

Belonging

WHAT IT MEANS TO
BELONG TO A CHURCH



"The kingdom of heaven is like
treasure hidden in a field. When a man
found it, he hid it again, and then in his
joy went and sold all he had and
bought that field."

MATTHEW 13:44



Why church?

Imagine that was you, out for a walk one day and you stumbled upon buried treasure which will completely transform your life. How are you feeling? Joyful? Excited? Bewildered? And perhaps a deep sense of 'Why me? I did nothing to deserve this.' That is the good news of Jesus Christ, which radically transforms lives and comes completely free to undeserving people. We can never earn the kingdom of heaven. We cannot buy our forgiveness. Jesus did it all for us as he died on the cross.

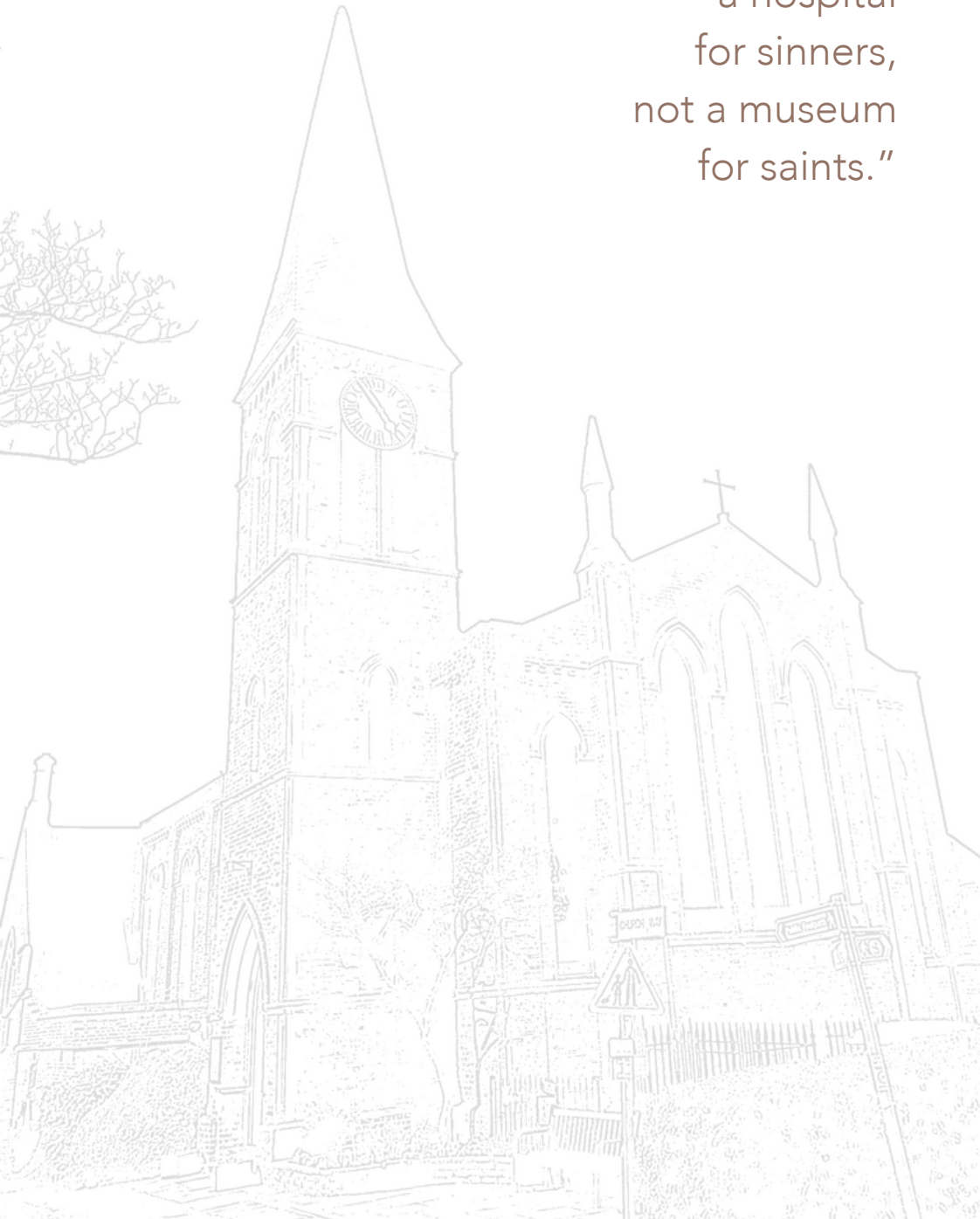
But here's the twist in Jesus' tale. Suddenly you realise this free gift is going to cost you everything. Jesus says, the man, "in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field." The kingdom of heaven, (that is, being a follower of Jesus and enjoying eternity with him) is given to us completely free, and yet it costs us everything we have. Not in a burdensome way - but because Jesus turns lives upside down.

And so, church life should reflect both the freeness and costliness of the kingdom. We want everyone to be able to join us on a Sunday and hear the incredible news of a just God, who sees all the mess and dirt in our lives, and yet he still loves us. And in his love he forgives all who ask for forgiveness. Not one of us is too bad for God - church isn't just for neat and tidy people.

However, as we see God's love and receive his free forgiveness, so he asks us to go all in with him. This means that church isn't an added extra in life - something which squeezes in around everything else. Our commitment to God should be seen through our commitment to our local church.

But remember the joy. "In his joy he went and sold all he had and bought that field." Committing to a church family is one of the greatest joys this side of the grave. Church is family (Heb 2:11) - a place where none of us is alone, and each of us belongs. And church is a body (1 Cor 12:12) - a place where each of us is needed and has a role to play. This booklet will help us see what this joyful commitment looks like at Christ Church.

“The church is
a hospital
for sinners,
not a museum
for saints.”



Being family

If church is a family then, just like any family, we care deeply about each other. In a larger church this can be harder, because there are so many people to care about and it can be easy to feel lost. That is why Life Groups are an integral part of our church life. They are a place to share life together with a smaller group of people, studying the Bible and praying for each other. Life Groups happen at different times throughout the week so that as many people as possible can join one.

We also strive to be a church family where we support each other practically. Our Support Fund (support@cockfosters.church) helps those in financial hardship, and our Pastoral Care Team (pastoralcare@cockfosters.church) helps us care for those who are suffering in other ways. These are great ways for us to carry each other's burdens, but they only work if we know each other well enough to know what burdens need carrying.

Carry each other's burdens,
and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

GALATIANS 6:2

Finally, remembering how dependent we are on our Heavenly Father, being part of the church family means committing to carry each other's burdens to God in prayer. We pray together in our Life Groups, at our monthly Prayer Central meetings (8pm on the second Wednesday of each month), at two weekly prayer breakfasts (Wednesdays and Saturdays), and using our daily Prayer Diary which you can access through the Christ Church app (search Christ Church Cockfosters in your app store). Alongside these we have an Urgent Prayer List (prayers@cockfosters.church) so that we can pray together for critical situations.



How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'

ROMANS 10:14-15



Why tell others?

When something really exciting happens, our natural reaction is to share the excitement with others. Good news is for sharing. And so it is with the good news of Jesus Christ. We strive to be a church overflowing with the love our Creator has shown to us by sharing it with others.

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

1 THESSALONIANS 3:12

This overflowing love produces both actions and words. The social outreach ministries we are involved with (Debt Counselling Centre, Mustard Seed, English Conversation Classes, and the Food Bank) help us show Jesus' sacrificial love. Our words then explain what motivates our love.

Alongside this, our Explore Groups are places where we can invite friends to investigate the Christian faith, but often these conversations more naturally take place through our everyday friendships and contacts. Whilst some members of the church family are particularly gifted, we all have a part to play in sharing the good news of Jesus.



There are different kinds of gifts,
but the same Spirit distributes them.
There are different kinds of service,
but the same Lord.
There are different kinds of working,
but in all of them and in everyone
it is the same God at work.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-6





Why serve?

God has made each one of us differently and he has given each one of us gifts. These gifts are not for our benefit but so we can serve others.

In church life this means that each of us has a part to play. Some of us are musical and can lead us in sung worship. Others are warm welcomers and are good at looking out for newcomers. Some have technical gifts to make cameras work and song words appear, others teach the gospel message to our children and young people. Whether we're young or old, brand new or a Christ Church old-timer, our church family needs the gifts God has given us. By committing to be part of the church, we are committing to use those gifts to serve our church family.

And here's the amazing thing... the more we serve the more we belong. The more we use the gifts God has given us, the more we enjoy the blessing of being part of the church family.

Why give?

Each year, Christ Church spends around half a million pounds on our various ministry activities. This is a huge sum and it is all raised through donations from our church members. So why give?

There are two big dangers here. With a large amount to be raised each year it is easy to hear "We need money from you." But who is the 'we' and who is the 'you' in that sentence? We are all the church and together God tells us to use the resources he gives us to serve him. There is also a danger that we miss the great blessing which giving brings each one of us. Jesus tells us...

"It is more blessed to give than to receive"

ACTS 20:35

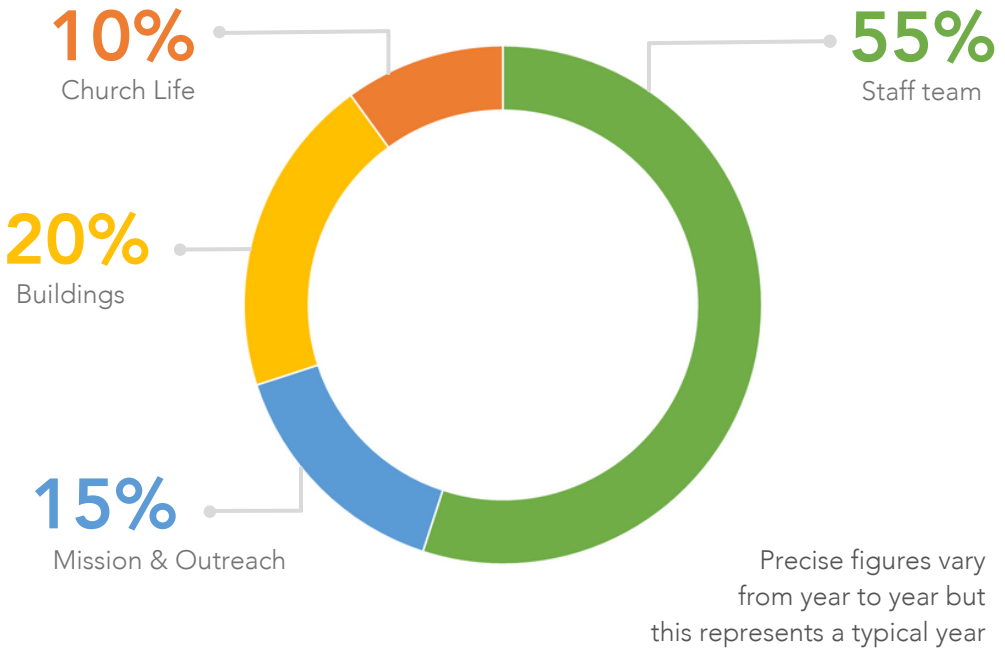
One reason the Bible tells us to give our money generously is so that we we experience this blessing. Giving doesn't buy God's favour - Jesus has already bought that for us. But as we learn to give our money away, we are freed from trusting in things which can never keep us safe.

We so easily put confidence in a salary or savings account but they can't keep us safe. The money runs out, or our health fails, and we are left fearful. The 'god' of money is shown to be powerless.

Giving our money back to God reminds us that, ultimately, he is the only one who can protect us in life and death. Giving frees us from the fear of false faith and builds our trust in our Creator. And then, God uses the money we give to grow this same faith in others.



Where is the money spent?



Staffing: These include salaries, National Insurance, accommodation, training and pension costs. We don't employ staff to do all the ministry of the church; instead we employ church staff to train and disciple the whole church family, so that together we can do the ministry God has given us.

Buildings: These costs include utilities, insurance, consumables, repairs and maintenance for church buildings and staff housing.

Church Life: This includes music, children and youth resources, Life Group materials, office stationery, postage, photocopies, IT, evangelistic events, welcome lunches, publicity... and much more.

Mission & Outreach: We support mission partners and social outreach projects seeking to share God's love and explain the gospel message. We also support other evangelical Anglican churches through our Parish Share. In addition, church family members give around £50,000 a year through our partnership with Compassion UK.

Frequently asked questions about giving:

How much should I give?

2 Corinthians 9v7 encourages us with these words "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

In the Old Testament God's people, the Israelites, were required to give a tithe of 10% of all their produce. Whilst many Christians still find this a helpful guideline, tithing isn't a New Testament principle because instead, followers of Jesus are encouraged to freely give from what God has given to them. There are no set percentages, the Bible simply encourages us to be generous, cheerful and planned in our giving.

Can I give a one-off donations rather than regular giving?

One-off donations are always very welcome. However, regular giving is particularly helpful as it allows us to plan forwards for ongoing costs.

Do I need to complete the standing order form, or can I do it online?

Many will find it easier to set up or amend standing orders directly with their bank, but please still complete the Giving Response Form to let us know your plans.

What if I need to decrease my giving?

Because our individual financial circumstances are constantly changing it is wise to have a regular review of our giving. For some this review will mean deciding it is best to reduce their giving. That is of course absolutely fine, just let us know of any changes so we can plan accordingly.



What if I am a basic rate taxpayer?

Please complete the Gift Aid Declaration as that allows the Church Council to recover the tax you have paid on the gift.

What if I am a higher rate taxpayer?

Please complete the Gift Aid Declaration and remember that you can reclaim additional tax via your personal tax return.

What is our policy on reserves?

We must maintain some reserves as a buffer against unforeseen costs or changes in giving. The Church Council aim to have at least 2 months running costs in reserve.

Who sees information about giving?

The overall finances of the church are discussed regularly by the Church Council but because the Bible advises us to keep our giving private, the number of people who see specific information about giving is kept to an absolute minimum. Generally this is only the Treasurer and our Financial Administrator.

How do I find out more about leaving a legacy to Christ Church?

Over the years we have been very blessed to receive a number of legacies. Our Treasurer (treasurer@cockfosters.church), would very happily provide details about how to set this up and the tax advantages for your family in you leaving a charitable bequest.



If further clarifications would be helpful,
please send questions to our Treasurer - treasurer@cockfosters.church

For you know the grace of our Lord
Jesus Christ, that though he was rich,
yet for your sake he became poor, so
that you through his poverty might
become rich.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:9

Giving Response Form

Your name (CAPITALS)

- I would like to commit to new regular giving of £ per
- I would like to change my giving from £ per to £ per
- I would like to keep my existing level of regular giving
- I would like to make a one-off gift of £
- I would like to speak with someone about leaving a legacy
- I will change my Standing Order myself

- If you want us to contact your bank and make these changes for you then please complete the Standing Order Mandate overleaf
- If you are a UK tax payer then please complete the Gift Aid Declaration if you haven't completed one previously
- Please make any cheques payable to 'Christ Church Cockfosters'

Please return this form to the Church Office or place it in the giving box at the back of church

Standing Order Mandate

To the Manager, [REDACTED] Bank plc

Address [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Please pay: Christ Church Cockfosters
CAF Bank Ltd
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kent, ME19 4JQ

Account Number 00011048
Sort Code: 40-52-40

The sum of: £ [REDACTED] (figures)

[REDACTED] (words)

on the [REDACTED] day of [REDACTED] 20 [REDACTED] and on the same day in each succeeding month / quarter / year. This cancels any previous instruction in favour of Christ Church Cockfosters.

My Account No. [REDACTED] Sort Code [REDACTED]

Signature [REDACTED] Date [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Gift Aid Declaration

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made from the date of this declaration and in the past four years.

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax for the current tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax claimed on all donations made in the tax year, otherwise I will be responsible to pay any difference.

I understand that Christ Church Cockfosters will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

I am willing for this information to be stored on computer.

Title Name

Address

Signature Date

Please notify the church if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.



Please return this form to the Church Office or place it in the giving box at the back of church. The form can also be completed online using the QR code

We will not hide these truths
from our children;
we will tell the next generation
about the glorious deeds of the Lord,
about his power
and his mighty wonders.

Psalm 78:4

Trent School

We are very thankful for our partnership with Trent School, supporting its curriculum with weekly assemblies, RE lessons, termly church services and much more - all helping Trent to thrive as a Christian school.

Attendance at Christ Church is one of the various admission criteria for the school, which means many young families join us hoping to get a place there. If you're hoping to get your child a place at Trent, you are very welcome - please come and say 'Hi' and let us know.

Trent is a wonderful school and can offer a great education for your child. But even more than this, in your time at Christ Church, we would love for you to discover the wonderful message of Jesus: that we can be completely forgiven through him and know God personally.

Please do join us at an Explore Group between our two morning services to discover more, ask questions, and discuss these things over a coffee. We'd love you to become fully involved in our church family, so that we can support and care for each other as we journey together in faith.



Please note that joining the Electoral Roll won't make any difference to your Trent School application.

Why join the Electoral Roll?

Everyone is welcome to join us for our Sunday services - we love welcoming people Sunday by Sunday to gather with us. However, as we have seen, attending church services on a Sunday is different from being part of the church family. The Electoral Roll is the method we use for people to commit themselves publicly to be part of the church family. It is a chance for each of us to say:

"I am committed to my church family at Christ Church and I will support my church through prayer, regular attendance, giving, and using gifts God has given me to serve at church."

This isn't a commitment anyone should make lightly, but it is a clear way to identify that you are part of the community of faith here. It also helps our church leadership know who is part of the church family, so we can pastor and disciple the church family as God has instructed us.

If you wish to make this commitment, please complete the attached Electoral Roll form and hand it in to the Church Office. Every six years the Electoral Roll is refreshed allowing us all to renew our commitment to each other.

If you're not yet ready to make this commitment, please keep joining us each Sunday - it's great to have you with us.



Electoral Roll Form

Please complete one form per person
Use the QR code for the online form



Full name

Address

Email

Telephone

Date of birth

I declare that:

I am baptised and over 16 years old

I have been worshipping with Christ Church regularly (at least once a fortnight) for at least the last 6 months

I declare that the above answers are true and I apply for inclusion on the Church Electoral Roll of the parish.

Signed

Dated

By returning this form you consent to this information being used with Christ Church Cockfosters for ministry and mission purposes, kept either physically on computer, or in church management software and subject to the principles set out in the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. For details on how we process your data please see our General Privacy notice on our website www.cockfosters.church/privacy-policy or contact the Church Office. If you live in the church parish you can join the electoral roll prior to completing 6 months attendance.

PCC Resolutions

The following two resolutions have been passed by the Christ Church PCC (church council) to capture our understanding of the Bible's teaching around human sexuality and gender. These statements won't exactly represent the personal convictions of every member of the church family but they describe our agreed position which we allow to shape the ministry here at Christ Church.

Resolution on Marriage & Sexuality (September 2023)

The PCC affirms the Church of England doctrine that marriage is between one man and one woman and is intended to be for life since we believe this to be the pattern given to us in scripture.

We also affirm the beauty of celibacy - recognising the goodness of both biblical positions.

We seek to provide good pastoral support for those who may struggle to live by this teaching and welcome all people to Christ Church, regardless of their sexual status or orientation.

We seek to be a Church which is a loving Christian community, an extended family, and a place where we hold to a traditional Christian view of Marriage, as set out in the Book of Common Prayer, 39 Articles and Ordinal, and to do so with grace and love.



Resolution on Gender & Ministry (March 2022)

We affirm the beautiful distinctiveness between men and women in creation, and that God's word and works of creation demonstrate differing roles for men and women both in family households and the household of faith, the church.¹ Despite the many errors of the past, this distinction in roles in no way assigns differing worth or dignity to men and women.

We recognise the clear voice of Scripture that both men and women have gifts, given by God and to be used both in public and private settings.² We desire to see a greater number of opportunities in church life for women to use their God-given gifts in public settings, including speaking gifts. We are encouraged to see women leading Sunday services and teaching in Engage and Explore Groups.

We acknowledge that the primary pattern of church leadership described in Scripture is a plurality of elders and that the expectation is for these elders to be male.³

Within our Anglican context, we acknowledge that our ordained presbyters, licensed by the bishop to the parish, are included in this eldership role. Therefore, it is the desire of the PCC to request that only male presbyters be licensed by the bishop to the parish.

The PCC remains open to appointing women who are ordained as permanent deacons and who share these convictions, and to exploring the possibility of other men serving as elders. We believe that the role of churchwarden is rightly open to both men and women.

We believe that the primary responsibility for preaching within the church rests with the elders.⁴ It is therefore appropriate for the elders to do the majority of the preaching in our all-together worship services.

We believe that the primary responsibility for teaching and preaching falls to the elders, who from time to time may invite a non-elder to preach. This non-elder may be a man or a woman.

¹ E.g., woman bearing children; men as household heads (Gen 3:20, Col 3:18-19, Eph 5:22-23, 1 Cor 11:3)

² 1 Cor 11:5, Rom 16

³ 1 Tim 2:12, 1 Cor 14:34-35, 1 Tim 3:1-7 & 11, Titus 1:6

⁴ Titus 1:5-9, 1 Tim 3:1-7



ChurchSuite

ChurchSuite is our church family database. It helps us keep in touch with each other, sign up for events, and manage our ministry teams.

If you don't have a MyChurchSuite account, please let the Church Office know (office@cockfosters.church).

If you do have an account, it really helps if you can add a photo of yourself and make sure your details are up to date. You can do this through the ChurchSuite website (www.churchsuite.co.uk) or on the ChurchSuite app.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Trent, Christ Church Cockfosters represents the congregation at Christ Church Cockfosters and is a Registered Charity (1134144)

The Christ Church Trust is also a Registered Charity (298004)

WE LONG TO BE A
spiritually, healthy &
relationally, connected
CHURCH
Confidently, transforming
OUR COMMUNITIES
WITH THE GOOD NEWS OF
Jesus.





COCKFOSTERS.CHURCH



CHALK LANE, EN4 9JQ