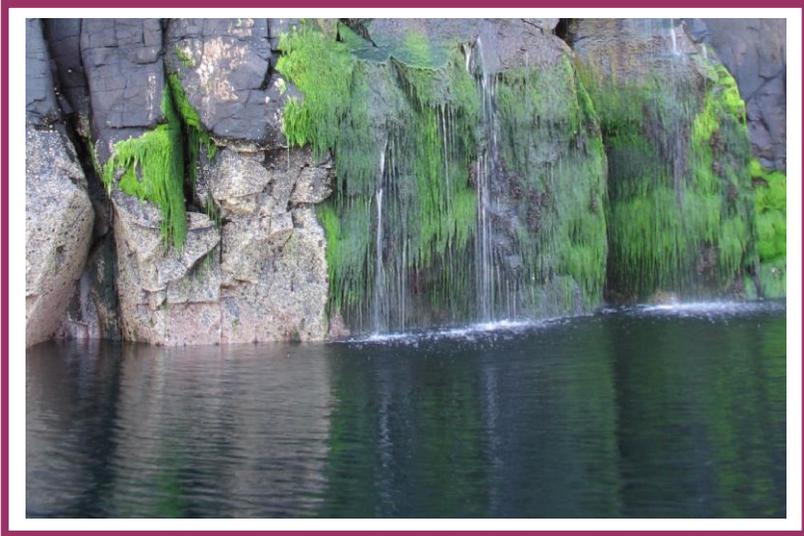




# WELCOME TO SIDCUP BAPTIST CHURCH



*Jesus said...“Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*

*John 4: 13-14*

**Welcome to Sidcup Baptist Church. Whether you are visiting for the first time or have visited many times before, we hope you will enjoy your time spent with us and that you will know God’s presence and his blessing.**

**A church is a group of people, not a building. Our buildings are where various activities take place. But the church is a group of Christians, people who have put their faith in Jesus Christ, meeting and doing things together.**

**Our aim is to be a church that loves and serves God, his people and his world. This leaflet tells you more about us and what we believe.**

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## ***What do the Christians who meet as Sidcup Baptist Church believe?***

We believe in God – eternal, perfect and unchanging in holiness, justice, wisdom and love – who sustains and governs all things. We know God as three equal and indivisible persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, sometimes referred to as the Holy Trinity.

## ***Where can I find out about God?***

God has revealed himself to mankind in various ways, the Bible having particular importance. This 'library' of 66 books, inspired by God but written by human authors, includes many different kinds of writing such as history, poetry and prophecy. Divided into the Old and New Testaments, the Bible reveals God's purposes and serves as our ultimate authority on matters of belief and practice.

## ***What has that got to do with me?***

The human race has a special place in God's purposes. We are made in God's image: that is, God values us and he wants to have a spiritual relationship with each one of us. But from the earliest times, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted by what we call sin. And however great or small the sin that stains our lives, the effect is the same: it separates us from God, because he is holy.

## ***Where does Jesus fit into this?***

There is nothing that we can do of ourselves to earn God's forgiveness and be reconciled to him. So God has himself provided the way. God became a man, Jesus ("the Christ" or Messiah, meaning "Anointed One"). Jesus lived a life without sin, and showed us what God is like. He willingly let himself be put to death, executed on a cross, so as to take upon himself the punishment that sin deserves. But that wasn't the end of the story. Jesus was raised from the dead, (his resurrection, the event we celebrate at Easter), and later ascended into heaven to take his rightful place with God as the Lord of all things.

## ***How does Jesus dying help me?***

Jesus paid the price for sin – not his own, but the sins of all people past, present and future. If we are genuinely sorry for our sins and turn away from them (called repenting) and put our faith and trust in Jesus' death and resurrection, then God, in his love, forgives us and 'adopts' us into his family. This is called salvation, or being "born again", not a physical re-birth but a spiritual one. It is God's free gift, available by faith alone and not by anything we could try to do to deserve it. This is the Gospel, the "Good News" of what Jesus has done for us.

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## ***How can I connect with God and Jesus?***

The third person of God is the Holy Spirit. It is through the Holy Spirit that God works in our lives. He convicts us of our need for God's forgiveness, gives assurance of our salvation and imparts spiritual life to believers. He inspires us individually and collectively, helping us to worship God and to become more like Jesus in the way we live our lives so as to continue the work Jesus started.

## ***What does church, or being a church, mean?***

We are part of the worldwide church – the “Body of Christ” – and part of its local expression in Sidcup. We believe there is One Church, but many flavours, and we seek to uphold the unity of that one church through our mutual love, care and encouragement for other churches as well as within our own.

SBC is a “Baptist” church. The name comes from “baptism”, which is the symbolic washing away of our sins and starting a new life as a follower of Jesus. And in the Baptist tradition, baptism involves a public declaration of faith and full immersion in water (though we recognise that some believers who join with us may have been baptised according to other traditions).

## ***How is this church run?***

The Baptist label also says something about how our church is governed. Like many churches, we have a team of Trustees comprising a Minister (Pastor) who is supported by a group of elected Deacons to help with the church's administration and leadership. But major decision-making is the democratic responsibility of church members, who have been accepted into membership as a step of commitment to the church and its ministry. Together we seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in shaping our decisions and actions.

Whilst we take the idea and commitment of membership very seriously, we aim to treat all people the same. We believe everyone is equally precious to God and loved by him, whatever their gender, race, colour, social or other status or preferences. Jesus commands us to love one another and we seek to do that in every way we can, including pastoral care, training, practical help and encouragement.

## ***What does the church do?***

We want all people – particularly in Sidcup – to know about God's love for them, and we want to show that love in practice. One way is by welcoming people into our services – the times when we meet together, notably on Sundays. But not everyone feels comfortable with a ‘traditional’ church setting, or their perception of it, and so we look for opportunities to take the message of God's love out into our community. We

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aim to show love in action by serving our community, including putting our time and resources into activities that meet identified needs such as for young people and various support groups. We also support action elsewhere, both in this country and abroad, to spread the Good News and to help meet human needs – such as relieving suffering, providing care for the sick, supporting education and speaking up for those who are oppressed or persecuted.

### ***What happens when SBC meets together?***

We hope for a special encounter with God, so anything could happen! We meet not just as the whole church together but also in smaller groups. We worship God together, which may particularly include music and singing, have teaching from the Bible, and how it applies in our lives, and pray (talking and listening to God). We also have fun! Sometimes we commemorate the last meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his death and resurrection, usually known as the Lord's Supper or Communion. This is where we share bread and wine to symbolise Jesus' body being broken and his blood being shed for us on the cross, acknowledging his sacrifice on which our salvation depends.

### ***What difference does believing in God and Jesus make?***

Ultimately we believe that Jesus will return, in unmistakable glory, to bring God's righteous judgment upon the world. Those whom Jesus knows as his followers will be welcomed into eternity spent with God, but those whom he does not know will be eternally separated from God.

God has promised to make all things new, including us! None of us knows when this may happen, whether it will be in our lifetime or indeed what our earthly future might be. That is why we are compelled to tell people about Jesus, so that they might start that new life and relationship with God now, with assurance about where they are heading eternally.

### ***And finally...***

We hope you find this leaflet a helpful introduction to SBC and what we are about. If you have any questions, please ask one of the leadership team and we'll see if we can help. You can also contact us by email on [secretary@sidcupbaptistchurch.org.uk](mailto:secretary@sidcupbaptistchurch.org.uk) or by telephone on 0208 309 9717.

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3: 16*