

Prince's Drive Baptist Church Ethos Statement

1. Our Christian Identity

Prince's Drive Baptist Church is a community of Christians who live to worship God, to grow in our understanding and experience of God, to share the good news about Jesus Christ and to work for the common good. It is this Christian identity, our covenant with the Baptist community and Prince's Drive Baptist Church's agreed beliefs and values that are the foundation of all we are and do.

2. Our Commitment to the Wider Baptist Community

Prince's Drive Baptist Church has chosen to covenant with the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) and its member churches and organisations. Therefore, BUGB's Declarations of Principle, Vision and Culture all inform our ethos as a Baptist church.

The Declaration of Principle

The three-part 'Declaration of Principle' forms the basis of understanding for all who belong to the Baptist Union and Prince's Drive Baptist Church affirms this declaration prayerfully and wholeheartedly:

1. That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws.
2. That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who 'died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again the third day'.
3. That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.

Baptist Union of Great Britain Vision and Culture

BUGB is committed to intentionally developing a culture where we are

“Growing healthy churches in relationship for God's mission”.

This means we:

- 1. Seek to be a movement of spirit led communities** – As those who have encountered the living Christ, to intentionally seek his will and purpose for our local churches and every expression of our shared life. (Galatians 5:22-25)

2. Feel like one team – celebrating diversity; valuing, respecting and trusting each other as we work together in partnerships - making sure everyone feels included and listened to. (I Corinthians 12:24b-27)

3. Embrace adventure – being serious about discipleship, willing to take risks, pioneer and move out of the comfort zone of familiar ways of doing things. (Matthew 28:18-20)

4. Inspire others – with a generosity of spirit, to energise and motivate people to be all that God created them to be. (Ephesians 5:1 & 2)

5. Share a hunger for God's coming kingdom – nurturing a 'holy discontent' that arises from our desire to give practical expression to our vision of God's purpose for creation - confronting evil, injustice and hypocrisy and challenging worldly attitudes to power, wealth, status and security both within and beyond our Union. (Matthew 6:9 & 10)

3. Our Values and Vision Statement

As a church we have discerned these values and this vision statement specifically for our mission and ministry, complemented by the Vision and Culture of The Baptist Union of Great Britain above.

Our simple but significant vision:

“Together under God to see all people become devoted followers of Christ”.

This then is seen in our core values as a church, as at PDBC we seek to be:

1. Serious about the Bible: 2 Timothy 3:14-17 - The Bible is the word of God and we do not want to be a church that simply pays lip service to the book or uses it as a jumping off point into discussion. We believe it to be our source of authority about the things of God.

2. People who pray and seek God: Matthew 6:33 - The Westminster shorter catechism asks 'what is the chief end of man?' The reply is to 'glorify God and enjoy him forever.' We understand that it is very easy to believe in God but to live like an atheist. We seek to be a community which takes the call to pray and seek God very seriously knowing that that is the only way we will truly grow in faith and knowledge of God.

3. A blessing to our community Mark: 12:28-31 - We do not believe that we have to choose between being a Gospel church and a church engaged with the community. It matters that we are engaged in the community around us and that as we show support and care that we speak of the reality of Jesus and the need for salvation in him.

4. Becoming more like Jesus: Philippians 2:1-11 - We are followers of Jesus and we should seek to be more like Him in word and deed.

5. Welcoming to all: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 - A Church community should be a place of redemption and restoration. All are welcome to come and explore what it means to follow Jesus.

4. Statement of Beliefs

In recognition of the Baptist principle that each church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer the laws of Jesus Christ, and following the ethos outlined above, Prince's Drive Baptist Church has discerned and agreed to hold to the following theological convictions. As a member church of the Evangelical Alliance we have adopted their basis of faith as our own:

Evangelical Alliance Basis of faith

We believe in...

1. The one true God who lives eternally in three persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
2. The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.
3. The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God - fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.
4. The dignity of all people, made male and female in God's image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.
5. The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ - born of the virgin Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.
6. The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.
7. The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection; his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.
8. The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.
9. The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.
10. The Church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers - given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.
11. The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.

5. Women in Leadership

Prince's Drive Baptist Church holds to the view that God created women and men equal in personhood and that He calls and equally affirms both men and women into a vast array of roles, including all forms of church leadership.

6. Sex and Gender

Prince's Drive Baptist Church acknowledges that while gender reassignment in and of itself is no barrier to participation in the life of the church, on the basis that the Bible teaches God created man and woman and a person's gender is God given and assigned at birth, this theological position precludes transgender persons from being appointed to leadership positions in the life of the church.

7. Sexual Orientation & Same-Sex Marriage

Prince's Drive Baptist Church holds to the understanding that while sexual orientation in and of itself is no barrier to full participation in the life of the church, sexual relationships can only be expressed in marriage which we recognise as being between a man and a woman. This theological position precludes those who are not celibate outside of marriage or those in a same-sex marriage from being appointed to membership and leadership positions in the life of the church.

8. Marriage & Divorce

Prince's Drive Baptist Church holds to the understanding that neither divorce or remarriage are necessarily barriers to church leadership or full participation in the life of the church.