

Job Pack



Welcome

*From the interim leaders of Love's Farm Church, **Marcus and Kathryn Pickering***

Welcome to Love's Farm Church!

This is a special church at the heart of the community, and with the community at its heart. Our story is unique and much of it is yet to be written.

We are longing to meet the person that God is calling to be our next leader and we're delighted that you're thinking about joining us.

We are a diverse and inclusive church, of all ages and backgrounds, and from the outset we have sought to be a place of welcome where people feel at home – no matter where they consider themselves to be on their faith journey.

This is a rapidly growing community with enormous opportunity both to build on our established work and to continue to pioneer.

We hope you enjoy reading about our church and find all the information you are looking for – but please feel very welcome to visit us on a Sunday, or to get in touch if you would like to hear more.



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From the Bishop of Huntingdon, Rt Revd Dagmar Winter

A Christ-centred community

The Church of England has been involved with the development of Love's Farm Church from its earliest days, and we are delighted to be continuing that relationship with a contribution towards the recruitment and payment of the next full time minister serving Love's Farm Church.

This post is open to any minister ordained within the Anglican, Baptist or URC traditions, who remains in good standing with their denomination. The person appointed will hold the post under the usual terms for ministers in their denomination. Nonetheless the role of the minister in Love's Farm Church is not to develop an Anglican or Baptist or URC church, but to shepherd, grow and envision a Christ-centred community that is ecumenical, contemporary and courageous. You will be expected to build strong relationships of support and accountability, both within your denomination and with other denominations that partner in the LEP. You will have unqualified support from all 3 denominations, as resources allow.

You will have the assistance of my diocesan team, including our Director of Mission and Ministry, Rev Peter Leech, and Advisor for New Housing, Rev Beth Cope, a highly experienced pioneer minister. You will also enjoy the support of local clergy in the Deanery of St Neots.

We hope you will come and meet this extraordinary congregation and discern with us whether God is calling you here.



*From the Moderator of Eastern Synod of the United Reformed Church,
Revd Lythan Nevard*

A Local Ecumenical Partnership

In 2015 The URC Eastern Synod created a mission project at Love's Farm. Funding was found for a pioneer who could be lay or ordained, to see what fresh expression of church might develop on Love's Farm. A house was bought at 76 Stone Hill for the pioneer to live in and from where the work was developed.

In the event, the successful candidate was a Church of England self-supporting curate which meant that the work was ecumenical from its inception. The project was initially for 5 years but was then renewed for a further 5 as Love's Farm Church has grown and flourished.

The Synod is delighted that Love's Farm Church sees its future as a Local Ecumenical Partnership. Love's Farm Church will become the newest congregation of the URC when our General Assembly meets in early July.

The Synod will continue our commitment to the church by offering 76 Stone Hill as the Manse for the new Minister. We will also cover house insurance and repairs and 50% of the cost of Council Tax and water rates.

Love's Farm Church will be part of a wider group of United Reformed Churches – the Mid Cambs Mission Partnership. There are 3 other ecumenical pioneer churches in this group alongside 3 United Reformed Churches and the 4 LEPs are proving to be a place of support and creative sharing for each other. There is not an expectation that the Minister of Love's Farm would work in the other churches but that there is a sense of belonging to the URC through the Mission Partnership.

We are excited to see what God has in store for this new season of Love's Farm Church.



*From the Regional Minister
for the Eastern Baptist
Association of the Baptist
Union of Great Britain,
Revd Dr Gale Richards*



Celebrating the Partnership

The Eastern Baptist Association (EBA) celebrates the partnership that has existed between the Church of England and the United Reformed Church from the earliest days of the formation of Love's Farm Church.

The EBA is now delighted to add to that partnership our Baptist principles and resources to help facilitate the equipping of members of Love's Farm Church (alongside the minister), to enable each member to share in the leadership of all aspects of the life of the church.

*From the Ecumenical Officer for Churches Together
in Cambridgeshire, **Revd Mark Burleigh***

Seeing the Church flourish

I am excited by what God is doing in Love's Farm, and have very much enjoyed being a part of the worshipping community on a few occasions.



Breakfast Church is great! It has also been a privilege to accompany the church leadership as they discern the next stages in their journey as a Fresh Expression of Church. I am particularly encouraged that the congregation includes people with no Christian background as well as from a variety of Christian traditions. This expression of church is unique to Love's Farm. I hope and pray that as their ecumenical identity emerges and grows, it will remain faithful to their clear principle of making people feel included and welcome.

During this next chapter, the church (and you if you become their leader) will have the full support of Churches Together in Cambridgeshire and be able to draw upon our knowledge and experience gained through supporting ecumenical churches in areas of new housing. We have a wonderful team of ecumenical officers, all of whom are committed to seeing Love's Farm Church flourish as a Local Ecumenical Partnership.

This is a great opportunity for someone with a heart for ecumenism, seeing Christians work together creatively in mission and ministry.

About Love's Farm Church

Love's Farm Church has emerged from a shared vision for a Christian presence on the new housing developments of Love's Farm and Wintringham in St Neots.

It has grown out of prayer and commitment by churches and individual Christians across the town, and a practical partnership between the Eastern Synod of the United Reformed Church and the Church of England (Ely Diocese).

We began meeting in September 2015 to try and imagine how church might work in a new community. From the outset we sought to be a place where people who weren't used to going to church would feel comfortable. We try and make our welcome warm and relaxed. We want everyone who comes to feel this is somewhere they could belong. Every Sunday morning at 10.00 (except the first Sunday of the month) we throw open the doors of Love's Farm House (our community centre) and serve breakfast, followed by an intergenerational cafe-style service which lasts an hour.

Our founding minister was an Anglican Priest and we were funded predominantly by the United Reformed Church. Although many of our members have only recently encountered Christianity, we also have a number of people from a variety of different Christian backgrounds. So as we begin this new chapter we have invited ecumenical friends to become our partners, forming a Local Ecumenical Partnership comprising the Church of England, United Reformed Church and Baptist Union.



"We want everyone who comes to feel this is somewhere they could belong."





Our Vision

As a church we meet at the heart of our community and seek to have the community at the heart of the church. Three key words express what we hope for as a church on Love's Farm and Wintringham: community, encounter and discipleship.

Community is really important to us, both the one that gathers on a Sunday morning and the wider Love's Farm and Wintringham community of which we are a part.

Encounter matters because we believe faith is not the absence of doubt but something much more dynamic, involving relationship and journey. Faith is not something we either have or don't have; it's a journey that we're on and a relationship we're in.

Discipleship: Jesus invites us to become his disciples. When we gather, we try to work out what following Jesus looks like – learning to live, love, walk, and work like he did.

This is our story so far – and we know there are chapters still to be written. But it's not 'our' story alone because it belongs to whoever becomes a part of this 'community – encounter – discipleship' journey that we're on!

Would you like to join us?

Our Context

St Neots is a growing market town with an expanding population due to the significant development in our communities at the eastern edge of the town.

The current population of St Neots is approximately 34,000, and is projected to rise above 40,000 by the close of the decade.

Love's Farm is a development of over 1400 homes and was built on the site of a farm of the same name, originally belonging to a farmer named Adam Love. The first homes were occupied in 2008, and this was also when the local primary school – Round House Primary Academy – opened. The initial Love's Farm development was largely completed in 2016 and now includes

a volunteer-run community centre – where the church and many other local groups meet, a Tesco Express, two takeaways, a pharmacy and a charity shop. 31% of the housing is social housing, with a range of associated needs and challenges, and there are also significantly affluent areas.

Wintringham, when complete, will have 2800 homes, and first occupations were in 2019. There is an additional primary school (with a capacity of over 600 pupils) and at a later stage

There will be

5,000 new homes

when the development is complete

Love's Farm

Our Context continued...

in development there will be community facilities, including a medical centre, community centre, and retail outlets. Wintringham is culturally extremely diverse.

There is also a third development, with infrastructure works underway, to the east of Love's Farm. This has been known as Monksfields but is now looking likely to share the Love's Farm name – and in any case will feel somewhat connected to Love's Farm and will share many of its facilities, but there are also plans for additional sports fields and other amenities such as a pub/hotel.

St Neots railway station is located on the edge of Love's Farm,

with frequent trains to London Kings Cross / St Pancras taking as little as 40 minutes, and many of our residents are commuters to the capital. We are also within commuting distance of Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Peterborough.

We are also fortunate to be on the edge of open countryside with beautiful walks out across farmland right on our doorstep.

Many young couples move from London to buy their first family home on the new developments and we have already seen a generation of newborns grow into teenagers in Love's Farm and we are seeing a similar pattern emerging in Wintringham. Our demographic is thus heavily weighted towards young families.



Wintringham

Our Church

Breakfast Church

Our Sunday morning Breakfast Church is the mainstay of our Church, with an average worshipping congregation of about 40 – of whom roughly 40% are under 18.

We like it to be a warm, welcoming experience, inclusive and openly accessible to people of all faith backgrounds and none. We meet in Love's Farm House, which is the community centre for Love's Farm.

We use music, video, discussion and craft as well as more traditional preaching and teaching methods to enable everyone to encounter Jesus and explore how they might grow in relationship with him. We have just started a worship band which continues to grow and brings a freshness to our worship as we praise and glorify God.

Prayer

We are committed to prayer as a Church, meeting weekly on Zoom as well as sharing prayer requests throughout the week. We currently meet for about 15 minutes on Wednesdays at 8pm to pray for our each other, our community and the world.

Liturgical Year

We generally set a termly theme (e.g. a Gospel, the Prophets, Jesus' miracles etc.) and follow it together. We also mark the major Festivals of the Christian calendar, holding special gatherings during Holy Week, for Pentecost and at Christmas. Sometimes we will read a book together for Lent or have study groups.



Our Church continued...

In the Community

Our Church is deeply embedded within the Love's Farm community and is well respected across the community. In addition to meeting on Sunday mornings it serves children and families in a variety of ways throughout the week.

- Parent and Toddler group, 'Little Loves'
- Youth Club
- **MAST** – Money Advice St Neots. A community money advice service (under the national Community Money Advice (CMA) body) which began under the umbrella of Love's Farm Church and now serves the wider St Neots community as an independent CIO.
<https://mast.support>

We also have excellent relationships across the community, with members of Love's Farm Church serving on the Community Association, Love's Farm House committee, as local councillors and school governors.

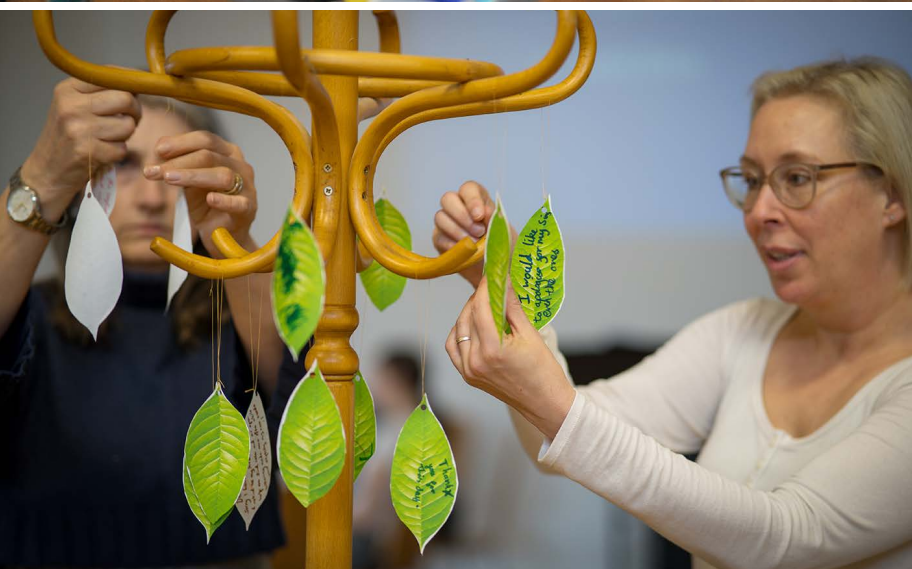
Our school-based work has included assemblies, early intervention coaching, work based chaplaincy and a weekly after school club, 'Bible story explorers'.

Historically LFC has hosted large monthly Messy Church gatherings but they have not restarted since the pandemic.



"Our Church is deeply embedded within the Love's Farm community."





Theological Statement

Love's Farm Church is rooted in the scriptures and in our daily encounter with Christ.

We are orthodox, but also progressive. We are inclusive, but also conservative. We welcome all, and we are committed to the growth of all into the holiness that looks and feels like Jesus.

We hold a wide set of theological and denominational backgrounds but are unified by our shared love and commitment to one another and this community. We have members who have been Jesus followers for decades, and members who are just starting a journey with Christ.

There are some issues where we have reached a common mind:

- We fully accept the giftedness of women and men and are happily led by either.
- We practice both believer baptism and infant baptism
- We welcome LGBTQI+
- We start with Jesus Christ revealed in the scriptures, but we accept that the Holy Spirit continues to lead us into all truth, and that we discern that truth together.

The Post

There is a strong sense that, although Love's Farm Church continues to consolidate and grow our Sunday morning congregation, our mission and ministry will never be confined to that. Our heart is to be mediators of the Gospel message in our locality, and to enable everyone to come to know and live in relationship with Jesus.

What this might look like will be discerned under the leadership of our minister, so it will need to be someone with the vision to be able to see and shape something which is not yet.

Job Description

- To consolidate and grow our Breakfast Church Sunday morning congregation through intergenerational worship, and take a leading role in identifying, facilitating and delivering other ways of worshipping as a community and church.
- Embedding our identity as a new Local Ecumenical Partnership into our structures and processes, so that we can continue to grow and flourish as a church.
- Strengthening and developing the Leadership Team, supporting them to grow as Christians and nurturing others as they are step up into new roles.
- Recognising the importance of promoting the inclusive culture of Love's Farm Church as a respectful environment, in which everyone is welcome and faith can be explored.
- Equipping and enabling all members of the church to grow as disciples and make more disciples, providing opportunities for exploring faith and discipleship.
- To foster a culture of stewardship and giving amongst the membership.
- To be a strong pastoral and evangelistic presence and mediator of the Gospel message in the locality of Love's Farm and Wintringham.
- To ensure a high level of pastoral care
- Facilitating children's and youth groups at Love's Farm House
- Nurturing current relationships with local primary schools
- Representing the Church as key stakeholders in the development of the new community at Wintringham.
- To work missionally in partnership with other churches across St Neots for the benefit of the people of Love's Farm and Wintringham.
- To ensure that Love's Farm Church is represented at local, regional and denominational level where appropriate, sharing the learning you and we have gained through being Church in a Newbuild Housing community, across pioneering networks and denominations.
- To participate in peer support groups locally as agreed between yourself and the participating denominations.
- Other duties and training and learning from time to time as required by the role.

The House

76 Stone Hill was purchased by the United Reformed Church in 2014 when the previous Pioneer Minister was appointed, and they have generously committed it to the new Local Ecumenical Partnership.

The house is a large 5-bedroom property in a prominent location at the heart of Love's Farm and just 5 minutes' walk from the local shops (Tesco Express, pharmacy, takeaways and a charity shop) and the mainline station – which has trains to London taking under an hour.

St Neots is an attractive riverside market town, with a range of independent shops, restaurants and services, and the centre is a little over a mile from the house

Also a short walk away is the bus stop for an express service to Cambridge and Bedford.

The accommodation is arranged over 3 floors, and there's also a double garage with off-street parking.



Person Specification

Education, Training and Experience	Essential	Desirable
Ordained within the Anglican Communion, Baptist Union of Great Britain or United Reformed Church; or Commissioned Church Army Evangelist	✓	
Degree or equivalent level qualification in theology, missiology or other relevant discipline, or equivalent professional work experience	✓	
At least five years' direct experience of ministerial leadership in a pioneering and/or fresh expressions of church context.		✓
Experience of transitioning a new church into its next phase of development		✓
Proven track record of creating, developing and leading Intergenerational worship		✓
Experience of working with theological diversity and different faith traditions, including those who are new to Christianity	✓	
Proven track record of community-focused ministry, preferably within a New-Housing context	✓	
Strong commitment to ecumenical working, preferably with some experience of pioneering alongside ecumenical partners	✓	
Experience of growing and leading teams, including the church leadership team		✓
Proven Abilities, Knowledge and Skills	Essential	Desirable
An entrepreneurial and pioneering mindset, able to identify opportunities for developing new practices, ministries and partnerships		✓
Ability to work with, and come alongside, people of a variety of different ages and backgrounds, both within and outside a church context	✓	

Strong commitment to fostering a culture of inclusivity within the church	✓	
Gifted evangelist and mediator of the Gospel in the community	✓	
Exceptional pastoral skills		✓
Ability to identify gifts and nurture people in their discipleship, including into leadership roles in the church and community	✓	
Strategic planner and creative thinker, with a proven ability to set priorities and meet deadlines	✓	
Proven ability to communicate orally and in writing at a high level		✓
A reflective theologian-practitioner, with the ability to network and share learning within the pioneering field and across denominations.		✓
Confident IT and social media skills with good knowledge of various presentation tools.	✓	
Personal Qualities	Essential	Desirable
Demonstratable mature and deep Christian faith; love of, and faith in, the God of mission; and reliance on the guiding and gifts of the Holy Spirit.	✓	
Motivated self-starter with a flexible attitude, demonstrating enthusiasm, resilience, tenacity and a sense of fun.	✓	
Access to own transport		✓
Evidence of a personal and corporate spiritual practice and prayer	✓	
Willingness to work evenings and weekends	✓	
Willingness to undertake additional learning and training as necessary	✓	