

Witney Congregational Church Profile

Introduction

Witney Congregational Church is situated in Welch Way, adjacent to the High Street in Witney, and is right in the heart of this bustling town.



Witney is a market town, once famous for its blankets and situated on the edge of the Cotswolds, 12 miles from Oxford with 2 local railway stations within easy reach. The population of about 30,000 people is well served by a hospital, two secondary schools, primary schools and a further education college. Free car parking throughout the town ensures that the town's shops continue to survive, despite the recent closure of a number of larger stores. <https://www.cotswolds.info/places/witney.shtml> is a good place to search for even more information about the town.

About our church

We are a fellowship of committed Christians, a God-centred Priesthood of believers, spirit led, with an emphasis on worship, fellowship and caring for each other.

Our Mission Statement:

Witney Congregational church is a crossroads where we:

Meet God in worship

Meet one another in friendship

Meet our community and world with the love of Jesus

Church Composition:

We currently have just over 40 registered members, and a dozen or more regular adherents. The congregation is diverse in ages and backgrounds. The Diaconate is made up of the Minister, Associate Minister, Church Secretary, Church Treasurer and up to 9 further Deacons, who are responsible for the day to day operations of the church. A part-time Administrator (4 weekday mornings) and a part-time Caretaker ably support the Diaconate.

Services:

Regular Sunday services are held at 10:30 each week and 6:00 on the first Sunday of the month.

Communion services are held on the 1st Sunday in the evening and 3rd Sunday in the morning.

A short, informal service is also held on the 1st Saturday of the month, at 11:00, usually led by a church member.

Other current regular activities:

Mondays during term time	Noah's Ark for children under 5 with around 40 children attending. This includes Bible stories, prayers and songs as well as play
Tuesday	Fellowship based around chair exercises.
Wednesdays mornings	Prayer time
Thursdays	Coffee morning open to all. This includes our knit and natter group. In winter months we are designated a warm space and serve a soup lunch
Saturday	Coffee morning open to all, featuring home baked cakes – often full to capacity with regular attendees, especially a group of vulnerable/disabled adults and their carers.
5 th of the month	'Hi5s' is a programme of sociable activities with an emphasis on outreach. Activities include games, quizzes, treasure hunts and Café Church.
Bible Study	Bible Study is held in ad-hoc groups usually in the home of the person leading it.

Activities change over time, catering for the needs of the church and our community.

We are a long-standing member of Churches Together in Witney & District. We are actively involved in the World Day of Prayer and other community prayer initiatives.

Witney Congregational Church is a member of the Congregational Federation (CF). The CF provides administrative and practical support as well as connecting us to other congregational churches in the UK.

Use of the premises:

Because the church is centrally located, it is a very busy building with a number of rooms available for renting. Groups using our building include a singing group, keep fit classes, yoga classes, language teaching and more. Wednesday evenings welcomes the local Witney Inter Church Singers (WICS). There are around 80 people attending this group and twice a year they offer a very lively Christian based production.

On a Friday lunchtime, the local Muslim community uses our lounge. They have been coming for Friday prayers for a number of years.

Several of the rooms on the church premises are leased to other organisations such as Guideposts, working with vulnerable people, the Scouts, a Counselling Service and the St. Andrews Bookshop. We also lease a large proportion of our car park attached to the church during office hours to the Halifax Building Society (next door), leaving parking space for the Minister and the tenants in the flat above the church.

Witney Congregational Church is registered as a Safe Place see

<https://www.safeplaces.org.uk/>

Finance:

Witney Congregational Church is a self-funding, self governing church. Offerings are received in various ways, via a collection box, weekly offering plates, gift-aided envelopes and standing orders. Since COVID-19 most members make their giving through monthly standing orders. This maintains a good stable income, including Gift Aid.

The church owns four properties, which are regularly rented to tenants. These properties generate a good regular income for the church.

We support "Lend-with-Care" programme with Care International and currently have over £2,500 invested in this way. We also support Children in Malawi. We tithe our annual offerings to different charities, picking major beneficiaries each year at our AGM. Other business is discussed at our bi-monthly Church Meetings where members are given quite detailed financial updates.

Aspirations:

❖ *In worship:*

Our church fellowship desires

to be a living, growing congregation, open to people of all ages.

We long to enjoy

inspiring, meaningful. Spirit-led worship inclusive of the various needs of each member and user-friendly for people coming in.

❖ *In Christian friendship:*

Our life together will reflect God's love and grace

through serving one another and those in our community and world

❖ *In outreach:*

We open our building to the community

to be a place of prayer

and a basis for varied activities.