

## Southgate Church, Bury St. Edmunds

### **WHO WE ARE:**

Southgate Church is a Local Ecumenical Partnership between the Church of England, the United Reformed Church and the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

### **WHY WE EXIST:**

“To be a community of Jesus followers committed to growing as disciples who share the love of God and see lives changed in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

### **HOW WE ASPIRE TO BE AS CHURCH:**

- **Worshipful** – in all we do we seek to praise our Creator God and give Him glory
- **Word Inspired** – our lives are based upon the Bible and the example of Jesus
- **Spirit Led** – prayerful in all we do, constantly seeking God’s direction and help
- **Relational** – love, authenticity, accountability, encouragement and practical care
- **Hospitable** – welcoming to all, seeking unity in the midst of our differences
- **Holistic Discipleship** – nurturing growth in ourselves and others in every aspect of life
- **Community Focused** – called to bless the Southgate area and the places where we live, work and play

## **Person Specification – based on who we are, our vision, values and strategy**

### ***Ecumenical***

The minister of Southgate needs to be someone who recognises the treasures within church traditions other than their own, and who has a willingness to celebrate, minister within and build upon Southgate’s ecumenical context.

### ***Community***

Our minister needs to be willing and able to help the church deepen our commitment and love for one another as a church community. We aspire to be more ‘relational’: to be more authentic and accountable to one another, and to be caring for one another in practical ways. We want a minister who models pastoral care, but who creates a culture of mutual support rather than one of dependence upon a ‘pastor’. Our value of ‘hospitable’ demonstrates how we want to be a community that is always open to others, of whatever age or background. We long to see unity but recognise that this is not the same thing as uniformity – this will be true in terms of our different church traditions, but in other ways too.

### ***Jesus followers***

We want a minister who, with us, will seek God’s will for this particular church and help us to be obedient to it. Individually and corporately we want to be those who are constantly being ‘inspired by God’s Word’, and actively taking the risk of imitating Christ and following wherever He leads us. Our minister will, alongside the existing team of gifted preachers and service leaders within the church, prepare and contribute to teaching series that inspire us to apply God’s Word to our lives so that we can actively join God in His mission.

### ***Growing as disciples***

Our minister needs to be somebody who understands ‘discipleship as holistic’ and as a lifelong process. We need somebody who can build upon the existing house groups, encourage us to apply God’s Word in every aspect of our lives, and who nurtures a culture that celebrates and invests in growth – in our own lives, and in the lives of others. We also long to see those in our community who engage with the activities of the church to be gently yet intentionally discipled so that they are able to respond to the gospel and join us in ‘worshipping’ our Creator God.

### ***Share the Love of God***

Southgate Church is blessed to have a Families and Community Minister who, over a number of years, has led us in making many connections with our local community. We have an extensive programme of activities and regular events throughout the year which seek to share the love of God with the Southgate area. We are a 'community-focused' church, and the fact that we are based in a Community Centre is a blessing in this regard. We believe this prophetic kingdom presence in our community is central to the future mission and growth of the church. We recognise, however, that we may need be less 'busy' as a church in order to invest the time necessary to deepen the relationships with the people we meet, particularly the young families who we long to see becoming part of our church. Our minister will value the contribution of this work to the life of the church, be a proactive presence in the community and help us to build strategically upon our existing outreach. We need a minister who will model evangelism as well as equipping the congregation to share God's story.

### ***See Lives Changed in the Power of the Holy Spirit***

We long to be instruments of God's life-changing power in the midst of our community. We want to see prayers answered, relationships restored, bodies healed, addictions broken, and lives surrendered to Christ. We would love to have services every few months where people are giving testimony and being baptised or confirmed as followers of Jesus. Whilst we recognise that salvation is a work of God's Spirit, and that all of the glory goes to Him, we long to be disciples through whom our Redeemer God is making disciples. We are praying for a minister who can lift our sights higher and raise our expectancy about what God can do amongst us. We are excited about the next chapter of ministry and pray that it will be one not only characterised by faithfulness, but by fruitfulness too.

### ***Our Strategy***

During our pastoral vacancy we have been seeking God's will for the future of the church. Recent conversations have explored a mission-focused 'multi-congregational' approach to church. This feels like an approach that might effectively build upon the significant community connections that we have, and which we are aware has brought missional growth in a number of churches around the country. There are some concerns, however, about the potential divisiveness of this approach, and we are therefore looking for a minister who can sensitively guide us through a process of further discernment before leading us into a period of change and growth. For these reasons we are looking for a visionary minister who will remain intentional about pursuing growth and fruitfulness, yet is gentle enough to care for those within the existing congregation who may struggle to cope with the implications of the missional adventure upon which we are about to embark.