



**SPRINGHEAD  
CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH**  
Profile

## **SPRINGHEAD OLDHAM**

Springhead is a village in Saddleworth, on the outskirts of Oldham in Greater Manchester. It is approximately 2 miles from Oldham town centre and it is a predominantly white community which is in marked contrast to some areas of Oldham. Most people are in employment but there are a large number of older people and young children.

Springhead is a residential area of private dwellings with two sheltered housing complexes for older people in close proximity to the Church. There is a post office, a dentist, a community centre and a number of local shops within walking distance but the nearest health centre, library and supermarket are in Lees, some 10 minutes' walk away. There is also a country park that runs through Lees and into Springhead with a playground for children. There is one primary school in Springhead and the nearest secondary school is 3 miles away. There are several public houses selling food within walking distance of the centre of Springhead. In Lees there is an abundance of take-aways, a wine bar and more public houses that sell food but little for children and older people. To access most forms of entertainment, people have to travel into Oldham or beyond.

There are currently outline plans to build 265 new family homes in Springhead which, if successful, may have an influence on future Church membership.

Springhead Congregational Church is very involved in the local community and fills a real gap in the social needs of the village.

## **HISTORY**

The Church was founded in Springhead in 1807 and, like all Churches, it has suffered both highs and lows but has always maintained a witness within the area. One of the low spots was in 1968 when the old Church in Radcliffe Street was found to be structurally unsound and had to close following a final service in October 1968. It was demolished in 1969.

The Sunday School was then used for worship and in 1974, a sanctuary was added to the building – this soon proved to be too small and was extended in 1980 to become the sanctuary it is today. This was an amazing accomplishment by the fellowship and a true high in the life of the Church.

## **THE CHURCH BUILDING**

The Church is very fortunate in having a large building. The sanctuary is a dual purpose room with seating for about 100 people. There is also a large hall with a stage, a

modern kitchen, a café area, two meeting rooms and plenty of storage room. There are modern, refurbished toilets, one of which includes baby changing facilities and is also fully equipped for disabled use.

The Church is very child friendly and has an up-to-date Congregational Federation Safeguarding Certificate. It is also currently looking to becoming a Dementia Friendly Church.

The building is well maintained. Outside there is a small car parking area and a grassed area across from the Church.

The Church does not own a manse but it is felt that this is not surmountable.

### **THE CHURCH'S POSITION IN SERVING THE COMMUNITY**

Each month the Church runs a luncheon club for older people of the Church congregation and the community, providing a 2 course lunch –with tea and coffee – and entertainment in the form of singers/speakers/bands etc. A small charge is made to cover costs.

Working with the local Primary School, a junior disco is held each term and up to 150 children attend. The Church provides the hall and a large number of volunteers! A local DJ provides the music and games. The Church also runs a tuck shop. The large number of children attending shows how popular this event is and strict guidelines are in place to ensure the safety of all the children.

The Minister leads assemblies once a month in two of the local Primary Schools.

Each week a Toddlers Club is held in the Church when up to 20 toddlers and mums, some dads, and many grandparents bring their children along for a morning of games and music and a very popular 'snack time' when all the children sit down together and enjoy a variety of finger foods.

Throughout the year, many social events and activities are held on a monthly basis and all are advertised in the local paper and on posters around the village in the post office, library and sheltered accommodation etc. Over the past few years these have included quizzes, afternoon teas, games evenings, a celebration for the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, band concerts, a cheese and wine evening and an annual Christmas Fayre. The Church also runs a 'New to You' Sale each year which is very popular with the local community. Any items left over are donated to Darian House Children's Hospice.

The building is used most days and is rented out on a long-term basis to a local Drama Group and a Karate Club and the Hall is also used many times during the year for birthday parties etc. The Church also allows the use of the Hall for charities without suitable premises to raise money for their causes.

## **MINISTRY**

From 1997 to 2000 the Church was served by the Rev. Edmonde Openshaw- Gill, who was brought up in Springhead - her parents were Ministers at the Church before her! The family connection is still a part of the Church and the Revs. Don and Pat Openshaw are still active members.

Following an interregnum, the Church invited Liz Dean, a local lay preacher and member of a nearby Congregational Church to become Pastor. Liz, along with her husband, joined the Church in 2002 on a part-time basis. In 2006, Liz took early retirement from the NHS and became full time at Springhead. At this time, she began the Congregational Federation's training course and in June 2011, having successfully completed the course, was ordained into the Ministry. Following the death of her husband in 2012, she continued in full time ministry until 2015 when she reduced her hours to a three quarter time ministry.

Liz has now decided that the time has come to retire and the Church has agreed that she can have a part time ministry whilst the fellowship considers their future. The situation will be reviewed in two years' time (2019).

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The Church has 52 members and approximately 24 adherents. There are some 16 children who attend fairly regularly. There is a cross section of ages with a number of families attending. The congregation is well-established, with over 50 people who attend regularly, and it is a very committed and caring fellowship with many loyal and dedicated members.

The Church is served by a Diaconate comprising of a Secretary, Treasurer, 10 Deacons and 1 Life Deacon – both men and women are on the Diaconate and there is a wide age range.

The Church meeting is an important aspect of the Church and is held bi-monthly after the Sunday morning service. The Diaconate reports to the Church meeting.

## **WORSHIP**

Family services are held at 10.30am each Sunday.

Children and young people are an integral part of the Church family and are very much welcomed and valued. There is a small carpeted area in the church with toys suitable for babies, toddlers and preschool children where adults are welcome to sit with their

children and still take an active part in the service.

On the first Sunday in the month, the service is planned around the whole fellowship and the children stay in Church for the whole of the service. During this service, there is often a hymn where children of all ages are invited to the front to play a musical instrument and sing along! A shared lunch is held after this service and coffee is served after all other services.

On other Sundays, the children share in the first part of the service and then leave to go into Sunday School where, in age related groups, they have stories, lessons and other relevant and enjoyable activities. On many occasions during the year the children take an active part in leading the service.

Communion is shared during the third Sunday of the month.

Special celebration services are also held throughout the year: -

Christmas

- *Nativity*
- *Carol Service*
- *Christingle*

Easter

- *A joint Maundy Thursday service with other local Congregational Churches*
- *Good Friday including a joint open-air service with Churches Together*
- *Easter Sunday*

Harvest

- *Service followed by a Harvest Lunch*

Pentecost

- *Family service followed by a Procession of Witness and a United Service and a shared meal with the local Methodist Church*

Other services include a Pet Blessing service, services incorporating films and drama etc., a café style Church and Messy Church. The fellowship is always willing to look at new ways of worship as well as enjoying the more traditional services.

A computer and projector are used for the hymns and readings most Sundays and also for PowerPoint presentations.

## **ACTIVITIES**

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**A Ladies Fellowship** meets fortnightly and on occasions meets with other ladies from local Congregational Churches.

**A Men's Fellowship** meets each week and helps maintain the buildings and gardens.

**Rose Queen** - The Rose Queen and her retinue enjoy representing our Church at other local Churches.

**SCOFFS** - This is the monthly luncheon club.

**Holiday Club** - During the school holidays, a weekly holiday club is held where many of the children meet to have fun and visit local attractions etc.

**Social Committee** - This is an open group to which everyone with an interest and/or idea is invited to meet to plan and organise many wide ranging social events and activities. These include the Christmas Fayre, an annual New to You Sale, jumble sales, afternoon teas, cake sales, quizzes, film nights, an annual trip to the pantomime and a popular family Christmas Eve Social. The group reports to the Deacons and Church meetings.

At least one event is planned per month and whilst these are not all primarily fund raising events, any money raised helps toward the running of the Church by covering the costs of overheads.

Each year the Church supports at least one local and national charity. This year it is supporting the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital as one of the youngest members of the Church is undergoing treatment for leukaemia.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### **CONTACT MAGAZINE**

A bi-monthly Church magazine is produced which shares news of the Church, reports of recent events and gives details of upcoming events. Several members of our fellowship receive this by email.

### **WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

The Church has a website [www.springheadcongregationalchurch.co.uk](http://www.springheadcongregationalchurch.co.uk) which is updated regularly, and also a closed Facebook page where details of services and forthcoming social events are posted regularly.

## **CONGREGATIONAL FEDERATION**

The Church takes an active interest in the Congregational Federation at national, area and local levels. Whenever possible, a small group of people attend the National and Local Assemblies. Members of the Church have also sat on the various Federation committees; three have served as Chairperson of the Area and the Minister is currently the Secretary of the North West Area.

A local group of Congregational Churches meet on a regular basis to support each other and to share one or two events each year – joint services, social evenings etc.

There is also a group of Church ministers or leaders in Manchester, Oldham and Derbyshire that meet on a six weekly basis to share and support each other.

### **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN LEES AND DISTRICT**

Springhead is a part of Churches Together in Lees and District. This group comprises of three Anglican Churches, a Methodist Church, the Salvation Army and the Moravian Church. Joint services are held at least three times a year and a Lenten Lunch and discussion group is held weekly each year - this year's theme was 'The Passion seen through the Arts'.

Pentecost is an important time in the Church year. It is celebrated with a Procession of Witness on Whit Sunday, led by a local brass band, from Springhead to Lees for a United Service with the other Churches. A wonderful occasion in which 300 or more share together!

On Good Friday, the Churches meet together in the centre of Lees at lunchtime for a short act of worship.

Social events are occasionally arranged and all are advertised on social media and the website.

### **WHAT TYPE OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP ARE WE?**

- We are a local Church
- We are a family Church
- We are a welcoming Church
- We are an informal and friendly Church
- We are a caring, sharing and learning Church
- We seek to serve God and our Community

As an independent Church fellowship, along with other Congregationalists, we are united

in our belief in the living God revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

We trust in the promise of Jesus who said: *'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them'*.

Springhead Congregational Church shares a wonderful heritage of faith with all local Churches and in particular with those Churches of the Congregational Federation.

We trust in Christ's promise to be with His people who meet in His name and we worship, work and serve with all who love our Lord to promote His kingdom of justice and peace and to help people everywhere to know the joy of His love.

We believe that the Church meeting is the coming together of the members of the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to discuss matters affecting the life of the Church. It is the Church meeting that is the governing body of the Church and every Church member is able to play his or her part in the decision making of the Church through participation in the Church meeting.