

CHURCH PROFILE

Upton Vale Baptist Church is a large and lively church of all ages. Its current 350 members form a welcoming, caring and inclusive intergenerational church family, drawn from across Torbay and beyond. Whilst our current Sunday morning congregation averages approximately 300, just under one third are under the age of 18. Before the current pandemic, Upton Vale was committed to running a large number of programmes across a variety of ministry areas. This included B2gether (our group for those with additional needs), Third Age activities for the retired, provision for pre-school and young families, and targeted children's and youth work. As a church we have been challenged at this pivotal time, to ask ourselves what God is doing right now at Upton Vale in Torquay. We believe that the current pandemic is a once in a generation opportunity to re-evaluate, not only what we do, but how we do it. We are asking the question '*what does it look like to move from being a church that ran many programmes to a church that becomes a disciple making movement?*'

The church is led by Andy Hickford, our Senior Minister and we have separate groups of Elders and Governance Trustees.

The current Staff Team includes:

- Director of Pastoral Care and Evangelism (full-time)
- Emerging Generations Team Leader (full-time)
- Executive Assistant to the Core Team (20 hours)
- Two Administrators covering full-time equivalent administrative support
- Communications Lead (8 hours)
- Premises Manager (20 hours) and Caretaker (20 hours), Assistant Caretaker (30 hours)

Upton Vale Baptist Church is situated in Torquay, one of three towns that make up 'the Bay', on Devon's English Riviera coast. Built upon seven hills, cycling in Torquay is not for the faint hearted, but does allow for fantastic views of both the surrounding coastline and Devon countryside and, travelling a little further afield, Dartmoor National Park is a mere stone's throw away. Whilst Torquay has a population of around 65,000, the three towns of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham together make up the small unitary authority of Torbay (the Bay) which has a population of about 135,000.

The public sector is currently the largest employer in Torbay which includes Torbay Hospital, 31 primary schools and eight secondary schools, whilst the seasonal holiday industry is also vital to the local economy. The recent construction of a northbound dual carriageway now provides a good road infrastructure connecting Torbay with Exeter, its closest city, and home of the Premiership rugby champions, Exeter Chiefs. Torquay itself is a fascinating blend of social and economic polarities, very wealthy residential areas rubbing shoulder to shoulder with areas of extreme poverty.

In common with most English seaside towns, Torquay has suffered some economic decline since the advent of the package holiday. Drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy and mental health are all social problems within Torquay and the Institute of Fiscal Studies predicts that following Brexit and Covid, Torbay will be one of the worst hit areas of the UK.

From its central position within the town, all this gives Upton Vale Baptist Church a uniquely challenging but exciting opportunity in serving the community and seeking to minister the love of Jesus to Torquay. Whilst a wide range of external groups already regularly use our premises and the church buildings throughout the week, Upton Vale, together with other local churches have developed strong links with our local council and other agencies.

In January 2022, we are excited to be opening an Education Centre here at the church, in partnership with Transforming Lives for Good.

Our Purpose, Vision and Values:

Upton Vale
BAPTIST CHURCH

OUR PURPOSE

To help people join the dots between who Jesus is and how we live.

OUR VISION

A community of people being changed by Jesus to bring change to the world.

OUR VALUES

Faithful Expectancy

Bold Creativity

Authentic Humility