

Welcome Baptist Church

Centenary Celebration 1909-2009



I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Psalm 57: 9-10.

On the 25th of July 1909 Louis Bleriot a French aviator, inventor and engineer completed the first ever flight in an aircraft across the English channel receiving a £1000 prize from the Daily Mail for his historic achievement.

The fact that Bleriot flew at an average speed of 40 mph and at an average altitude of 250 ft and that the fastest planes ever built - the SR71 Blackbird - could reach 1900 mph and altitudes of 80,000 ft reminds us all how rapidly and significantly things have changed in the last 100 years. These advances through science and technology have no doubt brought innumerable benefits to us all. Yet the recent MP's expenses scandal and the current economic instability which has seen vast global institutions collapsing reminds us all that we cannot put our ultimate trust and hope in ourselves or in our institutions, irrespective of how much progress we have made.

Therefore today as we look back and celebrate 100 years of faithful witness from the Welcome we remind ourselves that we gather before our unchanging Father in Heaven whose faithfulness reaches to the skies. He alone is steadfast and true; he alone is our rock and fortress, our certain hope in a fast changing and uncertain world, yesterday, today and forever. Amen.

The Welcome Baptist Church,

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Sunday the 4th of October 2009

Morning service

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.

Psalm 95:1-2

We gather this morning to celebrate and give thanks to God for his faithfulness. As we do so we also declare our trust in God for the future looking forward in faith to his continuing guidance and provision.

The service will be led by Reverend Guy Partridge, Pastor of the Welcome Baptist Church and the sermon will be brought by The Right Reverend Wallace Benn, Bishop of Lewes.

Our time together will also include a song called Gagona which means 'No one is like you Jesus' sung by the Kabubbu Children's choir from Uganda.

In addition the following people will be welcomed into membership of the church : -

Natalie Abbott, Lauren Bayly, John Botting,
James Cole, Susannah Cole, Hannah Durrant,
Beki Hayler, Daniela Hofer,
Gabby Morrey-Jones
& Chloe Rowlinson.

Our Vision, Purpose and Values

OUR VISION: Changing people – transforming the world

The Welcome Baptist Church family seeks to reach out to all people with Christ's love. (Matthew 22:34–40).

OUR PURPOSE: To know Jesus and make him known

Our purpose is to make followers of Jesus Christ and build them into a family that is growing in diversity and unity, number and depth. (Matthew 28:16–20; 1 Corinthians 12:12–30)

OUR VALUES:

The Baptist Union of Great Britain, of which we are part, is made up of over 2000 congregations and whilst we hold to the wider Baptist beliefs, the five core values below describe our own distinctive character through which we hope to participate in God's kingdom work. (2 Chronicles 7:14; Matthew 6:9–15)

The motto '**A Church Without Walls**' in a nutshell embraces who we want to be.

Intergenerational. We are a diverse group of individuals, both young and old, who believe our purpose and vision will only be achieved through growing together as a Jesus centred family. We therefore seek to respect and value everyone, irrespective of age encouraging integration, involvement, interdependence, mutual learning, cooperation and interaction wherever possible. Deuteronomy 6: 1–9; Mark 9:35; Galatians 3:26–29; Ephesians 1:10 & 4:1–6; Hebrews 2:11)

Welcoming. The phrase 'Belong, Believe, Behave' summarises our attitude towards one another. Therefore we strive to create a positive accepting atmosphere where people feel included, encouraged, supported and nurtured. A place where people will feel safe to explore the Christian faith yet will also be challenged to accept Christ and then grow in Christ-like behaviour. (Mark 9:36–37; Luke 15:1–2; Hebrews 13:1–2)

Relevant. We strive to develop disciples who have an inquisitive yet robust faith that enables them to confidently live out and authentically integrate their faith into every aspect of their lives, whether that be at home, leisure, school or work. (Matthew 5:16; Romans 12:1–2)

Real. We recognise that life is not without its hardships and complexities and in desiring to build credible and lasting faith we encourage people to be honest, open and vulnerable both with God and one another; thereby growing in trust and trustworthiness. (2 Corinthians 1:3–7; James 5:16; Romans 12: 9–21)

Passionate. This is a value that underlies everything we do. So whether together or apart, we seek to be passionate in our relationship with Christ, his people and his purposes. This is a way of living that demands sacrifice, commitment and devotion both to God's word the Bible and to prayer. (Luke 22:1–6; Acts 2:42–47)

Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Daniel 12 verse 3



Esther Bell

WELCOME BAPTIST CHURCH

History

The Welcome Baptist Church, originally known as Gilbert Chapel, has its roots in the Independent Chapel at nearby Punnetts Town, which was started in the late 18th century by "The Apostle to Sussex" - George Gilbert - a converted soldier who served under Lord Heathfield. Following its foundation on December the 12th 1886 the work initially flourished in Alexandra Road. However, by the turn of the century things were not going so well. In 1909 the Gilbert Chapel was bought by Miss Esther Bell of Eastbourne, who had been leading a fellowship known as the Welcome Mission that met at the time in a tin shed close to the site of the Heathfield fire station.

At the time of the purchase Miss Bell added a baptistry, and the Gilbert Chapel became The Welcome Mission. Throughout the 20's, 30's, 60's and early 70's several alterations and extensions to the building were carried out. During this period the name was changed to The Welcome Evangelical Free Church. 1974 saw the main building completely renovated with new roof, walls and windows to meet the changing demands of the latter part of the century.

In 1995 the Church ended its period of independence from any denomination and became the Welcome Baptist Church, a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.