

BROMHAM METHODIST CHAPEL PROFILE



CONTEXT

Our Chapel lies physically and spiritually at the heart of a remarkable working village, noted for its friendliness and sense of community.

Bromham is a spread out village including several small hamlets situated almost centrally between Calne, Devizes, Melksham and Chippenham, lying at the foot of the spectacular Beacon Hill and Roundway Down.

Traditionally Bromham's main industry has been market gardening covering about 4,000 acres although in the last few years several growers have ceased business. However, there is a small engineering factory and several other small businesses. There are two pubs, a post office (twice a week) butchers, and a thriving village shop. The Primary School has approximately 100 pupils and there are village sports facilities. A large Social Centre buzzes with life all year round and has a licensed club and skittle alley.

Our Chapel is 220 years old and is built into the hillside with a 2ft walk way round three sides, hence no surrounding grounds and no hall. In 1993 the original gallery was converted into a Sunday School room with a kitchen unit which can also be used for small meetings and refreshments. A toilet and wash basin were installed downstairs. The false ceiling has

been removed restoring the Church to its original glory. We have gas central heating and a loop system. Generally the building is in a good state of repair.

Bromham's population is about 2,000 with good mixture of all age groups but without any significant ethnic element.

We enjoy excellent relations with the Parish Church of St.Nicholas, uniting in several services during the year as well as many community activities. In this we are grateful for the good working relationship between our Minister and the Rector of St.Nicholas Church.

MINISTRY AND MISSION

The most noticeable characteristic of our Chapel and village is our two-way relationship with each other. Historical ties form the foundation for this but our life together is relevant to the present day. The lack of a Church Hall sends us out into the community for events other than services. Our numerous annual activities are held in the Social Centre, Angel House and in Devizes, some being in conjunction with St.,Nicholas Church. We publicise our services and events in the Parish Magazine and the local Gazette and Herald. As well as fund raising for the Chapel we donate to other charities plus local needs. We hold a Lent Lunch every year to support the local Devizes Food Bank.

STRENGTHS

Our community relationship is our obvious strength, along with our support and caring for each other on an every-day basis and especially in times of need, we are very much a family. People who only occasionally or never worship in Chapel support us financially and with their time and effort, Our core congregation is small but hard-working, friendly and generous with money and effort. In 2008 after much discussion we removed several pews to create a social space, re-carpeted the Chapel throughout, purchased tables and chairs and opened for our first monthly coffee morning in February 2009. Our coffee mornings have become an established part of village life, we are well supported every month, bringing many people over the Chapel threshold. We pride ourselves on the maintenance of our building. We pay our way even when larger repairs are necessary. The friendship with St.Nicholas Church and the village School is a huge strength. We feel we have many strengths and that our Christian Faith goes far beyond one hour on a Sunday morning.

WEAKNESSES

We need to address ways to make celebrating the love of our Lord together a must for as many local people as possible. Although we are a small committed congregation and very active we still fail to encourage people to come to worship on a Sunday. There was a well established Sunday School at our Chapel for many, many years, unfortunately it ceased to

meet about six years ago due to lack of numbers and as a result there is very little family input. However, the whole School have visited us on two occasions, at the beginning of Advent and again in Lent, we were also part of the Easter Trail round the village. We consider this to be a **BIG** plus and we hope for more participation with the school in the future.

We would like our new Minister to be strong in pastoral and community life, to continue the excellent working with St,Nicholas Church and the School and, perhaps, be prepared to explore new forms of worship. We are keen on the idea of a little more interaction (in the human, not necessarily electronic sense) in our worship, which he or she might be able to offer.

LOCAL CHAPEL LIFE

Divine Worship is held each Sunday at 10.30 a.m. The average attendance is about ten. Holy Communion is normally celebrated once a month (we like the traditional and modern). Our Services and Events involve us in Village Life in many ways. Coffee Mornings, Tea on the Law, Carnival, Harvest Supper, Flower Festival, May Day Fair and Chapel Bazaar, some of these events are to fund-raise for the Chapel others are to support village events.

Over the last three years the Chapel has been used as part of the Teddy Bear Trail at Carnival time. During the course of two days approximately 150 people have visited the chapel.

Last year we held an Easter/Spring Event with displays for people to enjoy, the Chapel was open for three days with refreshments served each day. On the Sunday afternoon we concluded the event with a "Songs of Praise" service and invited local personalities to choose their favourite hymn. Feedback from this all seemed to be very positive. Along with our other usual services, Chapel Anniversary, Covenant Service and Christian Unity etc. we support the local Salvation Army Appeal by holding a Toy Service every December. The congregation are generous in their giving of new toys to make a child's Christmas very special.

We are privileged to be part of the 'Villages Together'. In approximately 2008 several villages joined together for a Sunday Service (reason being lack of Preachers to fill Plan) this became very successful and has continued ever since. We ourselves plan the frequency of the services with local Preacher/Minister taking the lead. This has become great strength and has increased our Chapel family and fellowship.

Our services are often led by local Preachers, when the need has arisen we have led the service ourselves with everyone taking part.

We use Combined Mission Praise, Hymns and Psalms and Singing the Faith. We use a new up-to-date music box

There are two Chapel Meetings each year with an average attendance of ten. We have two joint meetings with St.Nicholas Church and two meetings with the other villages, We aim

always to be represented at the Area Meeting. Any new initiative from the Executive ,Area or Methodist Church we try to take on board.

More than anything that has gone before in this profile, we know that the spirit of the Lord is with us. Our aim is to be an outward looking Chapel, a Christian witness for everyone and to follow the God who goes before us.

The author of 'Ephesians' writes – "These little congregations clinging to the edges of the Roman Empire are at the heart of God's plan". This is an extraordinary claim, but one in which we can have confidence.

The majority of members and adherents were involved in the preparation of this profile.