



Church Profile

Church Overview

Welcome to the River of Life Church. With the recent retirement of our Pastor, we are now seeking to appoint a new Lead Pastor, and so we are delighted you are taking this opportunity to check out our church and this vacancy. We hope this profile will convey something of the richness of God's work here at River of Life, and that you will get a sense of what God has been doing through us to advance His kingdom.

From the beginning, we set about meeting together in prayer groups, Life Groups, Alpha Courses, outreach events etc. After three years, and having discerned God's heart for a church in Felixstowe, River of Life Church came into being with its first meeting at the Brackenbury Sports Centre, Felixstowe.

Today, we are a charismatic church, with expressive, Holy Spirit-led worship, and we meet in our own refurbished 24,000 sq. ft. premises. Currently, our membership exceeds 100. Most of our church family take on voluntary roles, so whenever there's a job to be done there's someone there to use their gifts and skills. Although there are sometimes gaps we need to fill, we're thankful for all we are able to do.

We have an effective leadership team. Deacons assist the elders, often providing logistical and material support. Our trustees are mainly responsible for controlling the management and administration of our registered charity (no. 1092998).

As an independent church, we don't belong to any denomination or group of churches. However, we are affiliated to the Evangelical Alliance, and for our core beliefs, our Statement of Doctrine can be found on our website: www.riveroflifechurch.net

The Church Today

On Sunday mornings, the café opens 9.30 for drinks, and then we hold a prayer meeting at 10.00. Worship starts at 10.30. Attendance for Sunday worship in 2019 averaged 89, having been 95 in 2018. We occasionally hold special events, sometimes with high profile speakers and musicians which can attract large numbers of visitors, however, we still need more Christ-centred strategies for church growth.

We have a variety of musicians and singers who make up our vibrant Worship Team, and who meet every week to pray, practice and worship. For Sunday worship they bring a mix of Praise and Worship Songs new and old. Although our worship may begin with a certain structure in mind, it can change in response to the Holy Spirit. We believe this is the vitality that keeps worship fresh and exciting.

During 2019, we had 10 believers' baptisms by immersion, which was up from six in the previous year. Also, we had one marriage, one marriage blessing, one dedication and one funeral. We also sent a massive 720 shoeboxes to Central Asia in response to the Samaritans Shoebox Appeal.

Our church family is diverse. We come from all walks of life, which, as one member put it, "That is how church should be." Many national flags are displayed in the worship area to reflect our different backgrounds. Yet, we are united by our common faith in Jesus Christ. And we are a tithing church – both as individuals and as a church fellowship (10% of church income is given to selected charities).

Prayer Team

We have a dedicated prayer team always available to minister to those with needs or for healing.

Children's ministry:

Toddler Group (pre-schoolers) - Friday mornings during term time.

Stargazers (school year 1-6) - Thursday evenings during term time.

Creche (0-3 yrs), Little Lobsters (3-5 yrs) & Cool Crabs (6-11 yrs) - Sunday mornings.

Life Groups

The basic building block of the church, where we build up and encourage one another. We have seven Life Groups each comprising of approx. 8-10 people.

Bible School

Runs twice annually, with the purpose to provide a deeper understanding of God's Word.

Women Unite

A ministry for women with events throughout the year. Ladies also meet twice a month for Coffee, Chat & Connect.

Community Outreach

- Emergency Food Store: for the last three months of 2019, we gave many bags of food, cleaning products and toiletries to those in need within the church fellowship and in supported housing in our community. We also gave a good number of Christmas gifts to homeless charities within the town.
- Monthly service at Cotman House Care Home.
- Felixstowe Carnival Day – we have a special pitch on the seafront with a gazebo where we witness and sing Christian songs.
- At significant times, we're in Felixstowe town centre witnessing and handing out tracts.
- Prayer walking in the area around our church.

Our Values, Mission and Vision.

Our Mission Statement is the words of the Greatest Commandment in Luke 10:27:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and Love your neighbour as yourself.

We are currently revisiting our core values, and plan to have updated our Statement of Core Values by the end of March 2020. Currently our values can be summed up as follows:

- We value the Bible as the inspired word of God
- We value the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to empower believers,
- We value the Church as a central part of God's plan,
- We value the Grace given by Jesus to all believers,

- We value prayer as an essential part of the life of a Christian
- We value all people without prejudice or judgment.

Our Vision Statement was produced several years ago and is going to be reviewed in the light of our revised statement of Core Values. It is likely that the new Lead Pastor will play a central role in this development.

The Vision Statement currently is as follows:

- To Host the Presence of God in increasing measure
- To be a worshipping church with vibrant praise and worship
- To seek revival and preach the full Gospel, seeing increasing numbers come to Christ, healed and delivered
- To increasingly see miracles, signs and wonders (Mark 16:17)
- To reach out to the people of Felixstowe and surrounding districts with the love of God
- To be a true family of believers meeting not only on Sundays, but midweek also
- To exhibit the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and practice the Gifts of The Spirit, both corporately and as individuals
- To be a church of prayer, interceding for those in Felixstowe, the County of Suffolk, our Nation, and the persecuted church worldwide, together with the nation of Israel

Church Building and resources

- Auditorium of 12,000 sq. Ft. with comfortable seating capacity for up to 650 guests in flexible configurations.
- Impressive Stage, approx 50 feet wide with professional stage lighting rigs.
- State-of-the-Art digital Audio/Visual controls with 144 channel mixing facility.
- Multi-Screen flat panel visual displays and projectors throughout the auditorium.
- Fully equipped kitchen ready to support events.
- Separate rooms to host teaching events with seating capacity from 20 to 200 persons.
- Conference rooms furnished with audio/visual equipment.
- A Community Cafe designed to be a meeting place for the community.

Felixstowe Today

Felixstowe is our town. It has a population of approximately 25,000 and is a good place in which to live and work. Indeed, Felixstowe means 'Blessed Place.' Perhaps the greatest attraction is its coastline with long beaches, wide sea views and extensive promenade.

In recent years, Felixstowe has received millions of pounds of investment which has seen the town grow in popularity. From the renovation of Felixstowe's award-winning seafront gardens, the creation of a

new beachside park, reopening of the Spa Pavilion theatre and most recently the opening of the new Pier. And so, the town is enjoying an upturn with significant growth.

Felixstowe isn't just a coastal resort, it's also a working town where, at the southern end of the town, Britain's largest container port is situated. In the other direction, at the northern end, is the stunningly beautiful river Deben where there is the fishing and sailing hamlet of Felixstowe Ferry.

The town centre has everything you need from butchers to bakers, from clothes to cafes and the independent Palace Cinema. There's also a wide variety of restaurants and cafes all the way along the promenade including some amazing fish and chips!

Strengths & Challenges

Strengths we wish to build on

A strongly charismatic church

A strong worship team

A prayerful church

An emergency food store

Effective, well attended Life Groups

Securely Bible based teaching

Commitment to tithing

Committed supportive membership

Well-equipped building with car park

Challenges we wish to address

Developing further our spiritual gifts

Intergenerational opportunities in worship

Further develop our prayer life

Closer connection with local community, schools and churches

Increasing our evangelism

Attracting more families, youth and children

Finance

Declining membership, need more volunteers

Increase the use of the building

The Lead Pastor we seek

We are seeking a Lead Pastor to guide us, teach us, and lead us into the future God has planned for us. We are looking for a Lead Pastor who will give strategic leadership, pastoral care and the growth of River of Life Church. The person appointed will have a passion for evangelism, a heart for bringing people to faith and growing new Christians. He or she will be an effective preacher & Bible teacher, an enabler to attract young families and help us grow. He or she will be a good team worker with leadership skills. This is further described in the attached job description.