

HOPE CHURCH

Sittingbourne



Questions and Answers



And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:16-20 (ESV)

Introduction

As the time approaches to send a group of our dear friends to pioneer into Sittingbourne, a few people have been asking questions relating to the nature of the new work so we thought we would outline some of the things we are sure of, some of the things we are aiming for in faith and how we anticipate things unfolding.

It is with this in mind that we have put together this Questions & Answers booklet (taken from a similar idea used by our friends at Church on the Weald, Tenterden) that we trust you will find helpful.

We have tried to answer as many questions as we can but should you still have anything you are still unsure about please feel free to speak directly to Gordon Watson (info@hopesittingbourne.org) or Adam Voke (adam@cornerstonecity.co.uk).

What will it all look like?

What are the differences between church plants and multi-site?

A **church plant** is part of the process of establishing a new church, with its own contextual vision. Once established the new church would be overseen by a new eldership team who would be responsible for the new church before God.

A **multi-site church** is when a church, overseen by an existing central eldership team, has their main church meeting in different locations for the purpose of gathering more people, usually in a fairly close geographical area. A multi-site church usually encourages its members to gather to each site based on their geographic locality.

Is Hope Church Sittingbourne a multi-site or a church plant?

We believe God has prophetically called Cornerstone City Church to plant churches (like a strawberry plant) and that this pioneering work into Sittingbourne is part of that call to plant. It is our intention that the work into Sittingbourne will grow to become a vibrant and healthy self-sustaining church.

Cornerstone City Church do not currently have a wealth of pre-existing resources on the ground in Sittingbourne or a swathe of people travelling over from Sittingbourne to worship with us in Medway – With this considered a multi-site strategy would not be appropriate.

Why are we doing it?

Our driving principle for planting churches is to join God in His mission to make disciples through proclaiming and demonstrating the good news of Jesus Christ. We are also responding to what we feel God has prophetically called us to do as part of our 'Huddle & Break' season at Cornerstone City Church (Visit www.bit.ly/huddleword to read the prophetic background to this). As we send our friends in faith to pioneer a new work it creates space for others to step forward, to grow and to flourish in their own unique way - As a result the Kingdom of God advances both locally and beyond!



"God says to you there's going to be a lot of; it's like strawberry plants as it were. I see your church planting into towns and cities around you (I don't know if there are cities around you but,) I see towns all around you.....I see your church planting, and planting, and planting."

Julian Adams (2008)



How do I know if I'm called to go?

Called is shorthand for a growing sense and confidence in God's direction for you. While this sometimes comes through hearing an audible voice, God more often guides us through a variety of means (prophetic words, advice from others, the Bible and even our own desires) which lead us to discern the direction God is taking us.

One of the ways we suggest you test any possible call to the work in Sittingbourne is to attend the upcoming 'Exploring Hope Project' to get a feel for what is happening. If you do think that God may be stirring you to be involved in any capacity please speak to Gordon or Natalie Watson who can help you walk through anything God may be saying, and if needed weigh it with the elders of Cornerstone City Church.

Hope Church Sittingbourne will not be starting with a congregational Sunday gathering like the one we enjoy at MidKent College, but rather gathering in homes regularly throughout the week.

The Hope Church team will be laying foundations in prayer, knitting hearts together over meals and getting a prophetic sense as to the contextual places and spaces Jesus would have this new community reach out to as they learn their new surroundings.

They plan to live open lives of hospitality amongst their neighbours, inviting people into the rhythms of their daily lives and trusting that Jesus will make Himself known in heart-after-heart, again and again!



Who is going to Sittingbourne?

As of 31st January 2018, those that have confirmed they are moving to Sittingbourne to pioneer Hope Church Sittingbourne are:

- Gordon & Natalie Watson (with Holly, Lewis & Kai)
- Steve & Stella Baughan

The team are already in contact with several interested people and have received several invitations to share about the Sittingbourne adventure more widely with other churches in Kent - This may lead to an increase of the team before the summer.

What are the timeframes?

From April 2018, the pioneering team will start to gather regularly with those that are exploring the call to go to Sittingbourne.

The Watsons plan to list their home for sale in April 2018 with the intent of moving to Sittingbourne in late June/early July 2018. Steve & Stella plan to move to Sittingbourne in September 2018.

If the time-frames above go to plan then Gordon will be '*de-elderred*' some-time in the Summer of 2018 (don't worry it's not as painful as it sounds!)

Will those that go still attend CCC?

The short answer is probably not. The likelihood is that those that are going will be prioritising their local context after they've moved. Our friends will always be welcome to come and worship with us and we'll be inviting those that have gone to return on occasion to share news and updates with us.

There will be several opportunities to gather together throughout the year at events like ENOUGH, LEAD training and other Relational Mission or Kent cluster gatherings. We trust we will continue to enjoy great ongoing relationships moving forward!

What will the relationship between CCC and Hope Church look like?

Cornerstone City Church will take primary responsibility for supporting the church-plant and its team until it establishes its own eldership (this could take several years).

Adam Voke will be the apostles delegate for Hope Church Sittingbourne on Mike Betts behalf. This is a natural relationship with Adam and Gordon having worked very closely together for the last decade. There will also be a team of leaders from across other Relational Mission Kent churches offering meaningful practical support and input - We can do more together than apart!

Using the prophetic imagery of a strawberry plant: Hope Church Sittingbourne is like a runner shooting out from Cornerstone City Church. Initially there will be a stronger level of support from CCC as the parent church but once HCS has begun to establish its own roots and is becoming increasingly less dependent on resources from CCC the level of sending support will naturally diminish and HCS will be firmly established as an independent but interrelated Relational Mission church with its own eldership and distinct contextual mission.

Initially HCS will operate under the governance of CCC's Management Team. HCS will at some future point be registered as an independent charitable trust with its own trustees who will manage its own finances and legal responsibilities as a registered charity.

How can I support from a distance?

Here are some suggestions of practical support you can offer in an informal capacity that will really bless those that are going:

Pray... If you sign up to our webmail we'll also list appropriate prayer requests on there

Keep in touch... It's going to be lonely at times!

Remember birthdays... Send our team birthday cards with personal encouragements (especially the kids!). You can send presents too - Same applies at Christmas!

Extend invitations... Meet up for coffee, go out for food, watch a film

We plan on having a couple of occasions in the lead up to the summer to gather people in Sittingbourne for prayer and to get a sense of what God might be saying – If this is something you would be interested in then please email info@hopesittingbourne.org and we'll make sure you get sent the dates!

Can I support on Sundays?

Although the team don't envisage having a public congregational gathering for the first 9/12 months... we obviously can't predict the future!

It is likely that the team will need some help with supporting congregational gatherings with people needed for teams such as welcome, refreshments and worship (especially those that can play instruments!).

We have already had several offers of practical support ranging from starting a community choir in Sittingbourne to supporting Sunday gatherings for a month or two through to up-to 12 months!!!

The Hope Church Sittingbourne team are hoping to draw practical support from our three closest Relational Mission churches:

- Faversham Community Church
- The Vine Maidstone
- Cornerstone City Church

If you feel stirred to offer support please email info@hopesittingbourne.org with a short outline of the type of support you would like to offer and the team will be in touch fairly soon to have a chat.

Is there financial support in place?

CCC have committed to keeping Gordon as an employed staff member for a period of 12 months at 3 days a week. This will financially enable Gordon & Natalie to prioritise pioneering Hope Church Sittingbourne without having to take on alternative full or part-time employment.

We will also be ensuring adequate supply lines of relational, emotional and strategic support are in place for all of the pioneering team, including the children.

All financial and practical support will be periodically reviewed and adjusted as appropriate in discussion with the team in Sittingbourne, the CCC elders and trustees and those Relational Mission Kent churches that are partnering with us.



How can I financially support Hope Church Sittingbourne?

Cornerstone City Church will be overseeing and managing any financial gifts toward Hope Church Sittingbourne that may come in from individuals and other churches or organisations offering support.

We have setup an online giving fund via ChurchSuite (www.bit.ly/givetoHope) where you can securely give one-off gifts or commit to a regular monthly gift towards the work of Hope Church Sittingbourne. We can also claim gift-aid on your behalf of an extra 25p for every £1 given, if you are a UK tax payer.

All donations will be kept in a reserved fund which the HCS team can request access to for purchasing items such as outreach events, flyers, banners, PA equipment, hall hire, training resources and other planting associated costs – All spending requests will be signed off in accordance with our CCC memorandum and articles.

How can I keep in the loop?

Hope Church Sittingbourne have the following social media profiles should you wish to keep up-to date with all that's going on in their preparations, what you can pray for and opportunities to practically get involved:

Website	www.hopesittingbourne.org
Facebook	www.facebook.com/HopeSittingbourne
Twitter	www.twitter.com/HopeChurchME10
Instagram	www.instagram.com/hopesittingbourne
YouTube	www.youtube.com/channel/UCnRG4piM0Suy1d18xdQ7yjw

There will be some form of semi-regular webmail for Hope Church Sittingbourne which you can sign up to receive via the website..



How can I prepare myself now for future opportunities to pioneer in Kent or beyond?

The call to plant churches is upon us as a church and as Relational Mission churches in Kent – This is not a calling for the select few... we all have to play our part! We therefore want to provide as much opportunity for everyone to be involved in future church planting initiatives that might emerge in the future.

We have a Pioneer group at CCC that meets to help those with an embryonic sense of being 'called to go' to gather together for encouragement, training and prayer towards that end – If you would like to be part of the Pioneer group then please let Adam Voke know.

HOPE CHURCH

Sittingbourne

Some of our early prophetic encouragements



*A church built around
the word HOPE*



*Bringing freedom
Bringing joy
Bringing HOPE*



*A work that is wider
than Sittingbourne*

HOPE CHURCH

Sittingbourne



Believing



Following



Worshipping



Planting



Establishing



Growing



Reaching