

**A GUIDE TO  
CASTLEREAGH  
FELLOWSHIP**

## **An Introduction to Castlereagh Fellowship (CF)**

CF is an independent, non-denominational Christian church, which came into existence in October 1993. Until January 2019, CF was based in Cregagh Estate, East Belfast, making use of rented premises. Since then we have met in our own building located at 206 Knock Road, East Belfast, premises which formerly belonged to Bethel Baptist Church and which were kindly gifted to CF on June 6, 2019.

## **The Purpose and Vision of CF**

CF consists of a body of people who have come to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

CF exists for a three-fold purpose:

- To praise and worship the triune God
- To encourage the growth of believers in Christ
- To equip believers in Christ to be a witness to His saving grace

CF's vision is to see God glorified through adoration and service. We aim to build up the members of CF by encouraging them in their faith and we seek to make new disciples through our witness both locally and worldwide.

## **The Beliefs of CF**

CF believes that the Bible is the Word of God and is the final authority on all matters of faith. It is completely reliable and reveals God's perfect plan of salvation accomplished through Jesus Christ. It contains the principles we need for understanding God's will for our lives.

CF believes that everyone is separated from God on account of sin and would be eternally lost but for His gracious intervention through the sacrificial death and victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ. Upon the exercise of repentance from sin, and faith in Jesus Christ, any sinner is delivered from condemnation by God and becomes a member of God's family, enjoying His glorious presence forever.

CF believes that while all genuine Christians belong to the universal church, the New Testament instructs believers to join a local church where they learn to live in community with their brothers and sisters in the Lord, worshipping together and encouraging one another in their walk with the Lord.

See the Appendix for CF's full Statement of Faith.

## **The Practices of CF**

- Bible Teaching

In all things we seek to submit to the authority of God's Word, the Lordship of Christ and the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. Therefore at the heart of CF's practices is a commitment to clear and accurate Bible teaching. This involves the regular ministry of God's Word on Sundays and on Wednesday evenings.

- Lord's Supper

It is the Lord's command that His followers meet together to remember His sacrificial death through partaking of the Bread and the Cup, symbols of His crucified body and shed blood. All those who have a personal saving faith in Jesus Christ and who are endeavouring to walk in fellowship with Him are enjoined to participate.

CF celebrates the Lord's Supper each Sunday morning as an integral part of our service.

CF's form of worship is participative, where any believer is free to contribute by praying, reading from and reflecting upon God's Word, or requesting a hymn for communal praise. The intended focus is on Jesus Christ and His sacrifice rather than on more general aspects of the Christian life.

Non-Christians are welcome as observers but are asked to refrain from partaking of the Bread and Cup.

- Baptism

The New Testament does not envisage Christians who remain unbaptised; all Christians should therefore be baptised.

Baptism expresses, in symbolic form, the believer's identification with Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection; hence CF practices baptism by immersion. Baptism does not make anyone a Christian or bring forgiveness of sins.

Baptism by immersion and a commitment to teach believers' baptism is a requirement for all Elders.

We are aware that some Christians regard infant baptism as a valid expression of the Biblical commandment to be baptised. While this is not a position that we teach or practice, we do not exclude from membership those who sincerely hold to this position.

A copy of CF's Baptism Policy can be accessed on the CF website.

- Evangelism and Mission

CF seeks to be an outward-looking church endeavouring to bring the message of hope in Jesus Christ to unbelievers, encouraging them to repent and exercise faith in Him and His atoning work.

CF takes seriously the responsibility to share the gospel in three spheres:

- a. Immediate: our family, friends, neighbours and work or school colleagues. Evangelism in this context involves showing hospitality, building good relations and taking opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions of a spiritual nature, and inviting others to our gatherings and events.
- b. Local: the neighbouring housing areas in which CF is situated. We distribute gospel literature to the local community and issue invitations to outreach events.
- c. Global: we are committed to global mission, taking the gospel “to the ends of the earth”. We pray for and give regular financial support to a number of Christian missionaries/mission organisations, while others are supported on an ad hoc basis. From time to time we send out teams on mission trips, while we also support particular mission projects as our finances permit.

A key and growing element of CF’s evangelistic activity is the production and distribution of gospel literature. A number of books and booklets have been printed: “Why Jesus?”, “Knowing the Good News”, “Why the Cross?”, “Why Christmas?”, “Why Must Jesus Return?”, “Why the Resurrection of Jesus Matters” and “Why Read the Bible?” These have been translated into a variety of languages and have been distributed both locally and in many foreign contexts.

CF organises its midweek prayer meeting such that part of the time is devoted to missionary matters. We have a Mission Focus slot as part of our Sunday morning service. We also hold a number of special missionary prayer meetings throughout the year and personal visits by missionaries are built into our Wednesday and Sunday evening programmes. In November 2022, CF held its first Missionary Conference.

From its outset, it has been a distinctive of CF that a high proportion of our financial resources have been allocated to mission.

- Care for the Global Church and Humanity

CF understands that we have a responsibility to support our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world, especially those living in contexts of persecution and poverty. Remembering persecuted believers is a key element of our prayer meetings, while an annual financial offering is dedicated to their support.

CF operates a Relief Projects Fund, while special offerings and gifts are forwarded to Christians and non-Christians alike in the aftermath of natural disasters and emergencies.

CF is committed to providing prayerful and practical support to those who seek to uphold Christian values on moral issues such as marriage and the sanctity of life.

## **The Governance of CF**

CF has a dual form of governance: Elders and Trustees.

CF believes that the Biblical pattern for church leadership is a plurality of Elders. It is the Elders who comprise the Leadership of the

Fellowship, and it is their role to oversee and co-ordinate the spiritual care of CF's members. This involves the teaching of God's Word, pastoral support, prayer, leading by example and the exercise of discipline according to Biblical principles.

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that CF complies with the legal requirements of charitable status. CF is a Charitable Trust, registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (103012) and operates in a manner consistent with its Trust Deed as adopted on 26/4/15.

The Trustees are appointed by the Elders and agree to operate under their direction in spiritual matters. The Trustees hold a minimum of four meetings throughout the year and submit an annual report and financial accounts to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

An Annual General Meeting to which all members of CF are welcome to attend is normally held in June.

A copy of CF's Governance Policy can be accessed on the CF website.

The CF Trustees' Annual Report is uploaded to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland website where it is available to be read by any member of the public.

## **Membership of CF**

The Christian life is not simply a matter of believing; it is also about belonging.

Membership of a local church is significant and meaningful, and belonging to CF is both a privilege and responsibility. Membership means a commitment to meeting together to worship God and to encourage one another. Sharing the Lord's Supper, receiving

instruction from God's Word and praying together should be priorities for every member. Each member commits to help build a loving and supportive community in which Christ is honoured.

CF places a high importance upon active involvement rather than passive attendance: members are expected and encouraged to support the work of the Fellowship through prayer, service and giving.

Members are under the care and authority of the Elders and are required to honour and submit to them in this role.

CF has a formal membership register to which those who successfully apply for membership will have their names added.

All members are invited to attend the AGM.

A copy of CF's Membership Policy can be accessed on the CF website.

### **Pastoral Support**

It is the responsibility of all members to be caring towards their brothers and sisters within the Fellowship. To assist with the provision and co-ordination of such support, CF has a Pastoral Care Team (PCT). It is important that members understand that the responsibility for the provision of pastoral support is not thereby confined to this group.

### **Sexuality, Gender and Marriage**

CF's position on matters of sexuality, gender and marriage is in line with a traditional, orthodox interpretation of Biblical teaching in these areas.

A copy of CF's Policy on Sexuality, Gender and Marriage can be accessed on the CF website.

## **Finance**

CF believes that giving is not to be viewed exclusively as a financial matter but is also one of spiritual significance. Proportionate, regular, sacrificial and cheerful giving is a reflection of God's grace in our lives.

Giving to the Fellowship can be done through Payroll Giving, Standing Order/Direct Debit or Collection Box (located at the rear of the Main Hall).

CF's bank details are:

Castlereagh Fellowship, AIB, 11/15 Donegall Square North, Belfast,  
BT1 5GB

Sort Code: 93-86-20    Account Number: 42173093

CF is registered with HMRC for purposes of Gift Aid (XR16899). Members who are taxpayers may wish to channel their giving through Gift Aid; anyone doing so should see the Treasurer for details.

The management of CF's finances is conducted by the Treasurer who reports to the Elders on a monthly basis and to the meetings of CF's Trustees. The Treasurer completes annual accounts for submission to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, which are verified by an Independent Examiner and can be accessed by any member of the public on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's website.

A CF Charter on New Testament Giving can be accessed on the CF website.

## **Safeguarding**

CF is committed to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of children and adults at risk of harm who have been entrusted to our care.

CF aims to comply with material laws in this field and relevant codes of practice and guidance for the safeguarding of children and adults at risk of harm.

Each children's worker is vetted through Access NI. Suitable training of children's workers is provided as required. A record is kept of any significant incident and reported as required.

It is the responsibility of the Fellowship's Child Safeguarding Officer and Adult Safeguarding Champion to keep the Trustees informed of developments in this area and to highlight any issues with CF's current practice.

A copy of CF's Safeguarding Policy can be accessed on the CF website and is on display at all times on CF's premises.

## **Health and Safety**

CF makes every effort to ensure it is compliant with legislation and good practice regarding its fire safety procedures. It is the role of the Fire Safety Officer to ensure that equipment is tested on a regular basis and that signage is displayed at appropriate points in our

facilities. A number of Fire Marshalls have been appointed to assist with emergency evacuations from the building.

CF makes every effort to ensure that we are compliant with legislation and good practice regarding matters of health and safety. It is the role of the Health and Safety Officer to ensure that policies are adhered to. A First Aid Officer (or a person with First Aid training) will be on site in the event of an accident or incident occurring.

Copies of both CF's Fire Safety Policy and Health and Safety Policy are on display at all times on CF's premises.

CF makes every effort to ensure we are compliant with legislation and good practice with regard to food hygiene. Instructions for the handling of food and food safety are displayed at all times in CF's Kitchen.

### **Disability Provision**

CF endeavours to ensure that, within the limitations of an existing building, we make our facilities as disabled-friendly as possible.

A copy of Castlereagh Fellowship's Disability Policy can be accessed on the CF website.

### **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Privacy**

CF undertakes to abide by GDPR to ensure the privacy of its members. All necessary personal information is held securely and retained only for limited purposes and for a period no longer than required.

A copy of CF's Data Privacy Policy can be accessed on the CF website.

## **Media & Communication**

CF has its own website ([www.castlereaghfellowship.com](http://www.castlereaghfellowship.com)) and Facebook page.

An important resource is CF's YouTube channel which contains a library of teaching videos on Biblical matters.

Members of CF are invited to consent to be added to a CF WhatsApp group which keeps them up to date with various information such as prayer requests and upcoming events.

## **CF Meetings and Activities**

CF's Sunday morning service is from 11-12.30 and its Sunday evening service is from 6.30-7.30 (excepting July and August when there is no meeting). During the morning service, a Crèche operates in the Minor Hall, with a Junior Bible Class (for Lower Primary School age children) in the Kitchen and a Senior Bible Class (for Upper Primary School age children) in the Upstairs Room.

Our Sunday evening service is designed to be different from that of a Sunday morning service with teaching on specific topics, visits by missionaries/mission representatives, Fellowship sharing evenings, and special outreach events.

CF's Wednesday night Prayer Meeting and Bible Study is from 8.00-9.15 (excepting July and August when there is no meeting).

CF's Adventurers Bible Club (for Primary School age children) runs on a Tuesday evening from 6.30-7.30 during the months of October to March.

CF's Little Mites Toddler Group runs each Monday morning from 10.30-12.00 during the months of September to June.

CF's Youth group (CFY) for teenagers meets once-per-month on a Friday evening.

CF's Explorers Women's Bible study group meets twice-per-month on a Tuesday morning.

CF's Ladies Fellowship meets once-per-month on a Friday evening.

CF has both Men's and Women's works which hold a number of outreach activities throughout the year. These are seen as innovative and enjoyable ways of presenting the gospel message to both friends and the local community.

## **Contact Information**

Address: 206 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6QD

Website: [www.castlereaghfellowship.com](http://www.castlereaghfellowship.com)

Email: [castlereaghfellowship@gmail.com](mailto:castlereaghfellowship@gmail.com)

## **Appendix**

### **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

CF believes that:

1. The Holy Scriptures, as originally given, are inspired by God, and are infallible. Through them, God speaks to us and they are our authority for what we believe and practice. For us to

understand them, we need the illumination provided by the Holy Spirit.

2. There is only one God, revealed in the Bible as three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three persons are one God in essential unity, co-equal and co-eternal.
3. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is God the Son, was sent into the world by God the Father, and became man, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. He is perfect eternal God and perfect sinless man.
4. Man was created by God in His own image. Through the rebellion of Adam, man fell from his innocent state, and sin and death entered into the world. As a result, each person is born a sinner, is guilty before God, and is subject to His righteous wrath and condemnation.
5. The devil is a real person who, as the god of this age, has set himself to oppose God and His purposes.
6. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross was as a substitute on behalf of sinners and satisfied the claims of God against sin. The sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only ground for salvation and through it there is reconciliation between God and sinners and redemption from the guilt, penalty and power of sin.
7. On the third day after His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus Christ was raised bodily from the dead. He was seen alive by His disciples during the forty days following His resurrection. In His risen, glorified body, He ascended into heaven to the right hand of God the Father, before whom He now intercedes on behalf of His people as the only mediator between God and man and from where He will personally return.
8. Salvation cannot be earned by our own good works. It is God's free gift, received when a person repents of their sin and

believes in Jesus Christ alone as their Saviour and Lord. Because of God's unmerited love and mercy, the person who believes in Jesus Christ receives complete forgiveness of sin, is accepted as righteous in God's sight, becomes a child of God, and receives eternal life which he can never lose. All who have thus been forgiven will receive glorified bodies at Christ's return and live with God eternally.

9. All those who have not been saved will be resurrected bodily to be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ and will suffer eternal punishment.
10. The Holy Spirit convinces individual people of their sin and leads them to faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit indwells every true believer at the moment of conversion and He places each believer into the body of Christ at the moment of conversion. It is the Holy Spirit's task to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ in the life of every believer by producing in them increasing Christ-likeness in character and behaviour, and empowering them for witness in the world.
11. There is one universal church, the body of Christ, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the head. Every believer has been placed into this body by baptism in the Holy Spirit, at the moment of their conversion\*.

\* We are aware that there are many believers today who have had experiences subsequent to conversion which they call "baptism in the Holy Spirit". We have no wish to deny the reality of, or the need for, genuine experiences of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We need to be open to all that the Holy Spirit desires to do and to test everything by the Word of God. However, we believe that the term "baptised in the Holy Spirit" as used in the New Testament refers to the way in which people are made part of the body of Christ.

