

Church Profile - DBC



dormansland
baptist
church

Celebrating, living and sharing
the good news of Jesus

Dormansland Baptist Church

7 High Street

Dormansland RH7 6PU

Summary

Dormansland Baptist is a church that punches well above its weight in terms of enthusiasm and community involvement; and Dormansland itself is not your average sleepy country village. The centre of London is only 50 minutes away by train, and Croydon is only 30 minutes away. There are plenty of local schools, and therefore the village attracts many commuters with young families who mix happily with its older residents.



Our fellowship is loving and lively, and a good number of the congregation contribute their gifts in one way or another for the benefit of all.

We believe in a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus which can grow and deepen through worship, fellowship, prayer and the study of God's word. We enjoy meeting together, and church members' meetings are well attended. Our style of worship is contemporary (Kendrick to Hillsong!) but we do not neglect the best of the traditional hymns.

Over recent years a substantial 'fringe' to the church has been built up, mainly through the work of our large Urban Saints group and Noah's Ark, our very popular toddler group. We would love to see these families drawn into the kingdom of God, and our main focus currently is on providing outside-friendly services and activities to facilitate this process.

We are looking for a minister who would relate easily to the un-churched as well as to our existing congregation: someone who would be willing to grasp the baton and run this particular race alongside us.

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Introduction

Dormansland Baptist has been described as “a gem of a church.” A charming old building is home to a warm-hearted and enthusiastic congregation who are always more than ready to roll up their sleeves and engage in the work of God’s Kingdom.

Dormansland is a village in South East Surrey close to the Kent and West Sussex borders. It is part of the commuter belt south of the M25, and surrounded by beautiful countryside, with a population of around 4,000.

The village of Lingfield, with a somewhat larger population (and a well-known racecourse) is close by, and ten minutes’ drive south is the larger town of East Grinstead (c 30,000), with many shops and amenities. Dormansland has a primary school, with a choice of secondary schools in East Grinstead and Oxted. (10 minutes by train). There are also a number of private schools in the area, which is continuing to be developed due to its proximity to the M25 and direct rail links to London (50 minutes).

The only other church in the village is Anglican, with a number of churches in the surrounding towns and villages.

The church, although situated up a short driveway just off the main road, is well known to the community due to the contribution it makes.

Our aims

- To seek to live a life consistent with the Gospel and worthy of our high calling in Christ.
- To bless our local community by sharing and showing the love of our Lord Jesus.
- To grow in the knowledge of God by reading his Word and by experiencing his presence in our daily lives.
- To be faithful and earnest in prayer, both private and corporate.
- To meet regularly with others for worship and mutual encouragement.
- To live in loyal love and fellowship with all the other members of the Church.
- To contribute to the work of God’s kingdom, according to our gifts, calling and opportunities.
- To accept personal responsibility for the government of the local Church, by being present, whenever possible, at the Church Meeting.
- To give financially for the work of God's Kingdom at home and overseas.
- To witness to the Lord Jesus Christ by word and deed, wherever we are, and to make disciples, as he commanded us.



Worship & Teaching

Our teaching is founded on the Word of God and we encourage all age groups to learn and put in to practice the foundations of scripture. The sermons are ‘unpacked’ throughout the week using the House Groups as a vehicle to allow further discussion and the opportunity to ask questions.

We were made to be worshipping beings and we want worship to be central to our lives. We seek for our members to grow through prayer and praise in corporate worship and long for all to have an intimate encounter with Christ. Our musical style is mostly contemporary, but we do not neglect the best of the old hymns. We have a gifted and spiritually mature leader for our worship team, and a young drummer, but we’re building up more service leaders and musicians to keep them company!

We encourage members to discover the natural and spiritual gifts God has given them through providing help around the Church with leading worship, music, preaching, ‘techy stuff’, hospitality, prayer ministry, youth and children’s work and many other ways. We also want to see the fitting and orderly use of the gifts of the Spirit in our times together and allow space for God to speak to us spontaneously. On the Sundays when we have afternoon family services we have introduced a more unstructured morning service, literally gathered around the Lord’s table.

The Church Fellowship

The fellowship has currently 38 full members, with bi-monthly members meeting which are always well attended. There are a number of fringe members also. This is a loving and caring fellowship. Our motto is “Celebrating, living and sharing the good news of Jesus.” We strive to ‘keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace’, and to ‘grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ’ whilst also reaching out to others with the good news.

The leadership team comprises a full time pastor (vacancy) and up to six deacons including a Treasurer and Church Secretary. The deacons fulfil practical roles within the life of the church but also work with the pastor in providing spiritual oversight and direction. The team meet once a month as a general rule.

Relationships with other churches

Relationships with other churches in the area are good, with joint Alpha courses running with the Parish Church for a number of years and the regular Easter 'Walk of Witness,' jointly shared with four other churches from Dormansland and Lingfield. Our aim is to continue to develop relationships with the other churches to reach out to the communities in which we serve.

Prayer Life and Fellowship Groups

Prayer is the lifeblood of any fellowship - and a constant area of challenge in a believer's life!

Apart from regular prayer in and before services we have a new Praise and Prayer hour once a month on Saturdays which is well supported, and where we sometimes learn new worship songs which fuel our prayer. Also once every other month on Wednesday evenings we gather to pray. But not all our prayer is structured. It can arise spontaneously in different situations.

There is so much to pray for, at home and abroad.

We have 3 house groups, which meet regularly for prayer, bible study and worship on either Wednesday evenings or Thursday afternoons. Other groups meet throughout the week including Oasis, a popular group for women that meets on a Friday morning.

Mission

Our core mission support is currently for:



Outreach and Community

Our outreach has taken on many forms in the past, from sending and supporting members on mission to various regions of the world including Romania, Uganda and Siberia; to running a “worship club” (regularly with an invited puppet ministry) at Young Epilepsy, a charity based locally, supporting young people with epilepsy.

Some of the activities that currently take place are listed below:

- Carnival – For a number of years we have put on a Community Art project as part of taking the church to the people.
- Noah’s Ark – Our thriving and very popular carers and toddlers group.
- Regular assemblies in the village primary school and help at its summer and Christmas fairs.
- Lunch club – A monthly lunch provided for the older generation which mixes church members with local people.
- ‘First Sunday’ afternoon family services, which are seeking to connect with our ‘fringe’, with the help of friends like Prof Light!



In addition to the Lunch Club we have Tuesday Fellowship, which meets alternate weeks and has a regular attendance of members and non-members, who are mainly retired. The group has a wide variety of excellent guest speakers and teaching.

Youth Work and Children

The church is committed to working with children and young people, which we do on Sunday mornings and on Friday nights. The Friday night groups are run through the Urban Saints movement (which used to be “Crusaders”). This is split into two groups: Juniors (7-11) and Seniors (11+), both of which attract a good number of non-church-family children from the wider community.

We participate in an annual residential weekend at Westbrook on the Isle of Wight, which is open to the whole of the east Surrey area (usually about 100 young people; in 2016, 36 kids went from Dormansland) and involves a lot of fun and some concentrated bible study across different age groups.

On Sunday mornings, we currently run two groups, but this has changed over the years, depending on the profile of children within the church families. Church for Children (C4C) is for primary school aged children and Saints on Sunday (SoS) is for those in the first few years of secondary school.

Pictures from Dormansland Carnival 2016



History of the Church

The church was founded in 1792 when a poor man was converted to Christianity and became aware of a lack of solid Biblical teaching in the village. He opened his cottage as a meeting place for prayer and, as numbers grew, believers were baptised in the local brook. Shortly afterwards, a small building was erected next to the poor man's cottage. We are still on the same site, but in a building that was constructed in 1817. DBC remains the only Free Church in the Dormansland and Lingfield area. Historically DBC planted churches or chapels in Edenbridge, Outwood and Lingfield.

Church attendance and membership has been predominantly from the village, with others being drawn from Lingfield and East Grinstead. The Church offers an extended family and a spiritual home, where old and new is blended together to offer Bible-based teaching, preaching and discipleship. The Church is a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, The South Eastern Baptist Association and the Evangelical Alliance, being in full agreement with its Statement of Faith.

Church Buildings

The Church

The current church building (with a capacity of 150-200) was constructed in 1817, with a hall and kitchen added in 1983. We have a small out-building (The Barn) and a portacabin that are used mainly for prayer and youth work. There is a small vestry and the original baptistery is still in use.

A church work party meets once a month for general building and grounds maintenance and a rolling programme of improvements. Recently we received a generous legacy which has enabled us to greatly enhance our facilities.

We feel we have attractive and functional premises that can be used to serve the purpose of the church for the foreseeable future.



In 2017, we will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the opening of our chapel, and we plan to make the most of it in our community.

Manse

The church owns a manse, which is two minutes' walk from the church. Situated in a quiet cul-de-sac, it is a four-bedroom, semi-detached property with integral garage and reasonable gardens to the front and rear.

Looking to the future

We are all too aware that our congregation is aging and that we need to attract more young families. We are also aware that there is quite a lot of indifference to the things of God in society generally, and a lot of self-generated 'busyness' which eats up people's time. We are praying earnestly for breakthrough in this area: for the Lord to soften the hard ground. We certainly have loads of contacts in the community through Urban Saints etc but getting them interested in God is the challenge we are facing. We know that prayer and patient perseverance are the keys, and at the moment we are working on both!

The church in our nation is facing many challenges, and has some very difficult issues to deal with, very often under public scrutiny. It's easy to batten down the hatches and ignore what we don't know how to deal with, but perhaps we need to be braver in at least informing ourselves re the issues in question. We have made a start!

Dormansland Baptist Church is serious about discerning the unique and particular plans that God has for us and excited about putting them into action, whilst bearing in mind Jesus' words: 'apart from me you can do nothing.' We are utterly dependent on him.

