



**SPRINGHEAD
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH**

Profile – July 2022

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Springhead Congregational Church.

Springhead Congregational Church is an independent church for the whole community and we seek to serve God and our local area by sharing Christian friendship.

We are a relaxed, informal and friendly family church with a range of activities to cater for all ages. We extend a very warm welcome to everyone, whatever the reason for their visit to our church and whatever their faith.

We have a well-established congregation of regular worshippers with a strong sense of fellowship where everyone is a valued member of our church family.

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

Our present minister, Rev Jonathan Abernethy-Barkley is due to leave our church in August 2022, so we are currently seeking a new minister. Although a full-time position would be preferable, we strongly believe that the right person for the role is more important than the number of hours required.

Unfortunately, we are not able to provide accommodation at the present time but an additional 20% of the stipend (pro rata) will be included as housing allowance.

Springhead Congregational Church is a warm and sociable fellowship, and the whole fellowship looks forward to welcoming and working with a new minister who will lead us to grow in faith and witness in the community.



SPRINGHEAD OLDHAM

Springhead is a village in Saddleworth, on the outskirts of Oldham in Greater Manchester. It was previously an urban district in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Springhead is a thriving community, approximately 2 miles from Oldham town centre. There is little unemployment 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 dentist, a community centre and a number of local shops within walking distance but the nearest post office, 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 two secondary schools within 3 miles. The football club (Springhead A.F.C.) play in the Manchester Football League, and the cricket club, Springhead CCC, in the Greater Manchester Cricket League. 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, but unfortunately it is lacking in social activities 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 384 new family homes on two sites 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 to accommodate the expanding congregation and was extended in 1980 to become the sanctuary it is today. This was an amazing accomplishment by the fellowship and a true high point in the life of the church.

THE CHURCH BUILDING

The church is very fortunate in having a large building. The sanctuary has recently been extensively refurbished and it 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 ground floor is easily accessed by anyone with mobility problems, or has a wheelchair.

The church is child and dementia friendly and has an up-to-date Congregational Federation Safeguarding Certificate.

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 insurmountable.



MEMBERSHIP

The church has 40 members and approximately 15 adherents. There are a number of younger children who attend fairly regularly, but unfortunately the number of children and families attending has fallen since the Covid-19 pandemic. The congregation is well-established, with around 30-40 people who attend regularly, many of whom have attended for well over 30 years. It is a very committed and caring fellowship with numerous loyal and dedicated members, of which many are second and third generations of the same families.

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

Informal Sunday morning family friendly services are held at 10:30am each week. The service lasts for 60 minutes.

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 entire fellowship and children and adults 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 and an informal café style service is held in the church hall on the fourth Sunday of the month. This service also includes breakfast.

Special seasonal and celebration services are also held throughout the year: -

Christmas

- *Children's 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 in Lees and District*
- *Easter Sunday*

Pentecost

- *Family service followed by a Procession of Witness, United Service and a shared meal*

Harvest

- *Service followed by a Harvest Lunch*

Remembrance Sunday

- *Service followed by lunch*

Other services have previously included a pet blessing service, services incorporating films and drama, No Strings Puppet Ministry and Messy Church. The fellowship is always willing to look at new, creative and interesting ways of worship as well as enjoying the more traditional services.

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

Mission Praise is the preferred hymn book and the church has two regular organists. In their absence, music is provided by a recently purchased digital Hymnal Plus music system which provides a wide selection of traditional hymns and modern worship songs.

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

CONGREGATIONAL CAFÉ – The church café is open every Wednesday lunch time (apart from the second Wednesday in the month).

SCOFFS - This is the monthly lunch club held on the second Wednesday of each month.

RAINBOWS BABY AND TODDLERS GROUP – A relaxed and welcoming group which runs every Thursday morning.

BADMINTON – Children of all abilities and skills meet every Friday night to play badminton.

BIBLE STUDY – The group meets in the minister's home on a weekly basis.

TODDLER SUNDAYS – This new group will meet every Sunday morning from September onwards.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE - This is an open group to which anyone with an interest or idea is invited to meet to plan, organise and co-ordinate the many wide-ranging social and

fundraising events and activities throughout the year. 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, which does not just enhance church funds but also helps to strengthen our fellowship and friendship.

The church supports many local and national charities on an annual basis in the desire to bless the local community and reach the wider world.

THE CHURCH'S POSITION IN SERVING THE COMMUNITY

The Congregational Café is open every Wednesday lunch time serving a variety of affordable of light lunches, snacks and cakes. It is a great place for members of the church congregation and the local community to meet for a chat and a bite to eat.

Each month, the church runs a lunch club for the over 55's in the church congregation and wider community, providing a home cooked 2 course lunch - with tea and coffee – followed by 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 140 children attend. A local DJ provides the music and games. The church provides the hall and a large number of volunteers! 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.

Each week Rainbows Baby and Toddler Group is held in the church hall 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.

From September 2022, the church is starting a new venture with the aim of increasing attendance and encouraging new families to join in worship on Sunday mornings. Toddler Sundays will run every Sunday morning in conjunction with our regular worship when a variety of toys, activities, Sunday school songs and stories will be on offer to babies, toddlers and pre-school children accompanied by an adult.

Throughout the year, many social events and activities are held on a regular basis and all are advertised in the local paper, social media and on posters around the village in the post office, library and sheltered accommodation. Over the past few years these have included jumble sales, afternoon teas, games evenings, 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 Derian House Children's Hospice. And recently, over 100 people enjoyed a celebration lunch for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee!

The building is used most days and is rented out on a long-term basis to two local drama groups, a karate club and a dance academy. The church hall is also available for use by the community or to hire for parties and other activities. The church also allows the use of the hall for charities without suitable premises to raise money for their causes.

OTHER INFORMATION

CONTACT NEWSLETTER

A monthly church newsletter is produced which shares news of the church, reports of recent events and gives details of upcoming events. Many members of our fellowship receive this by email.

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The church has a website www.springheadcongregationalchurch.com which is updated regularly, and also two Facebook pages – an open page which allows us to have a presence in the local community (and beyond!) which is primarily used to promote worship and advertise forthcoming social events – and a closed page which is only open to members of our congregation.

CONGREGATIONAL FEDERATION

The church is affiliated to the Congregational Federation and takes an active interest at national, area and local levels. Whenever possible, a small group of people attend the National and Local Assemblies. Several of our church members have had positions on various Federation committees; three have served as Chairperson of the Area and the minister is currently on the North West Area Executive.

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. The minister is currently Chairperson of the group.

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 where a large number of people share faith and fellowship together!

On Good Friday, the churches meet together in the centre of Lees for a short open air service for the community.

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 inclusive church
- We are a relaxed, informal and friendly church
- We are a caring, sharing and learning church
- We seek to serve God and our local 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'*.

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.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Over the years, Springhead Congregational Church has been blessed to have ministers with vision and a congregation who have rolled up their sleeves, dreamt alongside them, and made those visions a reality.

We have recently undertaken an extensive refurbishment of the church sanctuary to ensure that it is fit for a new decade of ministry and outreach.

Our vision for the future includes further work to the outside of the building, and the refurbishment of the kitchen and café area in due course to ensure that the building continues to be well maintained and in excellent repair.

We are also keen to look for opportunities to initiate and encourage new church projects to increase attendance at Sunday morning worship and seek out new members.

Finally, and very importantly, we wish to explore ways in which to positively connect with young people and encourage more young families to attend church and share in our wonderful fellowship. We also wish to reach out to lonely people and be more relevant to the changing needs of our local and wider community.