

### Who are you?

We are a small sized, established Anglican Church that is seeking to transform lives in Houghton with the love of Jesus Christ. We exist to help people grow in their faith, multiply (tell people about Jesus), serve our community and help people belong in a loving Church family. Our values underpin who we are – we act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God. We are a community of faith from many backgrounds called to live our faith within an imperfect community. We seek to be an inter-generational church, seeing the value of faith in all ages and stages. We are committed to work with our local school and wider community.

We are part of a team of churches, the Cornerstone Team and collectively we are committed to the principles of being a Resourcing Church

### Where are you going?

We pray and desire that we head towards our big vision of seeing many lives in Houghton transformed by the love of Jesus Christ. This means new people coming to faith but also those who know Jesus would have their lives continually transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. We pray we hold to our foundations and values and that we sit under the authority of Scripture as we undertake this incredible mission. We are committed to growing faith in our children and young people, strengthening the link between faith in school, the home and church. To that end we employ a Growing Faith Minister.

Our priorities for the next 3 years centre around church planting and evangelism; impacting our village with the love of Jesus Christ; making our church a place where people know they belong. We seek in all this to be a visible presence in our village.

### Where have you come from?

St Catharine's has been in its current location since around the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. There has been a Gospel witness in the village for a long time! More recently St Catharine's was helped in growth by a Church Graft over 10 years ago. Since then St Catharine's has been part of the Cornerstone Team of churches seeking to reach our surrounding area with the good news of Jesus Christ. We had a larger congregation prior to Covid.

### What are you doing now?

Evangelism – we are committed to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with our community. We have run courses helping people to explore Christianity. We also run Explore@home – a gathering of families that meets every 3 weeks to eat, play and read a biography of Jesus' life (Mark's gospel)

Discipleship – we run weekly Life Groups where people can go deeper in their faith as well as providing a place of care and support. We run a fortnightly youth Bible study and our Growing Faith Minister runs after school clubs in 3 schools in the Vine's Academy. Belonging – we have begun and developed a growing pastoral care team that seeks to pastor and care for those in our congregation and village.

Serving – we have a very pro-active practical care team that seeks to serve the pastoral needs of our congregation and the village. We run a drop in youth group in the village. We are also beginning the process of re-ordering the church to make it a more usable community building. Several members of the Church are actively serving in supporting the wider community, through organisations such as Open Hands.



Finances stable, but no new  
givers (existing members giving  
more)

'Explore' event each month.

had around 30 people attend  
to read man's Gospel, eat, & play  
mostly non-children.



**Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?**

We see the kingdom of God where people are living with Jesus as their king. We see this in the day to day journey of faith in people as they seek to bring their lives more and more under the lordship of Jesus. We see the kingdom of God at our school through after school clubs, as the faith of children is nurtured.

**What are you fearful about?**

That the Minister Community model will hinder growth and stop us from building on the really good work that has happened over many years. We are also concerned over the future of the Church of England with regard to LLF. We also worry about the impact of Minister Communities on our desires to reorder the church.

**What are you hopeful for?**

Unity in the Church of England, but not at the expense of Biblical truth. We are hopeful that in time Explore becomes a regular worshipping community of believers. We are hopeful our re-ordering will progress and ultimately put us in more contact with people through which we can share Jesus Christ, and support and serve people. We hope that people will grow and develop their giftings, especially we hope for the growth of new leaders.

**How you can pray for us.**

We keep the main thing, the main thing, That is knowing Jesus and making him known.

That we can engage well in the Minister Community process whilst not allowing it to distract us from ministry here in Houghton.

That we would progress with the re-ordering.

That our numbers of givers would increase and we would remain a generous church.

Struggling For new volunteers  
for church activities



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Church name: HOPE HAMILTON CHURCH

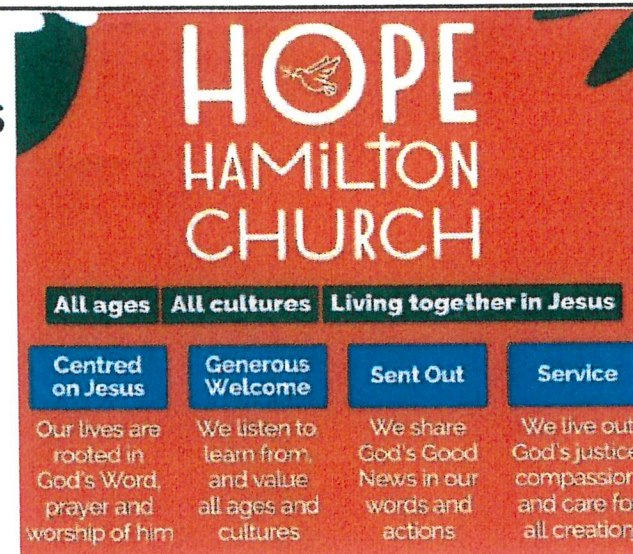
Date: 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023**Who are you?**

20-25 adults and 10-20 kids on a Sunday (families with fewer single people and those aged 60+)

A mix of:

*cultural backgrounds,  
stages of faith,  
church backgrounds*

An 'Intercultural Worshipping Community' (a Diocesan project)

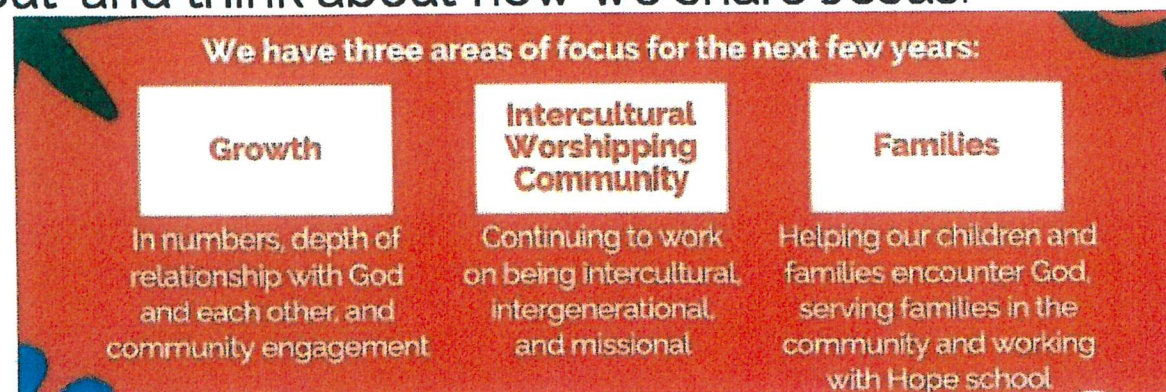
**Where have you come from?**

Established as a new plant / Fresh Expression in 2004. Starting up the church was very pioneering, outward and mission minded with a pattern of traditional Sunday worship not yet established. In the 2010s the church became much more established. We remained outward looking, but most notably through stronger links with the school where we worship.

We have always been a fluid community as people move into and out of the estate.

**Where are you going?**

In 2022 we went 'Further up and further in' with God and each other. In 2023 we are looking to go 'Further out' and think about how we share Jesus.

**What are you doing now?**

Rebuilding after a vacancy during Covid and some significant change in membership  
Continuing to go deeper into our vision and values (which we created together in 2021)

Strong school links (weekly assembly, Governors, events and gifts at festival times)

Community events e.g. litterpicking, shared meals  
A weekly 'Places of Welcome' café in the school.  
Midweek groups, monthly family tea, and more!



We have questions  
but little fear



### Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?

In our children and families.  
Exciting Christmas events in 2022 helped us see new people join us for craft afternoons and carol services. People attending church more regularly and new people joining us from the community.  
In trying lots of new things – feeling able to take risks for God.  
Inter-generational and inter-cultural relationships / friendships forming

### What are you hopeful for?

Growth, especially for new Christians.  
The housing estate at Thorpebury and the new opportunities there.  
More opportunities to serve our community in Hamilton.  
Continuing to learn more about each other's cultures and becoming more intercultural as a church.

### What are you fearful about?

Our resources for the future.  
Whether we will get lost among the bigger churches.  
Having people with enough energy to continue to step up and serve.

### How you can pray for us.

*Taken from our church prayer:*  
Make Jesus the centre of our lives.  
Grow and strengthen us in our diversity.  
Give us confidence to share your good news.  
Lead us to those who are in need.  
God, be at work in our lives, our church, and our community of Hamilton: hear our prayer.



**Who are you?**

- ❖ We are a family of God.
- ❖ We recognize that the majority of us are of the older generation and comfortable in our space.
- ❖ We worship in fellowship and embrace new ideas of worship
- ❖ We have a tradition that has developed over recent years

**Where have you come from?**

- ❖ We are a friendly, rural community within a population of 300
- ❖ We are a place where our worship is important and where our relationship with God is important
- ❖ We are a group who support others in need through charitable giving
- ❖ We support each other
- ❖ Come from mixed traditions
- ❖ Backgrounds of public service & nomadic existences
- ❖ Feel some have worshipped worldwide

**Where are you going?**

- ❖ Desire greater integration with other communities
- ❖ Grow our congregation
- ❖ Broaden what we are doing – develop new groups with families of very young children
- ❖ Build on our stability and to be able to grow

**What are you doing now?**

- ❖ Worshipping together – our attendance has been fairly stable over the last 6 years
- ❖ Varied programme of services – including the village school and agricultural emphasis
- ❖ Pastoral visits
- ❖ Serving community in fundraising activities



### Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?

- ❖ Family bonds and friendships
- ❖ Through acts of kindest
- ❖ Bringing out the best in the worst circumstances
- ❖ Growing creation
- ❖ Young life/new life we see around us in nature
- ❖ Having spiritual conversations in unusual places

### What are you hopeful for?

- ❖ Growth in discipleship and numbers of disciples
- ❖ More social groups in the church building/using church for wider activities that will spread the good news of Jesus
- ❖ Reappraisal of values/WOKE-ism/back to nature/global issues
- ❖ Divine intervention!

### What are you fearful about?

- ❖ Minister communities – response to the future of the C of E
- ❖ Being taken over/closure. Having less say where we spend our funds
- ❖ Reduced numbers in our congregation
- ❖ Rise in national materialism
- ❖ Aging congregation that don't always understand the changing world and fear stepping over 'political correctness'

### How you can pray for us.

- ❖ Direction into the unknown
- ❖ Help us to do well without jumping too many hurdles
- ❖ Help us to be less anxious, defensive and possessive



Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?

Reaction of children during Experience Christmas & Easter.

2 young people asking to be baptised  
Coffee & Chat leaders taking more initiative  
SDA church praying for us & offering help.

What are you hopeful for?

More leaders to step forward & take responsibility for practical things

Development of 3FG (Benefice Fellowship Group)

What are you fearful about?

Very small leadership team forming out.

Becoming unsustainable  
losing relevance in community of Thornby Lodge

How you can pray for us.

Health of Barbara, Kath & Andy (& Viv)

Young people of YACC & Kool Kidz to come to know Jesus.



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Church name: Christchurch Numbly Lodge

Date:

Who are you?

Estate church founded c 1957 to  
serve Numbly Lodge

Usual Sunday congregation is small  
but more people come for All Together  
Service - but they don't come or get  
involved other than that.

Where have you come from?

Where are you going?

Not sure.

What are you doing now?

Trying to keep plates spinning  
& keep going.

Trying to prioritise & say 'No' to  
things in order to stop burn out.





## Church: St Mary's, Humberstone

### Who are you?

- We are a small church on the outskirts of the City of Leicester. The ancient church building dates back centuries to when Humberstone was a tiny rural village surrounded by farmland.
- We are a congregation of around 30 people on Sundays and most of us are well over 60. Some of us were born and brought up locally, about a quarter of us have Caribbean heritage and the rest have moved here from other parts of Leicester or England.
- A few people carry out most of the work – often having more than one responsibility. Hardly anyone will engage with exploring faith outside Sunday worship.
- We are in a multi-faith area where potential Christians form a very small minority
- We are in a Benefice with Christchurch, Thurnby Lodge
- We were joined with St Barnabas when that church closed

### Where are you going?

- We're exploring what it means to be fully lay led and trying to keep positive whilst trying to discern our place in the local community and within the wider church. Realistically, it's too hard to look far ahead.
- We like our traditional C of E services
- We have learnt to make good use of zoom, both during Covid and since with a Friday 'Evening prayer' service

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023

### Where have you come from?

- 40-60 years ago this was a flourishing large congregation of families and professional people. Many different groups and organisations ensured that there was plenty going on.
- For many reasons, the church seemed to be going into decline until participation in PMC gave many of us a boost and taught us to look at what God is doing and join in. This means looking beyond church walls and into the community.
- We enjoyed a short but joyful renaissance – but now it feels less joyful and hard work as we travel through another vacancy – all 8 years older and feeling tired.
- Through a period of 2 years of Covid

### What are you doing now?

- We're trying to keep all the plates spinning. There are lots of issues to deal with – but working with each other and friends from Christchurch is helping.
- We're being supported by prayer by the local Seventh Day Adventist church – which feels encouraging,
- We're hosting all the local schools (all non-church schools) into the church and visiting them to deliver assemblies – especially round Christian festivals. We hosted nearly 1000 children and parents in Dec/Jan and will be hosting another 400 before Easter plus 2 full school assemblies.
- We take church into local care homes and sheltered housing. We also host Songs of Praise which attracts people from other local churches who aren't able to have "live" music.
- We're also learning to say "no" and to let some things go (pace ourselves).
- We continue to reach out into the community as best we can (eg Spring Festival) and welcome all who approach us.



## Church: St Mary's, Humberstone

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023

### Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerge?

- Through the offer of prayer support
- Through schools' visits and the feedback from the children
- Through some new people offering to join the PCC
- Through some excellent worship (e.g. Epiphany carols)
- Through improved relationships with Christchurch
- Through the plan to re-open and refurbish our Church Hall
- Through an (at present) small number of new members (with 2 children)



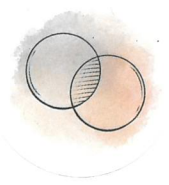
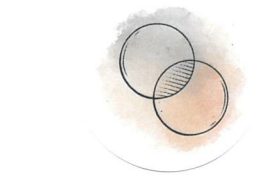
### What are you hopeful for?

- Relationships flourishing as a result of Spring Festival and schools visits
- Renewed and direct relationship with Christchurch
- Possibility that the hall may reopen as a proper community centre (not social club)
- Hopeful for hope and peace
- That the Minster Communities model will lead to more help and co-operation for local weaknesses eg a Treasurer in our case
- That we will grow and flourish again
- That the good will expressed by those who contributed to these thoughts will spread and grow in the congregation as a whole



### What are you fearful about?

- That the age/health of those of us who are trying to keep things going will deteriorate and fail
- That the church will become unsustainable and close
- Size and diversity of the parish (now joined with St Barnabas) is so enormous – how do we understand our place in all of that?
- How to be known and relevant in the whole area
- That we might lose our worship traditions as a result of the Minster Communities process
- If our Church Hall refurbishment project becomes bogged down, we will lose a major way we can contact our wider community
- The church building could become a museum with minimal worship taking place



### How can you pray for us?

- for wisdom, vision and good health for our leadership team
- for healthy finances and new treasurer
- for renewed interest and passion for developing personal faith within the congregation
- for our prayer support team from SDA church
- For a time of long stability
- For strong leadership
- With a special period of prayer for the Minster Communities process at each service

