

***The pages from our church website which describe the vision
we are still working towards
www.valentinechurch.online***



The
United
Reformed
Church

Shiregreen URC

Working in Community in North Sheffield

Home

Our Vision

About Us

Worship

Activities

News/Events

Contact

Blog/Links

Members

MAKING SPACE AT SHIREGREEN



We are seeking to develop our church plant and surroundings to serve the local community through the creation of special spaces



We want to upgrade all of our facilities over the next few years to offer everyone who comes onto our premises a positive and uplifting experience while they are with us,

Creating space in time and space so that moments can arise serendipity - within oneself or between self and others.

"I love this place. It provides room for my children to explore while adults sit and talk and eat together. It is an easy space."
(Carer with mum and children)





Some of the spaces we seek to create:

A WELCOMING SPACE



One of the early features we have noticed in our social café, Cafe Valentine, is the inter-generational make-up of those who are using the café.

Carers with children, three generation family groups as well as the elderly transported in the church minibus, and also groups of friends

There is an advantage in having a building which doesn't look like a church! People are more likely to 'wander in' when there is little to suggest that this is a 'religious' building. We are currently renewing our heating system to ensure the space is always warm and comfortable and we are considering a scheme to dampen down the sound levels in the main hall.

Having said that our building looks like a community hall, our large displays say something about who we are and what we do during the week as well as providing posters to stimulate reflection and discussion.





As a church, we use our main hall for a Toddler Group, After School Club, Older People's Lunch Club, a social cafe and special events such as Afternoon tea. Our Café is called Café Valentine as we are located on Valentine Crescent. We operate as a Warm Space in Winter months

As well as these church-run activities, the hall is also used on Tuesday to Saturday for a Dance School, community events and parties.

A Reflective Space

In our chapel, we offer organized worship, Godly Play monthly for our After School Club, and an intimate and flexible space. People can feel encouraged to reflect individually and in groups.

The space is now carpeted throughout so that people can sit on the floor or on the moveable chairs as required. We tend to worship 'in the round' on Sundays, sometimes as a Cafe Church.



The chapel is always available for anyone to sit and be still. There is a Godly Play corner where resources are displayed ready for storytelling both with children and adults.

We have become aware of the value of this storytelling method in working with older people with dementia and three of the church personnel have attended a training day for that particular focus.

We do not consider Sunday as the only day when 'church' happens. We believe it happens every time we are together in the building with the great variety of people who come through our doors.

Currently, we are using another storytelling resource called, **Open The Box** to offer a reflective space for customers at our Café Valentine, every week



A Safe Space

We have developed an enclosed and secure space behind the main hall where all ages can sit and/or play within a paved and gardened area. We hope to enhance the space with better garden features and outdoor furniture.

During the summer months, this space has proved particularly useful to Café Valentine where children can play safely while adults can sit and enjoy the outdoors.



A Healing Space

We have converted rooms in our 'exterior office building' for the provision of play and creative arts therapy. This includes a sitting room for informal conversation as well as a therapy room equipped with art and craft materials, toys and sand trays.

We have a qualified Play Therapist within our membership who has been offering sessions to children from the neighborhood as well as to adults wishing to benefit from creative art or sandplay therapy.



This service is offered free of charge and could well expand should funding be sourced to enhance the provision to the community around Shiregreen.

A Creative Space

We would like to make our upstairs craft room a place where more people can feel welcome and encouraged to be creative. There is a plentiful supply of materials and equipment as well as numerous 'crafty people' to offer help and instruction.

Our Children, Youth and Families worker is seeking to develop the small craft group which meets each week into a resource for parents and others to learn new craft skills, including sewing.



A Warm Space

Since the pandemic, we have registered as a Warm Space and offer free hot drinks, soup and toast for anyone who wishes to sit in our Café Valentine space on a Tuesday morning each week during the winter months.



A Recreational Space

The grassed area in front of the church buildings are being developed to incorporate some play facilities for children and young people whilst also making access to the lower level easier for older people so that they can sit and enjoy the environment in better weather.

In the warmer months, this space is an asset to the After School Club to let off steam, play ball games and hide and seek.

The children asked for a swing, so we fixed one to a convenient sturdy and horizontal branch. They also helped to create a 'den' planting a living willow tunnel in a corner of the lawn.



A Green Space

We aim to become a truly Eco-Church and as part of that aim, we are looking to develop our grassed area at the front of the church as more of a community garden with access for older people as well as the young to build areas such as a sensory garden and maybe a vegetable plot!

In line with the aims of the Eco-Church movement, we are also trying to make our buildings more carbon neutral, with a lowered ceiling already installed in the main hall and an application for funding for solar panels on the main roof of the hall.

We are also looking at ways to use more fairtrade products and locally produced food in our social café and lunch club menus.

We are working towards the silver award as an eco-church and ultimately the gold award.

A Learning Space

We also want to use the whole space to provide learning opportunities for all ages. We hold training days for First Aiders, Safeguarding and food hygiene. We also offer support for those wishing to develop their computer skills and have held occasional cookery schools.



Our hope is that through the excellent work of Tracey, our Children and Families' Worker, and our commitment to mission and service in the locality, we will be offering a holistic provision for body, mind and spirit.



A Growing Space

We are also hoping to create a new post of Plant Enabler, who will not only tend the church interior and grounds of our site, but also develop a team of volunteers to help manage the gardens.

We would like to make the front gardens more accessible to older and disabled people and develop areas for a sensory garden and vegetable plot. This would also contribute to our Eco-Church aspirations.

This person would also have the skills to provide training for younger people to grow their own produce and plants using designated areas of the surrounding land.



Plant Enabler

In 1992, a second sequel to the Child in the Church Report was published by the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, entitled Unfinished Business. Three new models were offered as ways of looking at Church. One of those models is The Hospitable Space.

A Hospitable Space

Throughout the Gospels when Jesus tells stories about the Kingdom, he uses the image of generous hospitality at a feast. The Kingdom has room for social misfits and aliens (Matthew 8:11,12). Jesus himself was hospitable, even in a lonely place and fed a hungry crowd (Mark 6:39,40), building on the generosity of others such as the child with the loaves and fishes (John 6:1-13). He also accepted hospitality from others, friends and strangers.

In this model, the Church is a place of hospitality and nurture. It accepts people for what they are and celebrates all that is good in them and all that they may become. It provides a safe space, physically, psychologically and spiritually within which they can question and grow.

To be a place of welcome it must be a place of forgiveness; to be true to itself it must be a place of hope and transformation. For this to happen it cannot afford to be guided only by sentiment. A hospitable community is a place where love confronts as well as forgives. To offer tolerance, forgiveness and affirmation it must also be honest and mutually accountable.

A church with this model will pay attention both to the attitudes and practices of its community and to the physical building, which may testify to its values far more than what is said or written about it.

With such sentiments in mind, we are looking at our church buildings and seeking to let them reflect our sense of being church through the hospitality we believe is a major dynamic in being Gospel (good news) for Shiregreen

Unfinished *business*

Children and the Churches

