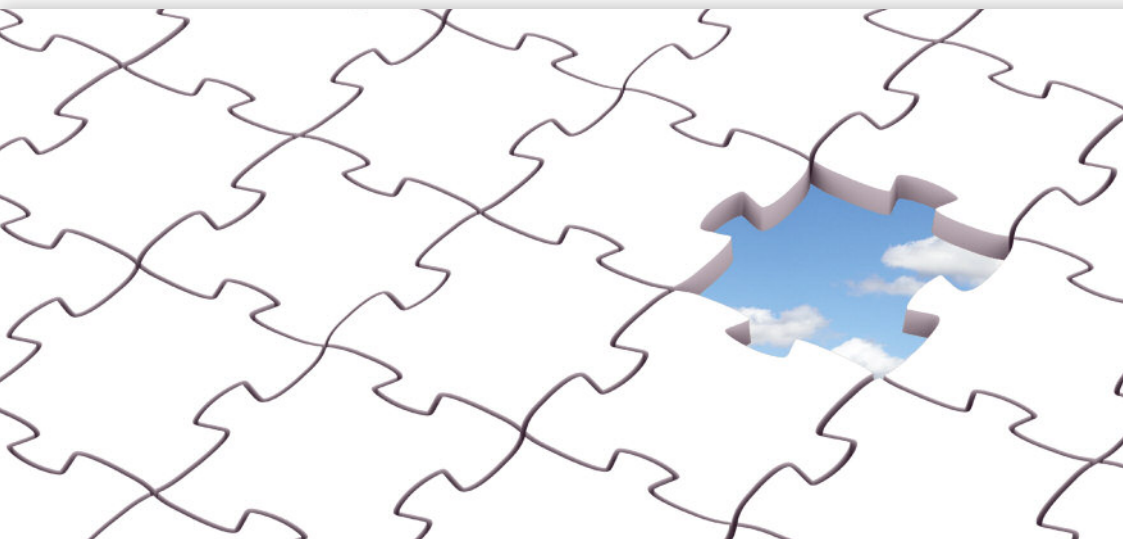


Gillingham
 Community
 Church



Becoming a partner

Introduction

Being a partner at GCC does not depend on religious rites or knowledge of creeds and such, but on a personal experience of being born-again and a desire to be actively involved in our work and life together.

Those who have accepted Jesus as their Saviour and Lord, and who recognise that God is calling them to be joined with us, are welcome to explore becoming a partner at GCC.

What is the church?

The church is neither a building nor is it affiliation to a particular denomination. The church consists only of those who have been born-again by accepting Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

In the Bible the church is spoken about in two ways. Sometimes the church referred to is the worldwide church, consisting of all born-again Christians wherever they are in the world. The moment that you accept Jesus as your Saviour and Lord you become a part of this worldwide church.



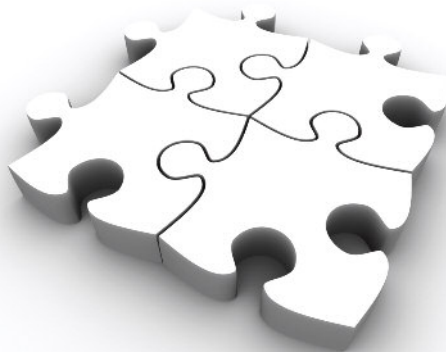
The church referred to most often in the bible is the local group of Christians, who God has called together in a particular place. GCC is one such group of local Christians seeking to worship and work together in the place where we live.

What partnership means

When you think about becoming part of a church, you might think of it a bit like taking up a membership of a club with its rules and procedures, quaint initiation rituals and possibly some sort of distinctive dress code. Maybe you see it like joining the local gym or starting evening classes. Being part of a church is not like that—at least not in GCC!

We are not, and never will be, a perfect church, but we are called to be united with one another. It is when we are united that we feel that we truly belong. The key to relating together in unity is in each individual having a living relationship with Jesus and in being committed to a common purpose. Unity is not conformity; in fact we celebrate the different ways in which our diversity can be used to express the life we have together.

Partnership is public statement that you identify with and belong to the local church family. It is also the recognition by the rest of the church family of you being accepted and welcomed as an equal and integral part of GCC.



Sharing responsibility

Being a partner in GCC is about commitment to each other. Partners share responsibility for the rest of the church and the work we do within GCC, the local community, and further afield.

First and foremost we seek to live a life that brings glory to God and to be in a right relationship with one another. If there is anything between us and God or between individual partners in GCC, we seek to put this right as soon as possible.

Every partner is treated equally and without favour. We seek to serve one another and to bear one another's burdens when times are difficult. We rejoice with one another when things go well.

Partners in GCC are encouraged to develop their individual gifting and calling in coordination with everyone else. We believe that everyone has a part to play in harmony with each other and that God has put us together to be fully engaged in the life and mission of the church. Every partner will be equipped and empowered to serve by the Holy Spirit.

Meeting together is essential to the growth of our faith and in maintaining our identity as a community.

All partners are expected to participate regularly in the main meetings and small groups at GCC.

As part of the giving of ourselves to Jesus and to his church we encourage partners to make regular financial contributions in accordance with their means.



There is room for different views about matters that are not fundamental to our beliefs, but we do not allow them to become issues that divide us. At GCC we seek to be transparent and honest in all our dealings both with one another and with others outside the church.

God calls and equips some people to function in the role of local church leaders. At GCC we have a team of leaders, who seek to lead with servant hearts. We share the work with them, support and encourage them, and accept their leadership.

In the unusual event of a partner engaging in conduct that compromises the reputation of GCC, regularly behaving in a way that is contrary to their commitment to Jesus or deliberately continuing to promote unsound teaching, the leaders may follow a process of discipline and restoration. This may eventually lead to the ending of that person's partnership, should they refuse to be restored to a healthy involvement in GCC.

Any partner who is absent from regular meetings of GCC for more than a year, except for extenuating circumstances, or who decides to join another local church will be deemed to have ended their partnership with GCC.



Belonging



So being a partner in GCC is about belonging and finding a spiritual home and it is also about commitment. It is important to understand what you are committing yourself to before you take the step of becoming a partner.

The Bible talks about the church being like a body in which each part is as equally important as the others. A body only works well if all of the parts are functioning together in unity.

Being a partner in GCC is not a nominal matter nor is it for those who do not intend to participate in the life of the church. Becoming a partner is making a statement that God has called you to be a fully joined and functioning part of his body in Gillingham.

We welcome anyone to make a connection with us. We aim to be open and welcoming to people at all stages of their journey towards faith in Jesus, including those who are still seeking to make sense of their lives. However, we encourage born-again Christians, who recognise a joining together with us, to make the commitment of becoming a partner.

This is not to create a two-tier church; it simply reflects where individuals are in their relationship with God and with the local group of Christians here at GCC.



Who can become a partner?

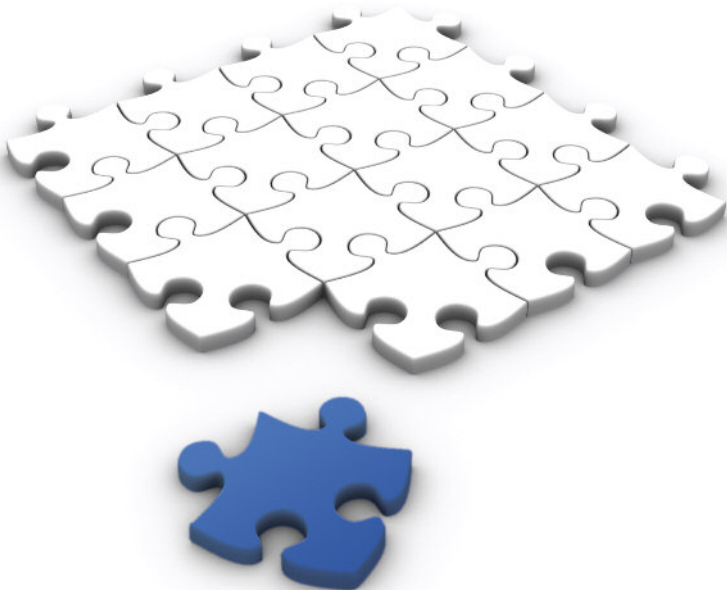
Partnership is open to any adult who believes that they are called to be part of GCC. You must be a born-again Christian, trusting in Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, and have been baptised in the understanding of this, preferably by immersion.



How do I become a partner?

When you believe that God is calling you to partner with us at GCC, please tell one of the leaders who will ask that you to fill in a new partners application form. Once the form is returned, one of the leaders will arrange for an informal chat with you. If there are any issues, they can be discussed at this point.

Assuming that everything is okay, you will be welcomed as a partner in GCC at one of the general meetings, such as a Family Forum.





I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1³⁻⁶ (NIV)