

Introducing the

SUSSEX GOSPEL PARTNERSHIP



strengthening and expanding
gospel ministry

“The regional gospel partnerships have been used by God to strengthen and enable gospel ministry across the country. New churches have been planted, outstanding training has been made available to church members, and gospel workers have been sent out as a result of churches’ partnership in ministry. The Sussex Gospel Partnership is amongst those leading the way in this work. It is deserving of our wholehearted support.”

William Taylor, St Helen’s Church, Bishopsgate, London

“Gospel Partnerships have emerged as a wonderful way of expressing the unity that exists between free church and Anglican evangelicals, and of multiplying gospel ministry by working together to train men and women to serve in their local churches and planting new churches where there is gospel need. I am delighted that so many FIEC churches are part of the Sussex Gospel Partnership, are benefitting from its work and are contributing to the realisation of its vision for the area.”

*John Stevens, National Director,
Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches*

“Christians working together for gospel growth across Sussex is a great ambition, calling for the widest and most generous support in prayer, giving and active service to make this vision a reality.”

David Jackman, former President of the Proclamation Trust

Vision

Our vision is to see *Bible-centred churches working together to train leaders, strengthen and plant churches, and advance the gospel*. Around 20 Anglican and Free Churches which shared this vision came together to form the Partnership in 2006. Thirteen years on, the Partnership represents more than 70 Churches and other Christian organisations (including churches in full Partnership and those with senior ministers who are Individual Partners).

Partnership: not simply a *fellowship* of people who enjoy each other's company, but a *Partnership* of churches who believe it is better, and more effective, to work together.

Churches: bringing together churches of different denominations, whose members can get to know each other and, wherever helpful, work together.

Bible-centred: joining together churches who are absolutely clear that the Bible is the unique and supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

In Sussex: working together in East and West Sussex to strengthen and expand gospel ministry.



Values

Convinced that Christ will build his church, we are passionate about working in partnership to grow local churches through:

- Bible-centred ministry
- Uniting in prayer
- Courageous evangelism
- Authentic gospel unity



Aims

Under God we aim to:

- Encourage church leaders by working together
- Recruit and train church leaders
- Encourage and organise evangelistic initiatives
- Encourage gospel growth in existing churches
- Encourage and initiate the strategic planting of new churches
- Work together for the preservation and advance of the gospel in our different denominations or affiliations

Training

For any who want to deepen their faith and be equipped to serve, the SGP provides opportunities for training in understanding and handling the word of God through two training courses. The day-time, mid-week **Sussex Ministry Training Course (SMTC)** is a one to two-year course run in Haywards Heath. The **Saturday Morning Bible Training Course (SMBTC)** runs monthly over two years in various locations.

Both courses consist of four core components:



Biblical Theology
Bible Exposition
Basic Doctrine
Hands-on Training

In addition, the **SMTC** provides practical training for a wide range of ministry contexts, covering topics such as running a small group Bible study, explaining the gospel, handling questions people ask, working in a team, men's ministry, women's ministry, youth work and church planting.



The SGP also runs regular seminars and other training and equipping events for church leaders. Further training mornings are run for those involved in a variety of ministries such as occasional preaching, small group Bible study leading, children's and youth ministry and music ministry. Short courses on a variety of topics can also be run for groups of churches.

Ministry Trainees

The SGP has a great concern to develop the leaders of tomorrow and so encourages and helps churches to offer Ministry Training Schemes. Such schemes provide training and testing opportunities for those considering full-time Christian ministry. They generally involve one or two years of discipleship and ministry experience and training in the context of a local church. Trainees also usually study one day a week on the Sussex Ministry Training Course (SMTC). These schemes are designed to train and equip Ministry Trainees in the key areas in which they need to grow, if they are to be good servants of Jesus Christ in the local church.

‘Ask the Lord of the harvest therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field’

These include:

Christian maturity and self-discipline

Knowledge of God

Understanding the Bible

Ability to study

Readiness to teach and care for God’s people

Commitment to servant-heartedness



Youth and Children

High quality, Bible-centred Youth and Children's Ministry is vital to the health and growth of the church. Sussex Youthworks is the task group within the SGP which works to encourage and resource good youth and children's ministry across Sussex:

Sussex Youthworks



Providing a rolling 3-year programme of training events on Saturday mornings called 'Come and See' for both youth and children's leaders

Advising Partnership churches wanting to move forward in their youth and children's ministry

Pointing people to good resources available elsewhere

Putting on events for young people

SORTED BY THE SEA

Run three times a year on a Friday evening in Hove, **Sorted by the Sea** is an evening of great fun centred on teaching the Bible to 14 to 18 year-olds in an engaging and relevant way

Evangelism

As a Gospel Partnership we want to do all we can to work together and help one another to present the good news of Jesus Christ to people attractively, persuasively and unashamedly. To this end we aim to:

Encourage Partnership churches to work together in evangelism (for example: running joint evangelistic courses, events and missions in their local area)

Publicise evangelistic events

Promote evangelism training

Promote shared use of available evangelistic resources (for example: people, events, experience and expertise)

Support churches which do not have resources for training or outreach

Encourage SGP Ministers in their own personal evangelism



*An initiative of the Gospel Partnerships around the UK, **A Passion for Life** is a nationwide evangelistic mission held every four years. It provides a particular opportunity for the churches of the SGP to work together.*



Church Planting

The 1.5 million people in Sussex need to encounter Christ through a loving community of his people. As a Gospel Partnership, we want to see the multiplication of local, gospel-centred, Bible-teaching congregations through which the Lord Jesus is proclaimed and men, women and children are converted and disciplined.



The SGP endeavours to identify the needs and opportunities for church-planting across East and West Sussex and to work with local churches and potential church planters to promote and enable strategic church planting initiatives. The SGP itself does not plant churches but seeks to be a facilitator and to create a culture of church planting within the Partnership. We also endeavour to promote the support of existing but struggling congregations that have potential for growth with help from Partner Churches.



The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for the numerical growth of the Body of Christ in any city, and the continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city.

Tim Keller, Redeemer Presbyterian Church

Unity in the Truth

The basis of the Partnership is that the fundamental truths of Christianity, as revealed in Holy Scripture, should govern the teaching and practice of the church. We understand these truths to include:

There is one God in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

God is sovereign in creation, revelation, redemption and final judgement.

The Bible, as originally given, is the inspired and infallible Word of God. It is the supreme authority and sufficient in all matters of belief and behaviour.

Since the fall, the whole of humankind is sinful and guilty, so that everyone is subject to God's wrath and condemnation.

The Lord Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son, is fully God; he was born of a virgin; his humanity is real and sinless; he died on the cross, was raised bodily from death and is now reigning over heaven and earth.

Sinful human beings are redeemed from the guilt, penalty and power of sin only through the sacrificial death once and for all time of their representative and substitute, Jesus Christ, the only mediator between them and God.

Those who believe in Christ are pardoned all their sins and accepted in God's sight only because of the righteousness of Christ credited to them; this justification is God's act of undeserved mercy, received solely by trust in him and not by their own efforts.

The Holy Spirit alone makes the work of Christ effective to individual sinners, enabling them to turn to God from their sin and to trust in Jesus Christ.

All those who believe in Christ are baptised with the Holy Spirit, who lives in all those he has regenerated. He makes them increasingly Christlike in character and behaviour and equips them for ministry in the church and witness in the world.

The one holy universal church is the Body of Christ, to which all true believers belong. It is made visible in local churches and unity is expressed within and between local churches by mutual love, care and encouragement.

The Lord Jesus Christ will return in person, to judge everyone justly, to execute God's eternal condemnation on those who have not repented and to receive the redeemed to eternal glory.

Partnership

The strength of the Partnership lies in it being primarily a Partnership between churches. However, two sorts of Partnership are possible:

Church Partnership where a church enters the Partnership, in accordance with its own decision making procedures

Individual Partnership for ministers where the church they serve is not yet in a position to become a member

Church Partnership and Individual Partnership are open to churches and ministers who are clearly in sympathy with the values and aims of the Gospel Partnership, who subscribe to the doctrinal basis of the Partnership, and are willing to fulfil the partnership commitment:

Working together with other Partnership churches in furthering the Partnership's aims

Attending Partnership Meetings or sending apologies (Partner Churches are represented by a senior member of the leadership team plus up to two other leaders)

Praying for the work of the Partnership

Signing the basis of faith annually

Contributing at least annually to the finances of the Partnership

Membership of the Partnership is subject to agreement by the Partnership Steering Group. It is usual for the church leadership team or minister to be visited by one or more members of the Steering Group before formally applying to join the Partnership.

Governance

Voting rights at the annual general meeting will be held by one nominated senior member of the leadership team of those churches which hold Church Partnership and by ministers who hold Individual Partnership.

Supporters

Supporters are individuals who pledge to support the work of the Partnership in prayer and financially. Supporters receive regular updates of news for prayer and information.

**A Partnership
of Bible-centred churches in Sussex
working together to train leaders,
strengthen and plant churches,
and advance the gospel**

To find out more, contact:

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