and young people. These groups re-join the main church gathering for the last 15-20 minutes of the morning service. All-age services are held in the school holidays. The prayer team is available to pray with people after each service.

The first Sunday of the month concludes with lunch together, for which a hot meal is provided by teams or individuals, and anyone able is encouraged to bring a dessert to share. Usually around 50 to 60 people, including children, stay for lunch.



The fourth Sunday of the month includes communion.

There is a team of people who take turns to lead on a Sunday morning. The style varies with the leader, but is generally relaxed with congregational participation in prayer, responses, readings etc. The team meets up a couple of times a year to pray, share best practice, etc. The singing is led by a piano or by a band on alternate weeks, but it also depends on what is happening and the preference of the leader. The band introduces new songs from time to time, sometimes in conjunction with a video. In general the congregation is open and adaptable to new ideas. Speakers are drawn from visitors and from within the fellowship. Themes and topics for consideration on Sunday morning, and at other times, are coordinated by a teaching planning team which meets about half a dozen times a year.

Focus for Sunday evenings 7.00pm to 8.00pm

Second Sunday communion

Third Sunday World Mission - visiting speaker, mission partner or prayer time

Fourth Sunday prayer meeting.

Weekly/monthly programme

Mondays: Craft and Chat, monthly on first Monday, in homes, or at church with a speaker, with open invitation - evening.

Small group in north Hoddesdon, alternate weeks - evening.

New Horizons retired men's group, monthly on third Monday, with speakers, lunches and visits.

Tuesdays: Walking Group doing local five mile walks, alternate weeks - morning.

Small group in Stanstead Abbots, weekly - evening.

Small group which moves round the homes of the group members, weekly – evening.

Wednesdays: Art group, weekly - evening.

Thursdays: Toddler Group, primarily non-church families, in school term - morning.

Small group in Hoddesdon - evening.

Fridays: Small group in Broxbourne - morning.

Craft and Chat, New Art Group are essentially interest acting as 'Crossing and community, and each attached to the church in



Horizons, Walking group, and social groups with a common places' between the church includes people who are not any other way.

Of the five small groups, fortnightly. The groups members each, and most studies etc. between

usually seek to include spouses and others unable to come regularly. Groups are encouraged to follow the notes and discussion questions available from the previous Sunday's sermons, but some set their own study agenda. Group leaders meet together from time to time to pray for one another, discuss issues and to share ideas. While each group provides initial pastoral care for its members, some issues may need coordination by the pastoral care team, comprising five church members, to arrange visiting, deal with requests for practical help and work with the prayer ministry team as required.

four meet weekly and one have around a dozen active share the leadership of Bible themselves. Social activities

There are about five church meetings each year, most are open only to members but there is usually one which everyone is encouraged to attend. Days of prayer are organised at intervals through the year.

World Mission

HBC has a long history of involvement with cross-cultural mission. Proximity to All Nations Christian College means there is regular contact with students from around the world, some of whom usually attend on placement. The church includes both former and current members of staff. There are currently five mission partners receiving support financially, practically and in prayer, and two others in prayer and with occasional gifts or practical help. HBC has contact with African Enterprise, World Teams, TEAM (US), Wycliffe, OM and Flying Mission. Our mission partners have either come through our youth groups, or as ANCC students, and one couple worked with us as associate pastor for two years before returning overseas. Other local and world missions are supported, eg. Compass Braille, Tearfund, London City Mission, Samaritans' Shoe Box scheme.

The five members of the World Mission team maintain contact with the mission partners, work with the treasurer on the budget for their support, and arrange the monthly world mission Sunday evening programme.

Church buildings

The church building lies to the north of the town centre in an area of mixed aged housing. Methodist, Elim and Anglican churches also serve the surrounding community all within about ten minutes' walk of HBC. The building is on a corner plot with a small car park, but on Sundays use is made of a school car park 100m further down the road. The main building dates from 1914 and is joined to two halls, added in the 1960s/1970s. The larger hall has dividing doors, there is a large well-equipped kitchen, storage cupboard and toilets. The main building seats 130 comfortably, and was fully refurbished with improved lighting, heating and sound in 2009. In the entrance area there are toilets, a church office and small kitchen.



Since the 1990s the church has been able to use the detached premises next door, with an upstairs flat/office space and a larger downstairs room with kitchen and storage. This is used by Young Life International - Hoddesdon, an unaffiliated Christian youth-work organisation in the town, which runs weekly groups, after school clubs etc. and has its office base upstairs.



The church premises are regularly hired by community groups; a choir, Pilates, Zumba, Children's dance classes to name but a few. The large hall is also used irregularly for individual events such as birthday parties or meetings for various community groups.

The manse is a ten minute walk from the church in a residential cul-de-sac. It is a 1960's semi with three bedrooms, and a single storey extension with two rooms and shower.

Location

Hoddesdon lies on the A10 in the south east corner of Hertfordshire about six miles north of the M25. Harlow, Ware and Hertford are all close by. Originally a small market town, it is now a commuter town. There is a variety of light industry and a good rail link into London. The population of Hoddesdon is nearly 44,000: mostly white European, with a significant Italian contingent, and an increasing ethnic mix as people move north out of London into recent housing developments. A new 'village' on the western edge of town adjacent to the High Leigh conference centre is now beginning to take shape, creating new opportunities for Christian community involvement.

Amenities & leisure

Much of the town centre has been pedestrianised and many independent local traders have gone, leaving the all-too-common mix of estate agents, banks, building societies, charity shops and coffee shops, but there is representation from virtually all the supermarket chains!

Hoddesdon, part of the Borough of Broxbourne, lies in the Lea Valley much of which is a country park either side of the River Lea. There are many opportunities for walking, cycling, boating, bird watching and fishing, all within easy distance of the town. For the indoor active there is the John Warner Sports Centre and the adventurous active can enjoy the Olympic White Water Rafting Centre, which is open to the public.

Schools

There is a choice of good primary and secondary schools in the local area. Two primary and two secondary schools are within walking distance of the current manse.

Churches Together in Hoddesdon, Broxbourne and Wormley

Eleven churches in the borough of Broxbourne share services and special events: carols at Christmas in the town centre; a Good Friday event of witness around the Clock Tower in Hoddesdon; and an annual united service during the Week of Prayer for Christian unity. Churches Together has sponsored local incarnations of Foodbank, Street Pastors and Young Life which are supported by members of various churches. At present the churches are preparing for a Winter Night shelter project which is being well supported.

In conclusion

HBC is a well-established and well-resourced church community that is looking to move forward and outward, whilst at the same time seeking to remain centred in Christ. The person appointed will be joining a church family that is excited by the prospect of what God can and will do in Hoddesdon. We are looking for someone who shares our vision to inspire and work with us. We would welcome someone with proven leadership skills who can encourage others and help the church realise more fully God's calling to reveal his love to each other and to our neighbouring community.