

Earls Colne Baptist Church Equality Policy

March 2024

As a church community we believe that all people are made in the image of God and should be treated with due consideration and respect.

In keeping with the UK **Equality Act 2010**, we will not discriminate any person due to their:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

We aim for our building, our worship services and other groups to be **accessible** to all. If a church member, hirer or visitor feels that the building, worship service or other group has not been accessible, they should report this to the minister or one of the deacons (details below).

We aim to avoid **direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, discrimination by association, perception discrimination, victimisation** and **harassment**. If a church member, hirer or visitor feels that they have been discriminated against, victimised or harassed, they should report this to the minister or one of the deacons (details below).

We reserve the right, under the law, to **promote our Christian faith** in our teaching and practice and to run our organisation according to Christian principles. This includes a requirement that the deacons and church members and attendees **profess and act in accordance with a Christian faith** and that all those using the building are **respectful of Christian principles**.

Our Ethos Statement

1. Our Christian Identity

Earls Colne 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 Earls Colne 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

Earls Colne Baptist Church has chosen to covenant with the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) and its member churches and organisations. Therefore, BUGB's Declaration 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 Earls Colne 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:

- 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)
- 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)

- 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)
- 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)
- 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)

This policy was approved by Michelle Eversden-Thomas (ECBC minister), Cynthia Moorman (ECBC deacon) and Judy Bird (ECBC deacon) in March 2024.