



www.fiveheadbaptistchurch.co.uk

Village and Community

Fivehead is a Somerset Village of approximately 650 people. In addition to the Baptist Church, there is the Parish Church and a Public House. The village post office and stores closed a few years ago but the pub now sells papers and some basic requirements. Fivehead lies 9 miles east of the County Town of Taunton, and 5 miles west of the District Centre of Langport which is described as "The heart of the Somerset Levels". The village lies on a south facing scarp and straddles the A378 that runs along the Curry Rivel ridge above the Somerset Levels and which links the M5 and A303 London to Exeter Trunk Road.

Fivehead is a corruption of five hydes, a hyde being 120 acres of land. The views to the south extend to about 20 miles towards Yeovil, Ilminster and the Blackdown Hills while to the north there are views toward the Mendip Hills, the Quantock Hills and the Bristol Channel. The Somerset coast to the north and the Dorset "Jurassic Coast" to the south are each within about 45 minutes drive.

Fivehead Baptist Church seeks to serve a number of neighbouring villages and the small towns of Langport and Ilminster with a combined population in excess of 12,000.



History

The Baptist Fellowship was founded in 1866 through the witness of a local farmer, but was not constituted as a formal church with a membership roll etc. until 1868. Its history has been long and varied but with a low point being reached in 1990, when the membership fell to 7 faithful people of prayer. Since this time, there has been steady growth with families and individuals coming into the church and a number of baptisms of those coming to Faith. About twelve years ago the Church was able to call its first full-time Baptist Minister with the aid of a small Home Missions grant. A grant also supported the second full-time pastor. After a testing couple of years, in 2017 the church called an interim part-time Pastor who retires in July 2020.

Membership

Membership over the past few years has varied between about 30 and 40; currently there are 33 members with an average weekly congregation of between 45 and 50 including around 7 to 10 children. Within the fellowship as a whole, there are a number of committed people who have not applied for formal membership but who nonetheless take an active role in the life of the church. There is a wide age range in the fellowship, from retired people to young families though at the moment there are fewer young families in the services. The majority of the young people's outreach however takes place during the week with often a good number of mothers and toddlers at Stepping Stones which is essentially a service specifically for them during the week. The other events for young people are termly film and pizza evenings attracting 20 plus children and parents, and Youth Café for teenagers from the community when the Stable Coffee Shop is open during an evening for them.



Fivehead Baptist Church at Lee Abbey

Worship and Church Life

As in many fellowships, we are drawn from a variety of church backgrounds from which we enjoy a free style of worship which is neither traditional nor charismatic. We are very much a family church gathered from the village and the surrounding area. We are evangelical in outlook and temperament. We are fully in accord with the Baptist Union Declaration of Principle. We believe the Members' Meeting to be where the church seeks the will of God under the guidance of The Holy Spirit for the life of the church and where important decisions are made. Church Meetings take place quarterly to which all are invited. However, voting, if required, is restricted to formal Members. There are annual elections by the membership for Secretary, Treasurer and Deacons.



The Stable

The Stable has been set up to provide a Community Coffee Shop where people from the village and further afield can meet. It is intended to be part of the Church outreach to the Community. In addition to tea and coffee, cakes and paninis, we sell craft gifts and there is a monthly art display from local artists. The Stable is staffed entirely by volunteers including some from the Anglican Church and the community and is open for normal hours from Wednesday lunchtime to Saturday lunchtime.

We also see The Stable as part of the Church's outreach to the Community; whilst people know it to be part of the Church, The Stable seeks to provide a warm and friendly meeting place but also with an opportunity for people to hear about Christ should they wish to. This area has also been used for Alpha courses in the evening and an occasional Contact Tea for the elderly (an outside organisation)

The income from The Stable does not fund the Church: The Stable pays its proportion of the utility costs of the church. Each year donations are made from the surplus from The Stable to a village or local cause and a developing country charity. In addition the tips are given to charities, both home and overseas. In 2019, the Stable made donations of over £1700 to agreed charities and causes at home and abroad.

The Church Buildings

The buildings are listed grade II as being of historic or architectural interest and lie within the village conservation area but have recently been modernised and reordered. The whole building was refurbished after a major fire in 2016. The Church seats approximately 100 persons and is attached to a rear hall with a recently installed new kitchen and a disabled adapted cloakroom. On the first floor above the hall there are two rooms used for youth work and meetings and an additional cloakroom. Immediately adjacent to the main building is a second building, originally stabling and external cloakrooms but adapted to provide youth rooms and storage. In recent years, the roofs of both buildings have been stripped and recovered.



About seven years ago the second building was completely altered and upgraded to provide a youth room at one end, and a coffee shop, The Stable, in the remainder of the building. Wifi is available in the Church buildings including in The Stable.

Activities

At the present time we have the following regular activities:

Sunday – 10.30am Worship.

All Age Service 3rd Sunday of the month

Communion on the 4th Sunday of the month

Monday – 10.00am Stepping Stones

(Parents and children 0 to 5 year olds)

- 7.30pm Deacons meet monthly

- Afternoon Meeting for residents St Martins (Sheltered Housing) monthly

Tuesday – 7.30pm Home Groups

Wednesday – 10.30am Women on Wednesday

Thursday – 10.00am Men on Thursday

7.30pm Youth Café (in The Stable)

Friday – Termly pizza and film evening for young people (with parents)

Saturday – 8.30am Mens' Breakfast monthly

We have ecumenical links with the Anglican Church in Fivehead and other Christian churches in surrounding parishes. There is a Christian Youth Worker (CLYP) working full time at Huish Episcopi Academy – the local Comprehensive with a widespread catchment including Fivehead. In addition we lead Assemblies periodically at two local Primary Schools. We have also funded an Oddments Theatre performance of Pilgrim's Progress in these two schools.

Look at our Photo Review of 2019 at our website – Home, Sunday, then click on “photo review of 2019”.

Finance

Since 2017 the church has supported a part time Pastor on a ¾ time appointment, but who will be retiring in July 2020. The church can continue to support this commitment allowing the possibility of the pastor pursuing other interests or an additional post. The church's current giving averages £2290 per month which equates to approximately £27500 per annum. The Gift Aid refund has boosted this to approximately £33,000. This is sufficient for us to meet our current ministerial obligations. The church accounts are subject to examination and the appropriate reports made to the Charity Commissioners (Charity No 238649).

In addition to meeting our commitments with regards to maintenance of the church buildings and the Manse we have been able to commit to regular gifts of at least 5% of our income to both Home Mission and BMS. With the help of the children's Sunday offering we also support two children in South America through the “Toybox” charity. “One off” appeals have also supported Tearfund; BMS South Sudan's Conflict Survivors and BMS (Christmas) Afghanistan Water Appeal.

The Manse

The Manse is a three bedroom detached house built around 1970, in good condition and decorative repair throughout. It has full double-glazing and oil fired central heating. Additional building work (approximately ten years ago) added a Pastor's study, a family room and a new kitchen with large dining area. An additional shower room and utility room were also added. There are sizeable gardens front and rear, good parking and a pleasant outlook over open farmland. The house is located at the end of a quiet lane close to the centre of the village and within walking distance of the Church buildings. The Manse also benefits from a substantial wooden workshop equipped with power.



Vision and Values

Our desire is to build up a body of believing people who will enable the presence, life and love of Jesus to be seen in Fivehead and its surrounds and who will work and witness for Him in obedience to His commands and leading as we seek to 'Love, Honour and Obey Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord'. Our vision is both for the village of Fivehead and the villages and communities in the wider area. In our immediate area there are no other churches with a similar style of worship.

At Fivehead Baptist Church we seek to

- reach out and serve with the love of Jesus
- encourage and enable each person to grow as passionate followers of Jesus

As a church we seek to be

Taught and shaped by what the Bible says,
Outward looking – towards one another, our community, the world,
Pursuing growth in Christian maturity (aiming to see our lives, attitudes & behaviour transformed),
Open to taking risks (in how we work out what it means to follow Jesus day to day),
A place of healing (physical, emotional or spiritual),

Open to the work and enabling of the Holy Spirit in the ways that He chooses,
Serving using the gifts we have been given,
Loving in word and deed,
Welcoming,
Prayerful (individually & corporately),
Generous (reflecting the generosity of God in all areas of our lives)

On a recent vision day the continued need for prayer was identified. Within the fellowship there are many gifts including preaching, worship leading, prayer, hospitality and pastoral care. The fellowships seeks a leader who would be supported by these gifts and would encourage and develop them within the church.

One major area of special focus is the work among young people and young families. We want to see them growing in fellowship and emerging as fully-fledged active members. In past years we have had an active group of teenagers several of whom made a Christian commitment, however they have now moved on to University, or work and consequently the majority of our young people are in a lower age range. As mentioned previously however, the Church holds a Youth Café on one evening of each week when The Stable is opened for teenagers from the community to be able to meet together safely. Engaging with local schools is an area we would wish to further develop as there is a great opportunity for outreach.

Conclusion

We hope that this profile helps to give a picture of the fellowship at Fivehead Baptist Church with the challenges we face and the opportunities we believe are before us. We believe that God has had His hand on the Church over the past years.