

Guilden Morden Congregational Church

Connecting with God and our community



Guilden Morden Village

Guilden Morden lies in the county of Cambridgeshire very near to the borders with Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. The population is about 1,000.

Amenities in the village include a primary school, 2 churches, 2 pubs and a village hall.

The Congregational Church

The church was established in 1840 and is a member of the Congregational Federation. We value the support we receive from the Federation especially with respect to advice and guidance in keeping our congregation, visitors and buildings safe. The Church has an up to date Keep Safe Certificate.

Our current membership is 9 members, 10 adherents and 12 children. We are a small friendly congregation who worship together every Sunday morning at 10.30am. We are committed to working in our community to offer hope and support and to bring members of our community together in faith and love. We aim that everyone will always find a warm welcome, friendship and support.

The Church Building

The main Chapel was built in 1840/1 and called its first minister Joseph Stockbridge in 1840 from Homerton College Cambridge. A teaching area and vestry were soon added. The frontage of the Chapel was added in 1870 (and dated in the brickwork). The Hall (called The Schoolroom) was built in 1900.

One of the foundation stones was laid by Principal Horobin of Homerton New College, now re-located in Cambridge. The Manse was completed in 1989, after the Old Manse in the High St was sold. The manse is currently vacant ready for a minister to move in.

Ministry

The church has had a continuous ministry since 1840 until our last minister, Rev Fionnaigh Reid retired us to live in Scotland in 2015. The members of the Church Meeting have ensured that worship has continued since then with the help of visiting preachers from sister churches of the Federation and lay clergy from our local Anglican community. The church is still licensed for weddings and continues to play an active role in family life with events such as Baptisms.

In addition we work closely with our Anglican church and with our nearest Congregational church at Litlington, holding joint services on a monthly basis.

Worship

Each week we hold a different style of service.

1st Sunday

Café Service. This is an all-age service of worship, starting off with coffee and croissants followed by a half hour service of songs, prayers and worship. The service provides toys and activities for children including pre-school children. The service is very informal, sometimes a bit noisy but always joyous.

2nd Sunday

Shared service usually with Litlington, usually a more formal style of service.

3rd Sunday

We join with our friends from St Mary's Church of England church for a shared service of worship. The venue alternates.

4th Sunday and /or last Sunday of the month

On the last Sunday of the month we hold our communion service. We welcome to our communion table all who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Those who may be unsure of their faith are most welcome to join us and can, if they wish, receive a blessing instead during the service. Usually the fourth and last Sunday are the same but occasionally we get a month with 5 Sundays. If this is the case we often try to offer a different kind of service. For example we are fortunate to have a member of the Church who will lead a Taize service for us and recently we tried our first Messy Church which was very successful.

Activities

Whilst our congregation is very small the foot fall through the building each week for activities is 50+ and still growing.

Mix and Match toddlers group and coffee morning meet every Wednesday morning throughout the year including school holidays. This group is run by chapel members who support the group providing refreshments and practical help.

Men's Guild meet monthly on a Monday morning, run jointly by chapel members and the community.

Craft Club and Jigsaw Club both meet monthly on a Thursday afternoon and Film Club meets monthly on a Friday evening to watch a film and provide an opportunity for socialising. These are community run groups with support from chapel members.

Supper Club meets three or four times a year. This is a charity fundraising event. Our most recent event raised over £500 for local hospices. This is a joint venture between the chapel and the community.

New groups started in 2019 are 2 music groups which meet monthly, one an 'a capella' singing group and the other an open session with instruments and singing. These are both proving very popular and are run by chapel with support from members of the community.

These activities take place in our schoolroom which is also available for hire for events where the village hall would be too big or unsuitable. Our local amateur dramatic society regularly use this as a rehearsal space and for the last 2 years we have worked with them to stage a Christmas celebration in the chapel itself.

We have lots of ideas for further activities run both by the chapel members and the community.

Communication

The Church has a website which is kept up to date. We also have a section on the village website and a Facebook page. We publish a monthly newsletter which is distributed electronically and through the village newsletter and the Anglican Group newsletter.

The Church Meeting

All decisions about the life and work of the church are made through the Church Meeting and we have a very creative, committed and supportive membership.

Our vision

We wish to grow the role of the Congregational Church within the village of Guilden Morden to provide support, friendship and especially comfort in times of trouble. We want to help people make a new connection with God; to see that God is relevant and accessible in today's world; to lead by example showing that God can make a real difference in our lives; in other words, to live our mission statement – Connecting with God and our Community.

The Church has a strong tradition of community involvement and we wish to grow the work we do in the community.

We would like to provide more pastoral care and feel that we need a minister to take these vital aspects of church life forward in partnership with the Church meeting and the community.

We are currently seeking a minister who can work with us on our ambitious agenda. Further details of this post can be found on the Congregational Federation website

Sandy Watkins, Chair of Church Meeting

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