



The **Methodist** Church

Edmonton Methodist Church

Affirming the
inclusivity of a
church that
represents the
ethnic diversity of
its community



Edmonton Methodist Church is a town centre church located on the main high street in the centre of a diverse, multi-ethnic community. The church has a wide variety of ethnicities and ages who worship together and runs a food hub to meet the needs of their local community.

Summary

There are well over 100 people who worship together every Sunday morning. Worship is vibrant and uplifting. Services last over 100 minutes and include time for celebrating a shared journey of discipleship, as well as worshipping God.

The food hub began in April 2020 as a way to provide for people during lockdown. Deliveries were made to over 200 households in 2020. The hub still provides deliveries to 40 households, as well as running a food pantry on Saturdays.



The church initially had a predominantly white congregation, before people of Caribbean heritage joined in the last century, followed by many people of Ghanaian heritage.

The church found that being a diverse church, in which many people can find a sense of belonging, has drawn in an even greater diversity of people.

Process

The church leadership is intentionally diverse in its ethnicity, across the full range of roles within the church.

The church maintains a clear sense of its history and of having a shared story, with longstanding members sharing stories from the church's history as part of the congregation's shared discipleship. Past members are remembered and their contributions are celebrated during services.

The church have planning permission to re-build the church building. They have been planning this for the past ten years as the current building is not fit for their mission purpose. The church are currently fundraising, having had their plans delayed by the costs of rising inflation. The new church is being environmentally consciously designed and is intended to have solar panels to power its central heating.



A place for discipleship



Sunday services are not just an opportunity to worship God. They are also an opportunity for members of the congregation to share together events from their lives, such as bereavements and birthdays, and journey as disciples together.

The discipleship of past members of the congregation is reflected upon during services. Members of the congregation, including children, contribute their gifts to worship, including by leading prayers and sharing reflections on the theme.

A children's holiday club is run each summer.



At the heart of the community

The church is on the main high street. The local shops and businesses cater to a wide range of ethnic groups, providing food and services to a diverse community. This is reflected in the work of the church's food hub, as well as the diversity of the congregation. The food hub maintains good relations with neighbouring traders and shops.

Sunday worship reflects the traditional styles of different groups within the congregation. It includes extempore prayers and preaching, traditional hymns and modern music and video technology.

Video and projection are used to ensure that the service is accessible to all members of the congregation, including those with visual or hearing impairments.

Inclusive

The church recognise that different groups within the congregation have different needs in order to truly have a sense of belonging.

There is a Ghanaian Methodist fellowship that meets regularly. There are also monthly Ghanaian worship services on Sunday afternoons.

The church organises a trip to the Caribbean that visits a number of islands, so that church members can remember and explore their diverse heritage and histories together.



All ages are fully included within worship. Children take part in all aspects of the worship service, including sharing reflections on the theme. Older members of the congregation maintain roles in leadership and welcoming visitors.



At the food pantry on Saturdays, members of the public can buy £20 worth of groceries for £3.50 from a stall at the front of the church.

Funding comes from Public Health England, along with donations from members of the congregation and the nearby New River Church. The project gets a delivery of surplus food from the Felix Project and also buys ethically farmed fresh food to sell.



Cares for the whole person and community, not just people's spiritual needs

The pantry closed for a while when it could not be done in a way that was COVID-safe, before re-opening once it was safe to.

At Christmas, hampers are delivered to those households who receive grocery deliveries from the food hub, which contain higher quality groceries as a gift to recipients.



The food hub caters to the needs of the diverse ethnic community. It supplies cultural food that is not necessarily available at affordable prices, such as cornmeal, yams and plantains. Signage is produced in a range of languages.

The Methodist Church affirms Edmonton Methodist Church because it is:

❖ Safe

- Provides a safe way for people to access the food hub, by ensuring the pantry is safe and delivering to those not able to come out

❖ Inclusive

- Worship that is inclusive for all, of all ages, cultures and abilities

❖ Serves people, meeting their needs

- Provides affordable groceries to those in need

❖ At the heart of its community

- Not that it is a town centre location, but that the church reflects its community and provides for the differing needs within the community

❖ Provides space for discipleship

- Uplifting services provide worship and shared discipleship that caters to diverse traditions

❖ Has an ethnically diverse congregation that reflects its diverse community

- A vibrant, diverse congregation that draws in others
- No ethnic group dominates worship or leadership
- Recognises that different groups have different needs in order to truly experience belonging, and meets these needs through church activities that cater to particular groups

❖ A commitment to further becoming more inclusive

- The church recognises that its congregation does not fully represent the ethnic diversity of its community and, through the produce and signage available at the food hub, is reaching out to the East European community in the area