

Community & Women's Worker

Cumbernauld Free Church

Introduction

At Cumbernauld Free Church our developing vision highlights that the greatest need for investment and input is in community engagement and equipping our women to be effective disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our hope of employing a neighbourhood worker is to build on the established relationships and networks we already have with our young families, children, and the community activities. We want to appoint a person with a calling for church and community based work who would support the development and implementation of the church's mission. We want them to support the church community in being welcoming, encouraging, hospitable, and, in building relationships. The worker would also enable and equip other women in our congregation to develop their faith through prayer, study, action, and relationships.

This position will be full-time contract and we envisage that this position lasting for three years - then to be reviewed. The position we hope will help to grow our church, strengthen our female members to become more effective in community outreach. We, also, hope it will develop a culture of team ministry within our congregation at this early stage of renewal.

Background:

Cumbernauld is officially North Lanarkshire's largest town with a population over 50,000. It is also one of Scotland's best commuter towns - located 13 miles north east of Glasgow and occupying a strategic location at the junction of the M80 and the M73 - Central Scotland's main motorway system. As a result, Cumbernauld is used by thousands as a place to do business, to live and to raise a family.

It is a growing town, which also has the imminent prospect of economic revitalisation. If successful in its application to planning permission, the town hopes to see a multi-million-pound 'TV and Film studio' built— creating new jobs and real potential for further investment. The TV series "Outlander" is being filmed in Cumbernauld at present. There is concern for redeveloping our "infamous" towncentre —which has been voted twice the ugliest in Britain.

Cumbernauld Free Church was planted fifty years ago, with the earnest desire that the community of South Carbrain (SC) and town of Cumbernauld would be served with a strong and clear gospel witness. The church building was suitably built in the heart of the SC neighbourhood – a two minute walk from the train station and a five minute walk from the town centre. SC is a community of contrasts. On one hand, there is a great deal of people living in social deprivation; on the other hand, there are numerous middle class and well-settled families.

From its beginning, CFC enjoyed a great deal of blessing growing in the 70s and 80s with attendances regularly over 100. In its boom years CFC, was also responsible for planting the Dunblane Free Church congregation. In recent years, the church has declined numerically with families moving out of the town.

However, fifty years on, the original vision and mission continues. Today, we are a small, but, rapidly growing neighbourhood church. Since October 31st 2015, we have been a church in the process of revitalisation and renewal. Since then, we have welcomed nine new members, our weekly giving has increased by 28%, our Sunday attendance has increased significantly, we have also welcomed (at least) one new visitor every weekend from January. These are very exciting times for us at CFC.

However, our needs as a church are great with an ageing core, a rapidly growing town, and a community pregnant with gospel opportunity. The developing vision and pressing need in the congregation is to engage our dynamic yet unreached neighbourhood; and to effectively equip, disciple and invest strategically in the women in our congregation.

Our neighbourhood around the church is mainly made of up working-class Scots - who either find employment locally or commute into Glasgow for work. Many of these residents are young and raising families. Conveniently, there are a number of nurseries, primary schools and secondary schools to cater for the children in the vicinity of SC. In addition, there is a large elderly population. Most of them have been here from the town's inception having moved here with young families as the new town grew in the 1960s and 70s. Furthermore, there is also a small but rapidly growing population of immigrants from all corners of the globe. Also, with the refugee crisis it looks highly likely Cumbernauld will be the third North Lanarkshire town to become a home for the refugees – after Coatbridge and Airdrie.

Our need

Our church has more women than men in the congregation. Our two evangelistic ministries are Little Lambs – a Carer and Toddler group which attracts up to 23 toddlers with their mothers/carers and our Ladies' Fellowship which attracts up to 15 women. The majority of our visitors to our church have been women. Therefore we believe that we need to become more strategic and intentional in these areas of ministry. We need to equip and disciple the women in our congregation desperately.

At CFC, we are conscious that our minister is a single man - with no wife to support him and the increasing pastoral needs of the congregation (i.e. a growing number of women with young children attending regularly attached to our church through mothers & toddlers group); therefore we need to do something urgently to enable fruitful ministry among women. We want also to rectify and address the occupational challenge that our minister faces meeting with female members of the congregation for pastoral care.

Aims and Objectives

Our aim is to find a person who can do two things:

- 1) Engage and evangelise our local community
- 2) Disciple and equip our female members

The role would involve identifying and assessing the needs of the local community in Cumbernauld (S Carbrain in particular) with a view to Gospel engagement in the area

Engaging with the community around the church; making friendships and forming relationships with an intentional view of sharing the Gospel

Identifying the needs and wants of the international community around the church and plan ways to meet these needs with a Gospel-centred approach.

Discipling and equipping women in the congregation through structured, planned one-to-one Bible studies, intentional fellowship, and offering pastoral support.

Helping to run 'Little Lambs', the Carer & Toddler group, as well as offering and providing care and discipleship for mothers and young adults.

Encouraging hospitality and a sense of community, through fellowship and food both within and outwith the church.

Offering one-to-one help and support to those struggling with addiction and in recovery, as well as taking part in the recovery groups.

General expectations would include being accountable to the church staff team, including Kirk Session, and to meet regularly with appropriate female colleagues for mentoring.

Our objective is to have the worker to liaise closely with the minister and elders to coordinate pastoral care and training for the female church members and who is passionate about engaging and reaching our community.

We are looking for a woman who demonstrates godliness in her life & ministry, is gifted in teaching the Bible to women in small groups and one to one; has strong relational and pastoral skills, brings significant experience in women's ministry and can lead and further develop our existing ministry among women. We want her to have a proven experience of working within community groups and has proven involvement within their current church. Ideally the person would be enthusiastic, self-motivated, have good organizational skills and an ability to engage with a wide range of people of different ages and backgrounds.

At CFC, we believe that one of the most undervalued and underinvested areas of ministry in CFC is the women's ministry. Whilst maintaining the biblical standpoint of complementarianism –the belief that men and women are created equals; yet have different God-given roles and responsibilities – we are passionate about women being utilized for gospel ministry. We believe that women have been given all sorts of ministry gifts, and that our church is poorer if these gifts are not being developed and used. This is why we want to develop a role in our church for a woman to be serving in our church among our women in order to invest in them for mutual support and encouragement.



Megan Gray

Megan Gray (formerly Bryce) is currently working as the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Support worker in Madras Street (a ministry of Free North Church, Inverness). She is married to Robin and at present finds herself seeking employment in the central belt in church work.

Brief Biography

Megan is 25 years old and is from Nairn. She graduated from Strathclyde University with a BA (Hons) degree in Community Education and Development. She has a number of additional qualifications including: 'STRADA certificates: Introduction to Substance Abuse, Addiction Relapse Prevention'; 'Level 3 Diploma in Addiction Counselling' and 'NHS Mental Health First Aid Training'. She is also in the process of gaining a Diploma in Biblical Counselling (CCEF).

Megan has worked with array of secular and Christian organisations which have given her exposure to people from a very wide range of backgrounds. These include: Road To Recovery, Inverness: Church based support worker working with men and woman suffering because of or from addiction; Highland Council, Nairn- Teaching English through ESOL and adults with learning disabilities; The Prince's Trust, Glasgow: Working with unemployed men and woman aged 16-25 in two 12-week self-development programmes. XChange Scotland and SOS (Sense Over Sectarianism), Glasgow: Sessional workshop leader in local schools and ESOL classes in Glasgow City College. The Tron, Glasgow: Teaching young people English in Slovakia. Glasgow City Mission: Working with addictions, unemployment and homeless adults in Glasgow. Serving In Mission (S.I.M): Teaching adults English in Bangladesh. Relief Care Assistant, Whinnieknowe Care Home (Crossreach), Nairn.

We strongly believe that Megan is ideal for us here in Cumbernauld – her background, her experience and her current circumstances appear to be uniquely tailored for what we are looking for. At our Annual Congregational Meeting, the elders and the congregation unanimously agreed that Megan was to help take us forward our vision and mission.

The congregation would also be very keen for Megan (and Robin, if this is agreeable to the Boards of Ministry/ETS) to receive mentorship from Rev Iain McDonald and his wife Marilyn, who have a great deal of ministry experience and are involved in the life of the congregation.

We pray that this might be one of the most significant steps we take with regards to gearing for growth. Although we do recognise that they won't be the answers to all our problems, but God willing they would play a part in boosting, investing, supporting, multiplying and equipping our congregation for more effective Gospel ministry in Cumbernauld. We also recognise that we would have the thrill of supporting two people who in God's grace may become leaders in their chosen fields wherever God calls them.

Sustainability

Acknowledging that this position is a development post, we envisage that the congregation will grow and experience an increase in numbers, givings and above all the ability of those being trained to feel able to take the work forward as we become a self-sustaining church. Assuming, we see this growth we believe that the improving financial position would mean that we are more able to sustain extra personnel who would fit the developing plan.

Depending on the research of the needs of the communities, the developing work might require a new slant to the work being carried out by our church. Our quarterly reviews, will give pointers to the particular direction of the work.

Robin

Megan's husband Robin Gray, is currently doing a ministry apprenticeship in the Free North Church, Inverness. During this time, he sensed a call to pastoral ministry. His application to become a Free Church ministry candidate has been successful. He will start his studies at Edinburgh Theological Seminary this September. Hence, Robin and his wife Megan are in the process of relocating to the central belt of Scotland.

Cost

Total over three years: £75k

Annual yearly Budget: £25k

Salary: £18k (roughly 80% stipend)

NI and Pension contribution: £4k

Expenses & help with housing: £3k

Funding

Funding is intended to come from a variety of sources.

Sustainability

The post will be reviewed after the initial three-year appointment but, as a role designed to support growth and development, there is a prayerful expectation of increased numbers in the congregation and therefore an increase in financial givings leading to longer term sustainability.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

If you have any more questions feel free to contact Rev. Andy Longwe:

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