HOPE.

WHO WE ARE

Exploring the words God has spoken & how we've formed

WHAT DEFINES US

Those special distinctives that make us unique

WHAT WE DO

Some of the ways we're demonstrating hope, & how you could too!

HOPE CHURCH
SITTINGBOURNE

Our coffee

HOW TO
HANDLE THE
WORD

We are part of the
relational
mission
Family of Churches
relationalmission.org
facebook.com/RMchurches
@RMchurches
newfrontiers

WE DON'T RUSH
Our coffee
relational
mission

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KEEPING CONNECTED

WORDS OF HOPE...

Welcome!

We're glad you've been able to join us today & trust that you've been made to feel welcome, encountering the presence of God through the love & devotion of His gathered people.

Please receive this small welcome brochure as a bit of a brief introduction to the life of our growing church community. We hope that the stories & pictures shared within will give you a small glimpse into the type of church family we aspire to become.

We absolutely love it when new friends come along & join us for the journey, so if you have any questions about anything at all regarding church life, what we believe or how you can get involved beyond Sundays, then please do come and say hello and ask either of us directly.

We hope we'll have the opportunity to get to know you much more in the days ahead.

Grace & peace to you,

Gordon & Natalie Watson

“

HOPE CHURCH SITTINGBOURNE EXISTS TO...

MULTIPLY THE **HOPE** OF JESUS IN THE HEARTS OF EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE, EVERYDAY.

”

WE DEFINE HOPE AS DISCIPLES WHO OBSERVABLY...

HONOUR JESUS

We recognise Jesus as the King of our lives.

We intentionally honour the person of Jesus & His rule & reign in our everyday lives.

OBEY HIS WORD

There are two authorities in the life of a disciple; the Word of God & the Spirit of God.

We encourage one another to read Gods Word (the Bible) & follow the leading of His Holy Spirit as He inspires us towards faithful obedience & lasting transformation.

PRAY BEYOND THEMSELVES

Prayer is the oxygen of the Christian life.

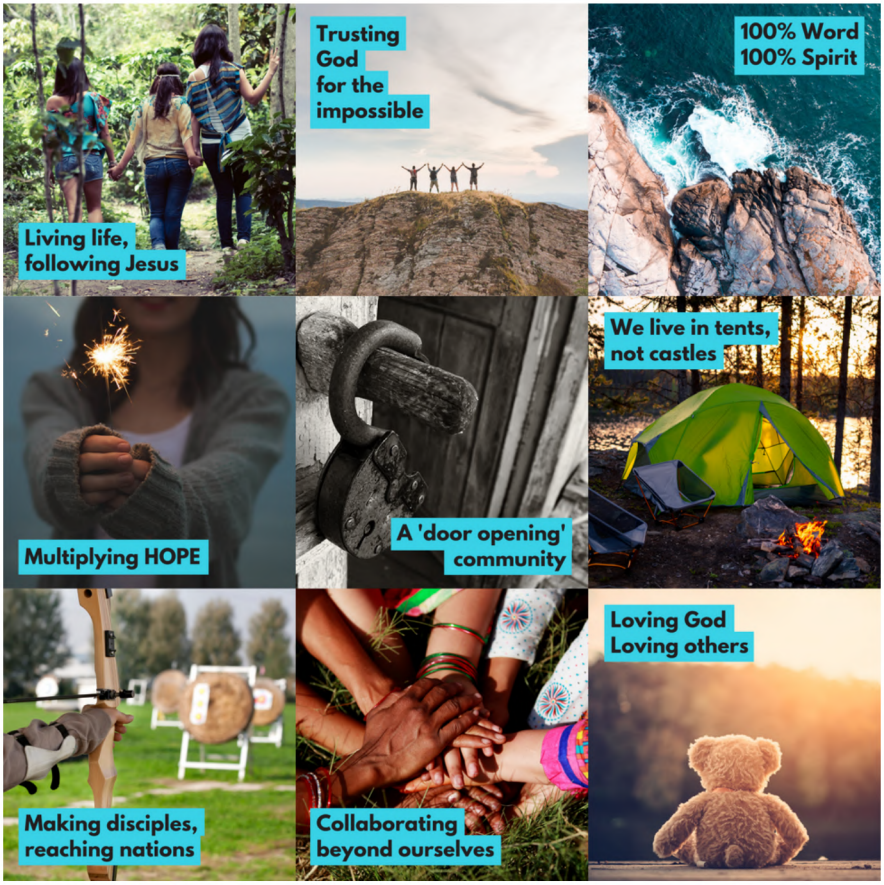
We aspire to be a people who not only pray for one another, but who's spiritual hearts & minds are focused on the condition & needs of our wider world, including those whom Jesus has placed us among.

EVERYONE A WITNESS

We each have personal stories to share of Jesus at work in our everyday lives.

We encourage one another towards Gospel confidence, so that Jesus Christ might be made known to everyone, everywhere, everyday through His words, works & wonders.

OUR 9 VALUES OF HOPE...



When our family first moved to Sittingbourne in May 2018 it was in faith, believing that Jesus had called us to follow Him on a *family faith adventure*, to plant a thriving New Testament church right in the heart of Sittingbourne.

We look back & can't believe how much Jesus has done since then. Many new friends have responded to similar calls & become part of this exciting new family of hope.

Together we look ahead & dare to believe Jesus for much more, trusting Him for the fulfilment of all that He has promised as we each obediently follow Jesus & the leading of His Spirit.

GORDON & NATALIE WATSON

HOPE IS A BARGE, NOT A SPEEDBOAT...

One of the things we love as a church is the role of the prophetic in bringing clarity and direction for the journey ahead.

On Friday, 29th June 2018 at the Relational Mission ENOUGH prayer event, Hope Church Sittingbourne received over 100 postcards from across the nations filled with personal encouragements, biblical verses, prayers and prophetic pictures/words.

One word in particular grabbed the hearts and imagination of our embryonic community of Hope.

God wants us to "be more like a barge than a speedboat".

Those of you that know me well (Gordon) will understand that I am someone that tends to operate more like a speedboat than a barge - I can very quickly get hold of an idea and speed off in that general direction, going from zero to 100mph in seconds, sometimes (maybe often!?!) leaving others behind, wondering where the sudden shift of momentum came from.

So to receive a word that encourages me to operate contrary to my default setting, becoming a bit more dependent on those around me and to lean into God, well, it's quite a powerful word, and probably the sort of word that God would give to a guy wired like me in a season like the one we've recently entered into.

But not that this word revolves solely around me, no, far from it!

This word was given to us as a community to shape and mould the way we function and relate, and I love that about the prophetic, it has the power, when heard with ears of faith, to bring clarity and direction to a whole people collectively as well as each of us individually.

Of course every picture can be pushed to the n'th degree, but the amazing thing about this image was that our family went on a barge holiday in the summer of 2016. We learnt so much about one another and about the journey of bargeman-ship (is that even a word!?) that this is a picture that we can easily grasp as a family as we've already experienced some of the highs (and a few of the lows!) of living life together on the barge.

When God speaks a word it is often to bring comfort and confidence so that when things get disheartening you have something to hold onto.

Following on the next page are a few things we think this barge image might mean for us moving forward...

On-and-off-and-on again
With a barge people can get on-and-off-and-on again - For us as a fairly new church we're to be happy and comfortable with the reality that many people are going to pop along for a season, maybe just once, maybe on-and-off. They may disappear for a while, then they may reappear again... and that's ok!

We've already had friends come and friends go, some have stuck, some haven't, some have been dependable and consistent, others less-so, but when God speaks a word like this one it radically changes your perspective, away from yourselves and onto Him.

Not everyone gets on the barge
Sometimes people walk alongside the barge on the canal path having a chat about the next section, but they never get on-board.

We've made a number of great local friends who we so wish would personally catch the vision of seeing a thriving New Testament church established here in Sittingbourne, give their lives to that vision, roll up their sleeves and come join us... but they're about other business.

We've loved making new friends who have helped us get our bearings in a strange new land, and the barge picture helps us have a realistic expectation that life on the barge isn't intended for everyone, and that's ok!

Everyone gets to play!
On a barge everyone usually gets to have a go at most things - There are no specialists on the barge. There's no platform. No crowd to try and impress. There are times when different people get to be Captain and steer the boat, and it's all hands on deck at meal times and as the hard work of navigating multiple locks approaches.

Everyone gets off and helps when you approach the locks or when you need to moor up somewhere to sleep or go wandering (either on adventure, to the shops, or to find a toilet... sometimes all three!).

The spirit of collaboration and everyone being willing to participate is essential on the barge. There isn't much room for passengers who aren't prepared to make a cup of tea, play a board game or lend a hand to a shipmate who's in need of help - On the barge we all pull together in unity, purpose and direction.

Enjoy the journey
On a barge there are occasional times when you have to just get your head down and make it to the next checkpoint, but the main aim of the barge is not to zoom from A-to-B (like a speedboat might!), but rather to enjoy the journey from A-to-B as much as the final destination itself.

There are unexpected wonders and experiences to be encountered if we might intentionally slow down and embrace the unique journey of the barge. There are times when you pull over and enjoy a walk together. There are times when you moor up and enjoy a night at a newly discovered pub together. There are times when you all settle down and tell stories, or sing songs together - No one gets left behind and you all pull in the same direction, even when you're feeling tired and grumpy and haven't had much rest - The best atmosphere to nurture on a barge is one of fun and friendship.

Enjoy one another & enjoy Jesus
The whole point of being on a barge holiday is to enjoy one another's company, more-so than even the surroundings. You literally live every moment of every day in each other's pockets. It's intimate, it's intense, there's nowhere to hide, and with Jesus in the centre it's both formative and transformational.

As a community we're to make sure we don't default to just thinking of church as an event that we go to on a Sunday, or a group that we attend mid-week, but that we embrace the 24/7 nature of barge-like discipleship. There is such joy to be discovered in being a people that give ourselves to living our lives in union and communion with one another and with Jesus.

We've lived with this prophetic word of the barge for several years now, yet this simple picture continues to bring depth, clarity and direction; shaping and forming us in the ways God intends as we each try to faithfully outwork being a New Testament church community.

Being completely honest, this word has also helped temper my own inclinations to push the throttle down, speeding off with ideas and creating a disruptive wake behind me, potentially leaving everyone behind. God has spoken clearly, and we're to remain intentionally faithful in the philosophy of how He has called us to be.

I can't wait to look back in years to come and see the fruit of our trusting God at His prophetic promises to us as a community, as we each play our part and believe Him in being "more like a barge than a speedboat".

WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

...written by Natalie Watson

"To change your life, love yourself. To change your community, love others. To change the world, love everyone."

Matshona Dhliwayo

We might sometimes think of community as the area where we live, or perhaps the social friendships we enjoy with neighbours and work colleagues, or maybe the local life that is evident across an estate, a village, town or city.

The New Testament book of Acts paints us a somewhat different and much more compelling image of what community could look like.

The followers of Jesus (the Bible calls them disciples) were in and out of each others hearts and homes daily. They consistently supported one another through trials and struggles, they joyfully shared their time, their talent and their treasure with one another so that no one was overlooked.

These believers also shared their innermost hopes and fears, their joy and their grief, and they were known by their wider world for how they genuinely loved one another.

This is the type of community life we aspire to reproduce here in Sittingbourne... it is what the whole world needs, a foretaste of heaven!

"Love one another, just as I have loved you, you are to love one another. By this all people will know you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Jesus - John 13:34-35

For this type of community to exist, everyone needs to play their vital part. We aren't to consider ourselves as members of a group or a club, where we come and go as we please, but rather we are a family, intentionally outworking daily life together with Jesus, especially when life gets hard... that's when we truly need community!

So how might you play your vital part in fostering such community life?

Join in, forge friendships, keep in regular contact, meet up, participate, share how you are really doing, pray for the community, and practically demonstrate care within it, especially where there is need.

HOPE DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS...

RUNNING PARTNERS

"WHERE 2 OR 3 ARE GATHERED IN MY NAME, THERE I AM IN THE MIDST OF THEM..."
JESUS (MATTHEW 18:20)

We encourage one another to intentionally forge mutually accountable relationships with a handful of trusted friends.

It is in these smaller settings that we invite one another to speak into our lives as we outwork our mission of honouring Jesus, obeying His Word, praying beyond ourselves and everyone being a witness to the work of Jesus in their lives.

We believe that being authentically known, both by God and one another, leads to powerful life transformation when done together with the Holy Spirit.

HOUSEHOLDS

"HOUSEHOLDS ARE GROUPS OF BELIEVERS THAT ARE SMALL ENOUGH TO CARE, YET LARGE ENOUGH TO DARE..."

Our vision is to see multiple households of faith established across Sittingbourne, each one expressing and outworking our collective mission of multiplying the HOPE of Jesus in the communities of Milton, Kemsley, Tunstall, Borden, Bobbing, Murston, Teynham, Highsted, Bapchild, Ospringe and Rodmersham.

The life of these interconnected households of faith centres around the New Testament practices of eating together, playing together, praying together, going on mission together and sharing resources.

SUNDAYS

Since Sunday, 21st October 2018 we've gathered together weekly on Sunday mornings at Costa Coffee in The Forum Shopping Centre near Sittingbourne High Street.

Our Sundays together have a contemporary and modern feel. There is usually good coffee with a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

Our growing community is a diverse and eclectic blend of different nations and generations who believe in outworking New Testament church life, so as we gather together we believe everyone has a part to play; we encourage participation, conversation and lots of fun!

We usually meet for just over an hour. Our time together is a combination of celebration and live sung worship to God (as Father, Son & Spirit), practical encouragement, prayer, an inspirational talk from the Bible, usually followed by engaging table discussions.

We believe that 'the imagination of God is amongst His people', so when we gather together, everyone has a vital part to play in helping everyone else to discover, experience and encounter God.

For more info visit...

www.hopesittingbourne.org/sundays

"WE CAN DO FAR MORE TOGETHER THAN WE CAN APART."

TERRY VIRGO
NEWFRONTIERS

Wendy Martin (Swale CAP Debt Help Manager) visiting us at HOPE...

> *CAP dont just support their clients in resolving their problem debt. Together with partner churches, CAP empowers their clients to break free from worry & fear, finding confidence and hope again.*

CAP DEBT HELP

Lifting the weight of debt across Sittingbourne.

Hope Church Sittingbourne is one of several partner churches enabling our local Swale CAP DEBT Centre to provides debt help completely free of charge.

There are many different routes to get out of debt. CAP support their clients through all the suitable options based on their circumstances, from which they can choose the best route to becoming debt free.

For more info visit...

www.hopesittingbourne.org/debthelp

PRAYING BEYOND OURSELVES...

Hope Church Sittingbourne aspire to be a praying church rather than a church that prays.

PRAYER

> *Jesus put His energies into teaching people how to pray. Prayer is something we can learn, and it's something we need to learn, and it's something that Jesus is keen that we learn.*

MIKE BETTS

RELATIONAL MISSION - A WAY OF LIFE

We believe that prayer is the oxygen of the Christian life, and that our prayer life should not be boundaried around our own personal or church life, but rather we are to look expansively and pray beyond ourselves.

PRAYING FOR OUR TOWN

There are over 65,000 people who live in and around Sittingbourne. Our heart is that every single person will have opportunity to encounter Jesus through His words, works and wonders.

PRAYING FOR OUR EXTENDED FAMILY

We pray for, and with, our local Sittingbourne Churches Together as well as for local Christian organisations serving the town, such as Swale Foodbank and the local CAP services. We also pray for our Relational Mission family across Swale, wider Kent and across the nations.

PRAYING FOR THE NATIONS

Every church should have both a local and a global mission. Several times a year we join as one with 1,000s of other believers across Relational Mission and Newfrontiers in praying together for Kingdom endeavours across the globe as part of our ENOUGH prayer initiative.

ENOUGH Home Hub

KEEPING CONNECTED

INFO ON OUR WEBSITE, SHARED CALENDAR & SOCIAL CHANNELS...

In a fast-paced digital age, staying connected with other believers and the life of the church is as important as ever!

Since the beginning of COVID-19 in March 2020 we've been very intentional in making as much information about our daily life as a church community available & up-to date via our Hope Church Sittingbourne website.

If you head to the INFO header, there you'll find links to several pages on our website which each communicate essential information on whats coming up and when.

For more info visit...

www.hopesittingbourne.org

LATEST INFO

Here you will find a list of blog style entries, each one speaking into the life of the church. It's both a great way of finding out what's coming up, but also acts as a historical record of everything we've done together over the months and years.

NEWSLETTER

We aim to send out a monthly newsletter via email. Here you can view our latest newsletter and also sign-up to be directly emailed our hot-off-the-press newsletters as soon as they're published.

CALENDAR

Our integrated calendar lists all of our upcoming events and groups, featuring all relevant links and passcodes to any online gatherings.

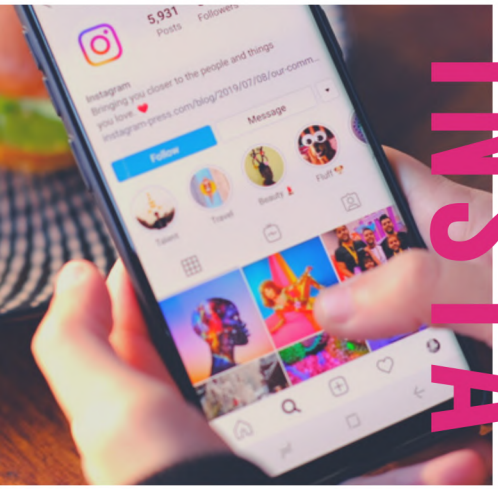
FACEBOOK

FOLLOW OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

Our Hope Church Sittingbourne Facebook page is an essential like if you want to be able to engage with our Livestream services.

We also share news & information about wider events via our Facebook page.

INSTA



FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM

We use Instagram to share BIG news, inspirational stories and engaging visual content.

If you find pictures easier to process than words, then Insta is a great way to keep up-to speed with all things Hope Church Sittingbourne.

@hopesittingbourne

HOPE HUB

FOR THE EVERYDAY CONVERSATIONS

HOPE Hub is our very own app where daily conversations happen. You can request prayer, be encouraged by a worship song, some Bible verses, catch up on recent podcasts plus hearing what's going on in other people's lives too!

Please ask Gordon or Natalie if you would like to be added.

GENEROSITY IS POWERFUL...

It changes the life of the giver and the world around them.

At Hope Church Sittingbourne we are passionate about living generously as a whole community. We have realised that our mission to impact our town, the surrounding region and the world beyond can not be achieved without it.

We value stewardship... We believe that everything we have belongs to God and we are only looking after (or are stewards of) what God has entrusted us. It is with this in mind that we encourage people to give joyfully, generously and regularly in proportion to their income.

It takes resources to fulfil all that God has called us to do, so lets each ask God what we could do to play our unique part in practically resourcing our collective mission as Hope Church Sittingbourne.

Many give directly from their bank account by regular standing order. Giving in this way means that those with responsibility for stewarding our finances have the benefit of knowing that an assured amount will be available each month.

Tithing (giving 10% of our income) is a commitment that many of us have decided to undertake in faith.

If you are a UK tax payer, please do also complete the online Gift Aid form via our website. Gift Aid is a government initiative which means that for every £1 you give, we can claim an extra 25p from the HMRC at no extra cost to you - This makes your giving go that much further!

For more info visit...

www.hopesittingbourne.org/give

Legal & governance...

Hope Church Sittingbourne is a registered UK charity (#1186867) and operates within the legal framework of the Charity Commission and the HMRC.

All finances and assets are stewarded by our trustees and spiritual leadership. Our financial accounts are audited externally and available as a public document via the Charity Commission website.

Sabbath

We are part of the
relational
mission
THE
HARVE
LEADING PEOPLE TO
PARIS

relational mission

www.hopesittingbourne.org