

# Notice for Sunday services at Priory Street and Church on the Green

19<sup>th</sup> February, 2023

**Increasing the adoration of Jesus.** That's our shared aim. Our vision. And this morning I'm going to share more of what the Elders, Trustees and Congregation Leaders sense God is saying to us about how we can do just that.

We're really excited to be sharing this news with you.

Bear in mind as I share it that this isn't the end point. We're at the beginning of this journey, and working it out as we go, but we want to share this with you as early as possible so that you can pray with us, talk with us, and play your part as we discern God's calling on us as a church. To help with that, we're going to have a special church meeting on Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> March at 3pm where we'll give more detail and you can ask any questions you have.

Over the past ten years, we've gone from being a church with one Sunday congregation at Priory Street, to having the 9.15 and 11.15 at Priory Street and Church on the Green in Rudloe on Sundays, plus the Mid-week congregation. With that we've gained some challenges. The services at Priory Street have to make room for each other, so there's less flexibility to worship longer for the 9.15 on a Sunday morning, and the worship leaders for the 11.15 can't turn up earlier to practise. We've had three Sunday morning congregations, but only two pastors through that time, which has made pastoral care more challenging.

So. Imagine with me if you will.

Imagine One church with two Sunday congregations. Both with their own pastor, Rob at Priory Street, and Adam at the other. Both with a place to meet. And both without time restrictions on their meetings.

Imagine that those two congregations had the resources both to hold the Sunday services, but also to reach out for the gospel into their local community, and further afield.

What we're suggesting is that the 9.15 congregation and Church on the Green join together to form a new congregation either in Rudloe or Neston, but reaching out to both communities for the gospel.

Now – I'm sure that raises a hundred questions... so let me very briefly say a few things that may answer some of those...

1. It is not the 9.15 being sucked into COTG, or COTG into the 9.15 – this would be a new work for the gospel made up of people primarily from 9.15 and COTG, with a leadership team made up of the leadership teams of both congregations.
2. Notice that I said primarily... we would not be expecting that everyone from each of those congregations would necessarily join the new work... We would give everyone the opportunity to prayerfully consider which congregation they might choose to be a part of, including those at the 11.15 service.

3. We're conscious that this will rest in large part on finding the right building for this new congregation to meet in, and we're working on that.
4. We are involving Adam our incoming Associate Pastor in every step of this process, and he's onboard and excited about pastoring the new congregation.
5. Adam and I [Rob] would have a focus on a particular Sunday morning congregation, but as pastors of CBC as a whole, we will do pulpit swaps regularly so that have we the opportunity to know and be known, and to exercise ministry across the whole church – including Adam leading us in our Evangelism.
6. Finally, I haven't talked about the MWS – that's not because we think you're any less important, but it is because this move will primarily affect the Sunday congregations. Nevertheless, those at the MWS may well feel they would like to join this new congregation on a Sunday morning, and those at the Sunday services may feel that the MWS is a congregation they would like to join.

.. as I said, we'll have a meeting on Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> March at 3pm, so do come along to that and we can go into more detail, and you can ask your questions.

If this goes ahead, The Oversight Team, Trustees and Congregation Leaders are keenly aware that this is not simply a task of moving chess pieces round a board, but that we are talking about real people. So if you have concerns, or you think we're missing something as we go ahead, please don't suffer in silence, but do come and talk to us.

As I've met with the Congregation Leaders over the past week, it's been truly humbling to see how those who have put sweat blood and tears into helping to lead these congregations over many years, have been willing to put aside a sense of personal ownership of the congregations for the sake of the gospel possibilities set before us. I would humbly ask that as we consider these changes, we all seek to follow their example. Ultimately, the congregations are not our congregations. They are God's church. And so we set out with care, but also with great excitement and anticipation to see what God will do as he continues to guide CBC into the next step of the gospel work he has called us to. Let's pray that through this task God would increase our adoration of Jesus at every step.