

Elstow Bunyan Christian Fellowship



Elstow, on the southern edge is now a suburb of the County Town Bedford. It is situated 50 miles north of London, nearly half way between Cambridge and Oxford. It dates back to 1078 when the niece of William

the Conqueror founded a Benedictine nunnery.

The parish Church is Elstow Abbey, which also dates back to the 11th century and survived the dissolution of the Monasteries by King Henry VIII.

The older part of the village is now surrounded by 20th century housing.



There is also a public house, a very elite restaurant and Elstow Moot Hall. Further information available at moothall.weebly.com.





Elstow's most famous son is John Bunyan, author of 50+ books,

including his most famous,

The Pilgrims Progress.

Elstow Bunyan Christian Fellowship is located at the north end of the village High Street, close to the boundary of Bedford. These days the road by the front of the building only leads to the nearby houses, many of which have been built in the last 30 years.

EBCF was formed in 2005, on becoming independent from Bunyan Meeting, Mill Street, Bedford. There has been a place of worship on this site since 1910.

Further information on our website bunyanelstow.weebly.com.

This Fellowship is part of the East Midlands area of the Congregational Federation.

At present we have 12 active members and around 20 adherents.

These range in age from mid 20's through to 90 years old, with the majority being over 60. At present we do not have any children or youth attending on a regular basis. We hold services at 11:00am each Sunday; the average attendance is 22. Some attendees live within walking distance, others travel by car.

As well as Sunday worship the building is used as a Community Centre. In the course of a week there may be as many as 350 adults and children benefitting from the wide range of activities which take place in the building. Our building has one main room, which will seat up to 90; a smaller hall to the rear, plus other facilities including a coffee bar and a separate, refitted kitchen.

Our congregation is made up of people with a variety of Christian backgrounds, and they coalesce around the description of being Bible believing Christians in the evangelical tradition.

Our services start at 11:00am each Sunday and usually last for around an hour. They vary, depending on who is leading them, and are followed by fellowship and refreshments.



We currently use Combined Mission Praise, 30th Anniversary Edition, and have New International Versions of the Bible available for the congregation to use. We have recently installed a new data projector.

Our music is normally provided by one of our members who plays the piano; occasionally another of our members plays the Clavinova. Sometimes we have several musicians who join together to form a band, brass and strings. We have no fixed pattern of worship; however the congregation do prefer Bible based sermons ranging from 15-20 minutes.

On the last Sunday of each month, Holy Communion is observed; this is sometimes accompanied by prayers for healing.

On Monday afternoons some of the fellowship meets for Bible study, prayer and fellowship. This takes place in a member of the Fellowship's home.

On a fortnightly basis, in term time, we run Tots Time for under 5s accompanied by a responsible adult. Numbers range from 10 up to 20. This is run by members of the Fellowship, with help from parents.



On the alternate fortnight, we run a coffee morning. This is also run by members of the Fellowship and supported by people from the village and



beyond. Some are part of our worshipping community, others currently have no other association with the Fellowship. All monies raised is given to charity.

Since the start of our coffee mornings over £45,000 has been raised.

A number of the men associated with the Fellowship meet from time to time for social events.

The Fellowship also holds other informal gatherings through the year.

In term time on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, Ladybirds, an independent Pre-school Charity use our building. This helps raise funds towards the running of the premises. One of our members attends their committee meetings, and in recent years our Pastor has visited them on the Monday following our Harvest Festival, to talk about Harvest; and in the days leading up to Christmas - to be 'Father Christmas'.

On a Wednesday evening a Brownies pack meet on the premises. In recent years they have attended our Remembrance Day service, and a few come along at Christmas. During 2019 they also attended our Harvest celebrations.

The building is also used by a Slimming World consultant.

Occasionally the premises are booked for one off events like birthday parties; often relating to children who use the building during the week.

We are looking to appoint a part time Pastor to help lead our Fellowship in these days of challenge and change. We anticipate that the successful Candidate will a, Lead our services on two Sundays each month, dates to be agreed with our Pulpit Secretary, and when other commitments permit, attend services on further Sundays.

b, Undertake pastoral visits as necessary.

c, Lead the Bible Study/Prayer and Praise meetings currently held on a Monday afternoon on agreed dates.

d, Prepare for, in association with our Secretary, and Chair, the Deacons, Trustees and Church Meetings, currently on a four monthly cycle.

Listing qualities required in a Candidate can be difficult, but such a list may include words like: a good people person, competent at leading worship, well organised, capable of leading business meetings, helping the Fellowship to reach out to those living nearby and to those who the Lord may bring into contact with us.

Encourage us to make relevant and necessary changes as may best meet the situation in the coming days; able to self-motivate and work as part of a team.

Some life experience would resonate with our mature congregation. If suitable supervision was available we would consider someone for whom this was their first pastorate. We would prefer a local, part time pastor all to ourselves but if the right person was appointed to one of the nearest Congregational Churches, we would consider a sharing arrangement.

We anticipate the above will take approximately 50 hours per month, spread over three days each week. We are offering to pay a quarter of the annual Stipend recommended by the Congregational Federation, on a monthly basis in arrears. Plus other expenses, and entitlements as set out in the Year Book. We do not have any accommodation to offer.

Over the last decade we have spent considerable sums of money on the building: new heating system; secondary glazing; insulation. New entrance and storage. Refitted kitchen. We are planning to future proof our large *picture window* which contains scenes from John Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*. (It measures 12 ft high by 23ft 3 ins wide) We are hoping to carry out this work in 2020.

Our Deacons, Secretary, Treasurer and Trustees are appointed on an annual basis in accordance with our Charity Commission approved Constitution.

Further information available from:

The Congregational Federation

or

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Church Secretary