

Newcastle Baptist Church Profile

Loving, caring, reaching

www.newcastlebaptist.org.uk



Introduction

Welcome to the profile of Newcastle Baptist Church (NBC). We are a lively, growing, and committed fellowship situated in the residential area of Clayton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire.

At the heart of NBC is a diverse family of approximately 200 adults, children and young people, ranging in age from under one to over 95. We are a Bible-believing community seeking to be Spirit-led, that has seen significant evolution in recent years - moving from a predominantly white British congregation to a vibrant, multicultural family. We are blessed with modern facilities and a strong financial foundation.

We share a deep commitment to our "frontlines" - witnessing to Jesus in our workplaces, families, and neighbourhoods. From active youth work and children's work on Sundays, to our community-focused "Warm Welcome Space" and "Café Link," we strive to be a church that not only gathers for Sunday worship but also makes a difference in our weekday lives.

As we look to the future, we recognise the need to deepen our discipleship, strengthen our cross-cultural friendships, and empower our members to serve. We have prepared this profile to share our story, our vision, and our prayerful search for a full-time Minister to lead us into the exciting next chapter of our life together. We seek someone wise, culturally sensitive, and pastorally hearted with excellent, engaging preaching skills.

We hope this profile gives you a clear picture of who we are, where we have come from, and where we believe God is leading us.

Our Church as it is now

Our People

The church is characterised by a strong commitment to the Lord, with younger members benefiting from the example of older Christians who are still staying “fresh and green” in their love for Jesus (Psalm 92:14). It has been a joy to baptise several people in the past two years, especially various young people. We are pleased to welcome people from a range of backgrounds, including some with learning disabilities.



Around half our adults are working, many in healthcare (University Hospitals of North Midlands), social care or education (local schools and Keele University). Others work in a range of local businesses. Well over half our families with young children/teenagers are now from overseas. Most of these families are here because at least one parent has taken up work at the nearby hospital.

A lively group of about 15 students from Keele University enrich our church life through their energy and enthusiasm.

A number of our adults are retired, with many of the recently retired now busy helping with childcare for grandchildren, both locally and in other parts of the country. Our older retired people – many of whom have been part of the church for years – have a strong tradition of supporting one another spiritually and socially through our weekday activities (see Church Activities).

We went online during COVID-19 and have continued to stream our Sunday services. This enables the housebound or those working on Sundays to join our worship, whether live or later in the week.



Newcomers say how welcome they are made to feel, and we enjoy church events where different ages and nationalities can mix.

However, we recognise that we have things to learn about developing friendships, particularly cross-cultural ones, that go beyond Sunday morning.

We are also challenged by how to encourage people to grow spiritually and develop their gifts when shift patterns and childcare prevent many from regular commitments outside Sunday. We particularly need to encourage more people to help in our Sunday children’s groups!

Our Children and Young People

We are blessed with thriving children's and young people's groups, overseen by our talented Ministry Assistant and our recently-appointed part-time Children's Worker.

It is a joy to welcome 20-30 children under 11 on a typical Sunday morning. We seek to introduce them to Jesus through enjoyable learning and play. For three out of four Sundays we run 'Little Stars' (ages 1-4) and 'NBC Kids' (ages 5-11), with the children leaving for their groups after the first part of our worship. Parents of under-1's are free to take their babies out for play in our Prayer Room which has a live video link to the service.



For secondary school age, 'NBC Youth' (ages 11-18) meets on Sunday mornings in the basement (the Den). 10-15 young people regularly gather for Bible study and discussion on the passage being preached on in the main service, in a way that relates to their lives.



A similar number meet at the 6pm evening youth group (though not always the same faces), but with a focus on real-life application and honest conversation, plus plenty of organised fun! The young people also enjoy regular social get-togethers and an annual summer festival trip - most recently to 'Limitless' at the Staffordshire Showground.

Our young people are also part of 'Blaze', a growing, wider youth gathering that brings teenagers from several local churches together for worship, teaching and community. Our Ministry Assistant serves on the Blaze leadership team.

We also have strong connections with the Guides and Scouts who meet in our building.

Our Services

On Sundays we seek to offer a warm, welcoming and Spirit-filled atmosphere where people of all ages can come together to worship, learn and grow in faith. Each service combines heartfelt worship and biblical teaching.

On the first Sunday of the month we hold two services: an early morning Communion service at 9:30am and an "All Together" family service at 10:45am. For the other Sundays in each month we hold one service at 10:30am.

The 10:30am service is vibrant and engaging. The service begins with prayer and contemporary praise led by a gifted worship team. Preaching is usually delivered by the minister although we also welcome guest speakers and church members to preach. The service concludes with a short time of praise and reflection, followed by a blessing that sends the congregation out encouraged and uplifted.

The once-a-month 9:30am Early Communion Service provides a peaceful and reflective start to the day. Traditional hymns, prayer, and a calm pace make it ideal for those who appreciate a more contemplative or traditional form of worship.

The monthly 10:45am All Together (Family) Service is joyful, interactive and designed for all generations to worship together. It features lively songs with actions, opportunities for children to participate, and a simplified presentation of the message to make it easy for everyone to understand. The congregation – young and old – is encouraged to take part through discussions and activities that bring the message to life.

Across every service, Newcastle Baptist Church remains committed to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in ways that are engaging, accessible and relevant to everyday life. Services can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/newcastlebaptistchurch>



Our Activities

Around 1,000 people come through the church building doors each week, for both faith-related and secular purposes. Activities run on-site by NBC include prayer meetings, a bible study, Alpha, church lunches and outreach events (Welcome Space and a weekly café). Uniformed groups, choirs, exercise groups and other activities (e.g. Slimming World) are run by outside organisations that rent the premises.

Off-site, regular church activities include home groups, men's events and "special interest" groups focusing on Mission, Creation Care and Outreach. All our groups seek to deepen friendships and provide opportunities for spiritual growth and/or outreach.

We also distribute invitations to homes around the church three times a year for our Christmas, Easter and summer events.

Our Leadership and Decision-Making Structure

NBC employs a full-time Minister, a full-time Ministry Assistant who heads up our children's and youth work, a part-time Children's Worker and a part-time Pastoral Worker.

We are blessed with a team of ten Deacons (who are also trustees) who meet monthly with the ministry team to discuss practical and spiritual matters and to make recommendations to the church members' meeting. The bi-monthly members' meetings are times of discernment and decision-making. Church membership currently stands at 113.

Wider Connections

We recognise the importance of being connected to God's wider work. NBC is in membership with the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BU) and the Heart of England Baptist Association (HEBA). We support Home Mission and BMS World Mission financially and in prayer, and are currently linked with BMS missionaries working in Uganda and Afghanistan

We also have links with a former church member and his wife working in a church in Japan, and a missionary working across Eastern Europe. We financially support other Christian organisations plus charities such as our local Foodbank.

The church is part of the Church Leaders in Newcastle-under-Lyme group which meets bi-monthly and organises joint events for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Easter and Christmas. The Easter and Christmas events include joint worship and witness in Newcastle town centre and elsewhere.



The Church we would like to see

At a church family gathering we talked together about our strengths and weaknesses and where God might be leading us.

We see ourselves currently as a Bible-believing, all-age Baptist congregation, pleased to welcome people from different cultures and church backgrounds. We are family-orientated with effective youth work. We see ourselves as welcoming and caring, pastorally supporting those in need. We are worshipful, Spirit-led and evangelistic. We benefit from generous financial giving.

We greatly value and currently benefit from engaging and inspiring preaching and see this as essential to the future spiritual life of the congregation.

Thinking about where God might be leading us in future, we recognised a need to go much deeper in relationships with one another – particularly with newcomers - to ensure true fellowship/belonging amongst the diversity of people who attend. We thought that more home groups would help, but recognised the constraints on people's time and that learning in different ways, e.g. via Zoom, might help. More personal hospitality is needed.

We could grow in our understanding of diversity, e.g. of neurodiversity, as well as of cultural diversity.

We are a growing church but have struggled to find people to help in different areas of service, e.g. in children's work. We need to learn how to encourage people to use their gifts so that too much work does not fall on too few people.

We are excited by the spiritual growth of our young people and would like to see them participate more in our Sunday services. We would like to be ready to welcome and disciple more young adults who might join us as a result of the way God is moving in young people's lives at this time. We would like to maintain our links with Keele University and do more to encourage the students who join us for worship, e.g. by having church families "adopt" a student while they are with us.

We would like to develop in evangelism. We are encouraged by our awareness of our "frontlines" and by the church's outreach through weekly activities, but we feel we could do more to link with the non-church groups that use our buildings, and with the community. We would like all ages to be equipped for effective evangelism.

We feel our discipleship of new believers could improve. In our church's walk with Jesus, we identified a need to listen more to what God is saying through his Spirit.

The Ministry we are Seeking

In light of the above, we are seeking a wise, culturally sensitive minister with inspirational, effective preaching skills and a pastoral heart who can help us to grow in our relationships and service within the body of Christ, and who can help equip us further for outreach.

Good communication skills are essential. We would also value good organisational abilities and the confidence to actively encourage others to play their part. A sense of humour would be valued!

It goes without saying that a deep personal faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord will underpin all of these qualities. We could sum up our ideal minister as having a passion for Jesus and a passion for people.

Practical Matters

The post is full-time and we intend to make the appointment in line with the BU Recommended Terms of Appointment. We may offer up to 20% on top of the standard stipend and manse value, depending on experience. We do not have a manse, so other benefits may be available, depending on the use of the minister's house.

We contribute towards the Baptist Pension scheme at 10% of Pensionable Income.

We will enable and encourage our minister to participate in the Baptist Union's Continuing Ministerial Development programme. If our new minister is not accredited with the BU we will ask them to complete approved training which can be undertaken alongside ministry.

To apply, please send your CV and covering email to secretary@newcastlebaptist.org.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 - The Surrounding Community

Clayton is one of 21 wards in the borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme. The population of Clayton was just under 3,000 at the last census (2021), with 92% of respondents being white British living in predominantly semi-detached houses on peaceful residential streets. 54% stated that they were 'Christian'; 37% 'No religion' and 5% did not answer. Households are mostly families with school-age children, or retired people.

At the end of Stafford Avenue (where the church is located), on the other side of the A34, in Stoke-on-Trent, is a new estate largely populated by families working at the University Hospital of North Staffordshire. This is a younger, more mixed demographic and a number of families have found a spiritual home at NBC.

We are 1.4 miles from the centre of Newcastle-under-Lyme, a market town with a population of 123,300. Newcastle-under-Lyme shares a similar profile with Clayton. Housing is largely terraced or semi-detached with a fairly static population; many extended families having stayed local despite the closing of mines and potteries, finding employment instead in the new warehousing and delivery industries. Like many small towns, Newcastle has seen a decline in footfall in its town centre and the subsequent closure of some well-known retail names. The Borough Council is undertaking regeneration projects in the hope of injecting new life into what was once a thriving market town.

Our church congregation is drawn from areas within easy reach of the church, as well as from other parts of Newcastle-under-Lyme and from Stoke-on-Trent. Some people travel quite a distance. Students from Keele University (population 13,500 students) share lifts from the campus three miles away, or travel from local rented accommodation.

Local attractions include the Lyme Valley Parkway a short walk from the church (useful to the youth group and church family for football, picnics, games and occasional litter-picks), and plenty of pleasant walking routes including along the Trent and Mersey canal. Trentham Gardens, a national tourist attraction with beautiful lakeside walks and a range of attractive bespoke shops is only 10 minutes' drive away. The Peak District is only 45 minutes away by car. Manchester and Birmingham are within easy reach.

Appendix 2 - Our Buildings and History

Newcastle Baptist Church was established in 1872, although Baptist beliefs and worship in the locality extend as far back as the English Civil War. The church's first building, known as "The Tin Tabernacle", was built close to the town centre, followed by the building of a brick church opposite the original one, in 1914. The church worshipped and served the community well throughout the 20th century and, being the largest Baptist church - and often one of only two with a full-time minister - frequently supported other Baptist churches in North Staffordshire.

By 2011 the congregation could no longer fit into the 120-seater sanctuary. A search for new premises culminated in 2013 in the purchase of our current building, at the time home to a small United Reformed Church congregation who could no longer keep the church running. We were pleased to have most of this congregation join our fellowship and become valued members.

We installed a baptistry and added a modern, light-filled foyer, suitable for small meetings and where the church can gather for refreshments before or after services. Three rooms in the main building are used as a) the minister's office (shared with the ministry assistant), b) a church office and c) a Prayer Room. Basement rooms known as "The Den" are used by our young people on Sunday mornings and by the Scouts group.

The old freestanding church hall was replaced by a bespoke modular building (the Hub) which includes a very large hall, a large classroom which can be divided in two and a large modern kitchen. A grant awarded towards the cost of the building stipulated that it should also be for community use and we have been pleased to make links with the community by hiring out rooms to various groups (see "Our Activities" above).

We have accessible toilets in both the main church and Hub.

Our car park is a useful size, doubling as a social space for barbecues in the summer! We are very grateful to God for our attractive facilities. They enable us to confidently welcome the surrounding community to a variety of events, all with the aim of bringing people into contact with God's kingdom.

Appendix 3 - Our Ethos Statement

For the purposes of employment law regarding protected characteristics, NBC has an occupational requirement that the minister should be a Christian.

We hold to the BU Declaration of Principle:

- 1. That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws.*
- 2. That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who 'died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again the third day'.*
- 3. That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.*

We see both men and women as created in God's image and equally able to take leadership roles.

NBC members have a range of views on sexuality but on balance the church currently holds a traditional view of marriage and gender. This means we have no current plans to publicly affirm same-sex sexual relationships or to be publicly affirming of transgenderism.

However, we have a pastoral heart for, and welcome, everyone regardless of their personal situation and orientation as we are all children of God, made in the image of God and offered salvation through Christ.