



Welcome to Cornerstone Church

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Version 1.1

Last amended: October 2023

Cornerstone Church Grays is a registered charity

Registered Charity Number 1192558

Registered Office: 15 Buttell Close, Grays, RM17 6UN

www.cornerstonegrays.org



May I take this opportunity to welcome you to Cornerstone Church, whether it be to our website, in person as a visitor or as somebody who is thinking of making Cornerstone their church. I hope that we have a chance to meet in person.

Mike Walton

Minister at Cornerstone Church

Thank you so much for making the time to pick up this short leaflet to find out a little more about Cornerstone Church. Here we will give you an overview of our church life and what we're about. At appropriate places along the way we'll point you to further information.



So what is Cornerstone church like?

At one level, it's pretty normal.

It is a local church based in Grays, serving the communities of Thurrock. It does many of the things you may guess that a church might do... following Jesus, loving our neighbour, listening to His Word, praying, worshipping - the list could go on and on.

At another level though, it is extraordinary.

Not because the people of Cornerstone are uniquely special but because a genuine local church is extraordinary in God's sight.

We're told in the Bible that

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Ephesians 5:25 (NIV)

The church is *that* precious to God and therefore hugely important to us.

We are also precious because we are God's family, longing for the Lord Jesus Christ to be at the very centre of all we do. As we live together for Jesus, God wonderfully works for our good and is also made known to the communities we live in. We want it to be Jesus who is the glue that brings and sticks our family together.

And it's a good job because we're a mixed bunch. Whether that be ethnic, cultural, stage of life or church preferences there are many differences that make us a diverse group of people.

This also includes people at different stages on their spiritual path. Many individuals are clearly Christians, but we regularly have people with us who are interested but not yet believers. Some people attend Sunday worship every week through to others who come every couple of months.





We like to think that Cornerstone is for anyone and everyone. Jesus opened wide his arms to all sorts of people and said 'come to me'. We would be doing Jesus a great disservice if our attitude was any different.

A healthy church should expect to have people at different stages and places in their spiritual walk.

At the same time we want to help everyone in our church grow in their commitment to Jesus and to his family, the local church.

So how do we grow at Cornerstone?

We are convinced that we grow as we get to know and love the person of Jesus Christ better. This happens as we engage, with the Holy Spirit's help, with the Word of God (the Bible) and talk to our Heavenly Father in prayer. God uses these activities to help us joyfully live more fully for Jesus individually and as a church family together. The hope of spending eternity with Jesus grips us more fully and our lives and communities are changed in the here and now.

As a result, we are committed at Cornerstone to our life together being centred round the Bible and prayer. This is especially true of our Sunday Services, bible study groups, serving teams and sharing Jesus.



Sunday Services

God's people live for Jesus everyday but our times on a Sunday are extra special as we make time in our busy weeks to sit at the feet of Jesus together with our church family.



To help us do this, our time together will include prayers, Bible reading, preaching, singing, time to catch up with each other and, every few weeks, the sharing of the Lord's Supper together. We aim to do all this in an informal yet focused atmosphere. Knowing and following Jesus is a wonderfully purposeful thing which we want to reflect in all that we do: whether it be singing ancient hymns, contemporary songs, saying together historic creeds, listening to a meaty and biblical sermon or hearing the children telling us what they've been up to in Sunday School.

As a reflection of the diversity within our church family, we expect that some aspects of the service will suit some people more and other parts of the service will suit others in terms of style. We purposefully choose to have this mix as we believe that a church family should be made up of all types of people and this should be reflected in our time together.

Sometimes people are understandably nervous about coming along to a church gathering for the first time. We aim to be welcoming without being overwhelming and try to make our services as easy as possible to follow. Some people in our church family like to dress up smartly, and others prefer shorts and T-shirt (when the British weather allows)!



Approximately every month, many of us stay after the service to enjoy a meal together.

We've found eating together to be a really important church family time but understand that other commitments mean that some can rarely join us for lunch.

For details of when and where our Sunday Services take place, please see www.cornerstonegrays.org/services/

Children and Young People

We have special groups for children on Sunday mornings.

There is a creche room where a parent/guardian can play with

their child or children. Toys are provided and a video link is set up so the adults can follow the service the best they can.



Most weeks, a Sunday School is provided for children aged between 3 and the end of primary school. This is time where they look at the Bible themselves and see what it means for them. They also sing, play games and make things, all of which helps them get to grips with what the Bible teaches. We follow a professionally produced Safeguarding Policy, details of which are available on our website and take this responsibility very seriously.

Young people in secondary school and college (aged 11-18) are considered old enough to participate in the service. Once a month we get together for an evening of fellowship, Bible teaching and fun.

For further details please pick up a **Children and Young People Booklet** or see www.cornerstonegrays.org/children-youth



Mid week bible study groups



Part of being part of a family is making time for each other.

At Cornerstone, the 2 main places that our church family members make time for each other each week is on a Sunday morning and for an hour and a half during the week. We meet together with between 6 and 10 other people from our church family in a bible study group.

Even in a small church, it is not possible to know everybody equally well. Our bible study groups are the primary place we get to know, pray for, support and grow together in our love for Jesus.

These groups meet in people's homes and are led by members of our church family.

What will happen each week will vary somewhat. For a few weeks in a row there will be an in-depth Bible study and other times will be more focused on thinking through applications from the previous Sunday's sermon. Other weeks the time will be given over entirely to prayer and other times will be spent discussing a Christian book that has been shared together.

There will always be time for prayer, catching up and the theme will always be rooted in Scripture in some way.

For further details please pick up a **Bible Study Groups Booklet** or see www.cornerstonegrays.org/bible-study-groups



Serving Teams



Our Lord Jesus is special in so many ways; one of these is his extraordinary service. As his followers, we know that means we should be people of service too. This serving attitude will touch our lives in lots of ways and this

includes our service at Cornerstone.

Therefore we anticipate that as people settle into Cornerstone Church family life, they will also start serving in some way. Our gifts, energy and available time vary from person to person and it is important that this is taken into account but we think it is important that every Christian serves to some extent.

For further details please pick up a **Serving Teams Booklet** or see www.cornerstonegrays.org/serving-teams

Sharing Jesus with others

We usually have a number in our church family who are not yet Christians. We are convinced that the best way we can help them come to the point where they are ready to start trusting and following Jesus is by helping them engage with the Jesus of the Bible.



The same is true of people who are not Christians and have nothing to do with Cornerstone Church. Through the relationships that our church family have with people in normal life, we encourage us all to love our neighbours. Then, as we serve, we pray for and take appropriate opportunities to speak of Jesus.

For further details please pick up a **Sharing Jesus Booklet** or see www.cornerstonegrays.org/evangelism



To conclude...

These activities that have just been outlined are the bread and butter of our church life together. They don't represent all that we do or would even like to do.

However, for every Christian at Cornerstone we hope that they will make Sunday Services, bible study groups, serving teams and sharing Jesus a priority in their lives.

We totally understand that people live busy lives and have various important commitments. Therefore, for example, if somebody works on a Sunday, they won't be able to make it every Sunday morning or for some people, coming to their bible study group once a month will be the most they can manage for a time.

If you are looking into the Christian faith or are already a Christian but are trying Cornerstone out you, are very welcome to have a much more pick and mix attitude to church life. You'd be welcome to get as involved as little or as much as you want.

We have organised ourselves like this because we want to help our church family avoid two common dangers that exist in the modern church today. First, a take it or leave it attitude towards church. This is where church fits around life instead of life, where possible, fitting round church. The other common danger is where church life dominates life so much that there isn't time to do anything else.

One last thing.

Cornerstone Church, Grays works together with faithful gospel churches where possible. This includes some independent, FIEC and Church of England congregations. We rejoice and value these local partnerships.



However we consider it to be important to formally belong to an organised gospel partnership (otherwise known as a denomination). Cornerstone is pleased to belong to the Anglican Mission in England (AMiE). This is a diocese of faithful Anglican churches committed to gospel mission.



For more details about AMiE please see

www.anglicanmissioninengland.org

Our Anglican identity is important to us and can be observed in some aspects of church life. However, there are a number of folks in the Cornerstone Church family who are not at all Anglican and appreciate the biblical focus that we have and are 100% involved in church life. We hope that might include you as well.

Well, we hope this has started to give you an idea of what Cornerstone is like. If you have any questions or comments, please do ask in person over the phone or over email. Up-to-date contact details can be found at

www.cornerstonegrays.org/contact-us

Details of further information can also be found over the page.



Further information

Further information can also be found on our website or in further booklets. Below is a list of booklets and/or website links that you might find helpful.

The paper booklets will normally be available at Sunday Services on the Welcome Table and pdf versions are also available on the website.

Aims, Values and Beliefs Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/our-priorities
www.cornerstonegrays.org/our-beliefs

Bible Study Groups Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/bible-study-groups

Children and Young People Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/children-youth

Contact details and Data Privacy Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/privacy

Giving Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/giving

Membership Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/membership

Safeguarding Policy

www.cornerstonegrays.org/safeguarding

Serving Teams Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/serving-teams

Sharing Jesus with Others

www.cornerstonegrays.org/evangelism

