



life at City Church

Our story, vision, values & culture





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you are welcome

Whether you've been to church your whole life, or this is the first time you've stepped into a church, we are so glad you are here!

This booklet is designed to help you navigate life at City Church.

The first section of this booklet is all about the basics of Christianity. Then we move on to why City Church exists and what we're all about. The third section covers what's going on in our church community and how you can play your part.

We would love to get to know you and support you in your journey with the Lord. So please don't hesitate to let one of us on the staff team, eldership team, or deacon team know how we can do that.

Here's a little about us.

City Church Manchester started in September 2014 with a small group of Christians from Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham. One of our founding pastors, Ralph Cunnington, moved to Manchester with his family in September 2013 to build relationships with local churches and gather people to join the core team. Then Matt Waldock, the other founding pastor, gathered a team from Liverpool, London and Leicester, and moved to Manchester in the summer of 2014.

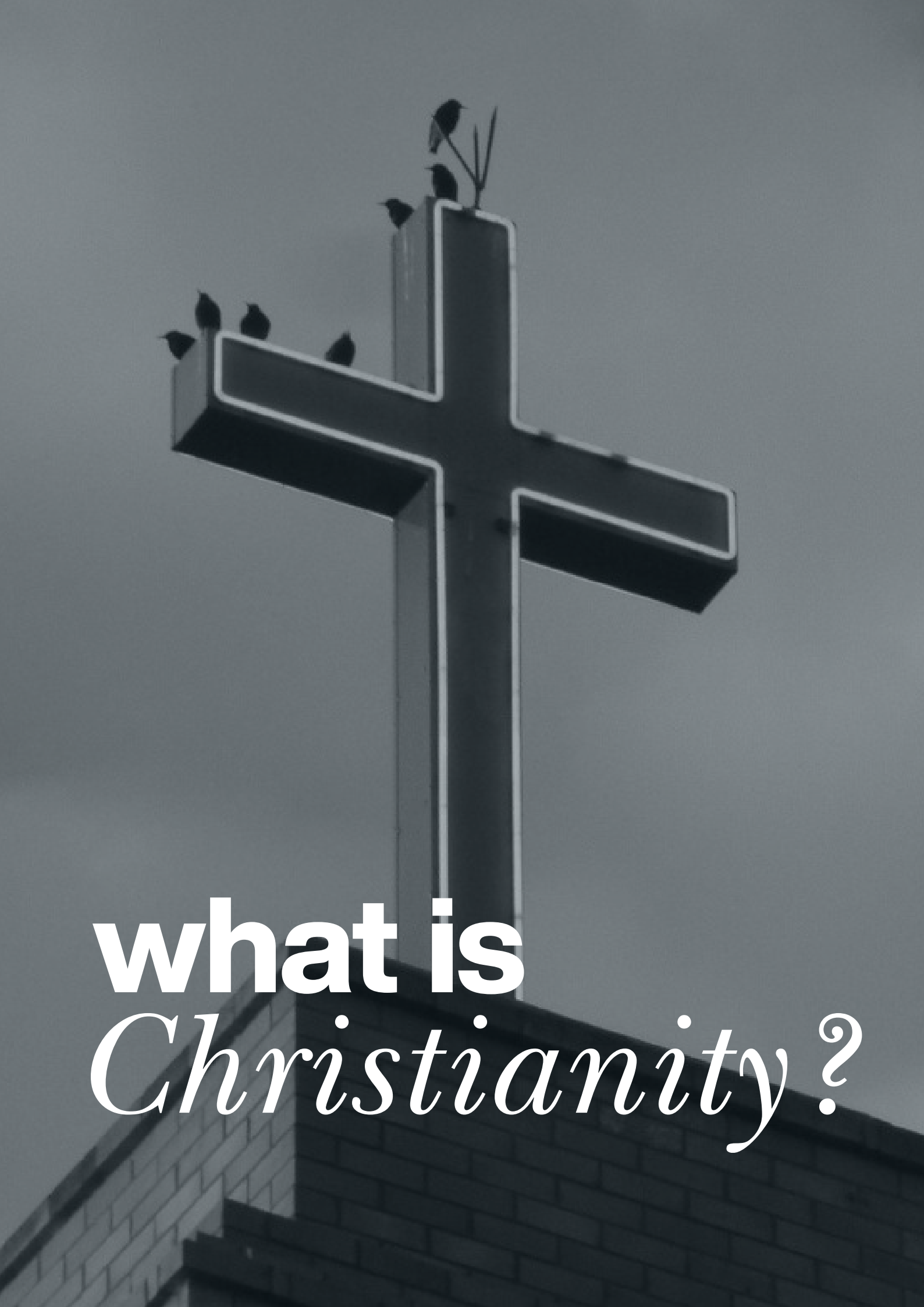
Our core team of 27 members publicly launched City Church Manchester on 7 September 2014 at the Methodist Central Hall, Oldham Street. We now average 280 adults each Sunday representing around 47 nationalities!

Please read on to find out more. We'd love you to join us on this exciting journey!





the basics



what is
Christianity?

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Google will tell you Christianity is a ‘2000 year-old religion that began after a man named Jesus died at the hands of the Romans.’

But we believe it’s far older than that. In fact, it’s so ancient, it transcends time and space. The official world religion may have started in the first century, but Christians believe that God - the eternal, transcendent being, the Trinity of three Divine persons, Father, Son and Spirit – was the one who created the humans responsible for devising a system of time measurement that included centuries.

When God the Son came to earth as the God-man, Jesus, he said:

I am the way, the truth and the life.

Christianity is the worship of Christ as King of Kings, Lord of Lords, creator of the universe, of time and space – the one who gives us breath in our lungs and a beautiful planet to live in.

He gave us the gift of communing with him, knowing there is more to life than what is in front of us or base animal instincts.

We rejected that gift and went our own way, sinfully rebelling against his plan for us to flourish and thrive in this world. But he came to make a way for us to be reconciled to God – through his life, death and resurrection – for us to live again with him forever in perfect peace and harmony.

We look forward to the day he will return to recreate this world without the sin and brokenness that infuses every inch of it. In the meantime, those who surrender their lives to the Lord Jesus live believing that in him and him only is found the way, the truth and the life. We are now united with him by his Spirit and live in acknowledgement of his authority and love.

Unlike what many think, a church isn't a building or a meeting. It's a people of all cultures chosen by God, united by faith in him to follow and serve him together. It's not a club for those who've made it... it's a hospital for the sick, where what unites us is a recognition of our need for God. Salvation in him is the only way to truly be free of sin, guilt, shame, anxiety, worry and depression. In him, we have new life – freedom to truly change, to truly enjoy and get the most out of life!

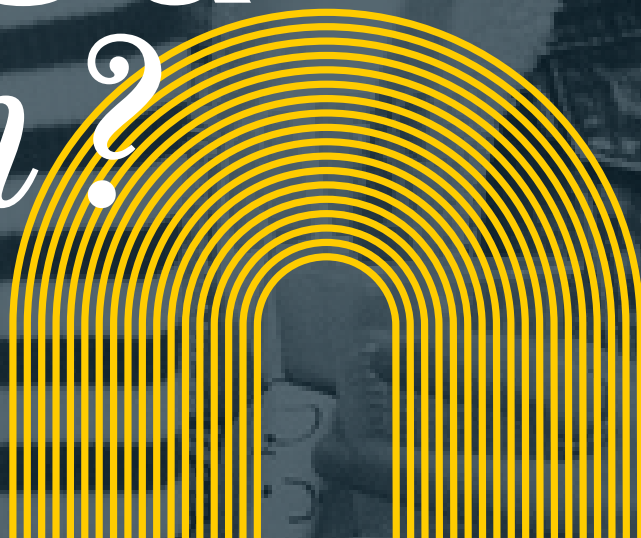
'Church' means a gathering of the universal church in a particular place and time made visible. A true church has three basic elements - the preaching of God's word, the administering of sacraments, and church discipline. The purpose of the church is worship, discipleship, mission, and discipline.

Our church started in 2014, with people of a range of ages and backgrounds brought together by a love for Manchester, a love for its people and most importantly a love for Jesus.

He's radically changed our lives and we want to recognise him at the centre of all we do. So we've been meeting regularly ever since to speak to God in prayer, to learn from what he says to us in the Bible, to participate in baptism and communion and to worship him with music and singing.

We spend time together in the week, not just on Sundays. We want to share the good news of Jesus with others so they can experience the same radical transformation and relationship with God. We are inviting everyone to enjoy Christ for the glory of God.

what is a *church?*



So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Romans 12:5

We believe membership is one of the best ways to grow as a Christian. It's our way of saying 'City Church is my church' and making commitments to one another and to the Lord.

- We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit as those who have been made one family in Christ.
- We will walk together in love, showing affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully warning and encouraging each other as occasion requires.
- We will not neglect meeting together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.
- We will make every effort to bring up the children entrusted to our care in the training and instruction of the Lord, and by a godly and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.
- We will rejoice at each other's happiness and endeavour with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.
- We will seek, by God's help, to live carefully in the world, saying no to ungodliness and idolatry, and remembering that, as those who have died with Christ and been raised to new life, we are now to lead a new life and a holy life in Christ.
- We will work together for the continuance of a faithful gospel-centred Bible teaching ministry in this church, as we continue its worship, sacraments, discipline, and doctrines.
- We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.
- As individuals, we will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

What if you could read the exact words God wants to say to you?

Well, that's why we read the Bible – the best-selling book of all time topping all other books by over 3.8 billion copies sold! Translated into 700 different languages and the New Testament into another 1,548, it's actually a library of books – law, history, poetry, songs, letters, and prophecies – written across nearly two millennia over three continents by 40 authors in three languages. Without a doubt, its worldwide impact is unparalleled.

But, more importantly, we read this world-changing book because we believe it to be the very words of God. He's not a remote and silent deity. He has spoken. In his kindness, he's revealed himself to humanity and the Bible is an accurate historical record of how that happened and what is still to come.

Because it was God who guided people to write it, the Bible is ONE message. Central to that message is ONE person, Jesus – God in human flesh – born in the first century Middle East, whose life, death and resurrection is recorded in four eye-witness accounts. The Bible shows us Jesus in all his power, kindness and beauty. He is alive today, still speaking to us through this miraculous book. We love to meet him in his Word whenever we're together because, by better knowing his words, we discover more and more life-changing truth about who he is and who we are.

The Bible is the life-giving word our God has written directly to us. That's why we love to read it, teach, preach and disciple from it as our only infallible authority.

Don't have one? Ask us for your FREE copy!

what is the *Bible?*



a library of

66 books

written by

40 authors

in

3 languages

across

3 continents

and spanning

2 millennia

but really, it is

one story

the story of creation, fall, redemption, recreation, the
story of Christ, the true hero

how do we teach the Bible?

The lion's share of our preaching is sequential expositional – that is, we preach through a book of the Bible, verse by verse, chapter by chapter. However, some books of the Bible could take 1-3 years to preach through using this method. We want to make sure we provide a balanced diet of teaching from the Old and New Testaments. Our elders carefully consider and pray through their preaching schedule and decide sermon series based on the pastoral needs they encounter, the felt needs of the church, the season we find ourselves in, and the cultural temperature of the world around us. Their approach is Christ-centred and gospel-driven – after all, the Bible is all about him! And the gospel is the way into the Christian life and the way through the Christian life.

Our elders work hard to ensure we get some teaching from the different styles of literature in the Bible – narrative/history, wisdom, prophecy, eye-witness testimony, letters to the church, and law books.

Our preaching year will also include some topical expositional preaching series – that is, still preaching from a primary passage but also pulling from other parts of the Bible to help us understand the big picture of what it says on individual topics like sex, marriage, work, rest, money, health, government, etc.

Some tips to help you learn:

- Have your Bible open during sermons
- Take notes or draw diagrams of the preacher's points
- Ask the preacher questions after the service
- Get involved in Connect groups to discuss the passage

DID YOU KNOW? Reading the Bible at least four times a week is statistically proven* to mean we are:

- 32% less angry
- 40% less bitter in relationships
- 30% less lonely
- 60% less spiritually stagnant
- 59% less likely to watch porn
- 228% more likely to share our faith with others

*Understanding the Bible Engagement Challenge: Scientific Evidence for the Power of 4, Arnold Cole, Ed.D. & Pamela Caudill Owwigho, Ph.D., December 2009



**So shall my word
be that goes out
from my mouth; it
shall not return to
me empty, but it
shall accomplish
that which I
purpose, and
shall succeed in
the thing for
which I sent it.**

Isaiah 55:11





what is a *Christian?*

The Bible teaches that a Christian is someone who, because of Jesus, is saved from hell and restored to the relationship with God they were made for.

By nature, Christians are not 'good people'. We had turned our backs on the eternal God and lived for ourselves – and so deserve eternal punishment. But God chose instead to rescue us through the life and death of his Son, Jesus. Being a Christian – or a follower of Christ – starts with recognising our rebellious nature and saying sorry to God for living as though he didn't exist. It means turning from living our way, turning instead to Jesus by trusting in him and living for him. When we do, our lives are radically transformed.

This is why we confess our sin together each Sunday, recognising we regularly fall short of God's standards. But in his grace, being Christians also means we're adopted into God's family – the Bible says we become children of God. And God comes to live in us by his Holy Spirit making us more and more like Jesus each day.

Christians are already united to God in Jesus and we can't wait for the day when we see him face to face and enjoy Him forever.

Want to know more? We'd love to chat through any questions you have. Come along to one of our regular sessions for those exploring Christianity.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.



what is the gospel?

Want to hear amazing news we can't keep quiet about?

The God who created the universe – who made the sun, moon and stars – also made us humans to have a relationship with him. Tragically, we rejected him and went our own way. Instead of recognising him as the centre of our world, we've lived selfishly as if it were all about us – as if he didn't exist.

But God, patient and full of love, took the initiative to fix the situation. He sent his Son into the world, as a man, to reveal God to us. Jesus lived a perfect life and died on a cruel Roman cross – taking on himself the punishment we deserved and dealing once for all with our self-centred rebellion. He gave his life to restore the broken relationship between us and God.

The way is now open for us to run into the arms of the one who made us, who offers true and lasting satisfaction forever – perfect eternal relationship with our perfect eternal God.

That's the news that makes our hearts sing. The true story we can't help but tell. Our church exists to invite everyone to enjoy Christ for the glory of God. That is our mission, our goal, our delight.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16



why
Manchester?



our *vision*

We are a growing church that trains and generously gives labourers to resource and plant churches in Manchester, the Northwest and beyond.



we exist to

**invite everyone to
enjoy Christ for the
glory of God.**





our vision & mission

We are a growing church that trains and generously gives labourers to resource and plant churches in Manchester, the Northwest and beyond. Our vision is about growing and establishing life-long labourers for Christ who will engage with the world around them, inviting everyone to enjoy Christ for the glory of God!

we grow

We're growing, not just in numbers attending and participating in church life, but also growing in the depth and enjoyment of our relationship with Christ.

In practice, this means we are outward-looking in evangelism and discipleship, always seeking to welcome the outsider who is new to faith, new to Manchester or new to our church.

we train & give labourers

We want to train and develop everyone to become life-long labourers for the gospel by encouraging and helping facilitate them to use their time, talent and treasure in partnership with City Church.

In practice, we train people in our internship, our summer placements, our trainee minister positions, and our volunteer teams. We then send people to volunteer, serve, work and train other churches across the city, the region and the globe. We've sent 13 people so far into full-time Christian work.

we resource & plant churches

We want these labourers to make an impact on the city through City Church as we seek to resource and revitalise established churches, as well as encourage and facilitate new church plants in areas of gospel need.

In practice, this looks like supporting church plants in sending people and sending practical, financial and spiritual help as well as planting churches ourselves.

in Manchester, the Northwest & beyond

Where do we want this to happen? Everywhere! We want to send resources to our local area here in Manchester, reaching out to the Northwest of England, and then extending out to the entire world.

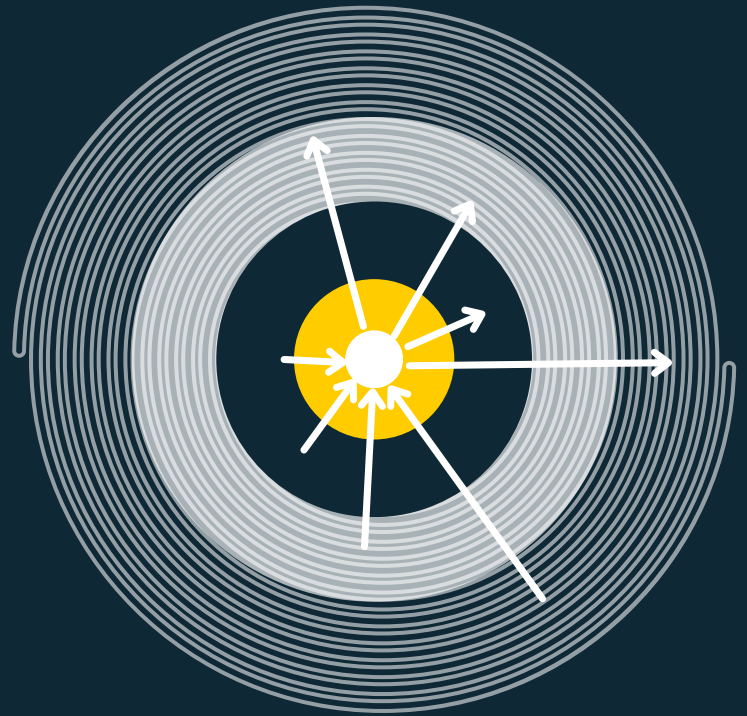
In practice, this means we develop strong relationships with churches in our city, our region, our country and our world. It's the reason we helped start the Northern Gospel Project - a network to promote church planting in our region.

a hub church

We gather widely to send out to Manchester, to the Northwest, to the UK and to the world.

We love to help train and send and we're passionate about continuing this endeavour. We know from experience letting people go is a sacrifice. However, we know the Lord is sovereign over all things and has allocated times and seasons for each of us to be in a certain place. So we hold lightly to the things that are temporary and cling to what is eternal.

We hope you can be part of this important task, one way or another!



Some of the interns and trainees we've sent out -



our values

1. gospel-driven

We believe the Gospel is the way into the Christian life and the way forward in the Christian life. We therefore want the Gospel to drive everything we do and shape the way we do it.

2. excellence in service

Our hope is that everyone involved in the church serves to the best of their ability, so as to glorify God. We desire to have a culture not of perfectionism, but of excellence in all things; driven by an enjoyment of God who has given His best for us.

3. accessible to a diverse community

We want the reconciling power of Jesus to be demonstrated through gathering people from across our city. We are committed to being an accessible community for all.

4. reformed theological beliefs

We stand in the reformed tradition and delight in God's sovereignty, the power and authority of the preached Word, and the expectation that the gospel will impact and transform our communities.

bible studies small groups house
groups social activities prayer
one-to-ones training student
ministry women's ministry
sports clubs men's ministry kids
work youth work mission trips
internships serving
cleaning projects disaster relief
counselling membership
courses exploring christianity
expansion preaching liturgy
worship ministry prayer minist
marriage preparation parenting
courses practical help outreach
serving opportunities leadersh
development global mission
local mission baptism lord's
supper confession weddings
dedications deacons elders
spiritual formation evangelism

what's on offer

organised

Some of what we do as church is organised - Sunday services, prayer meetings, small groups, age- or stage-related ministries and events.

These act like a trellis or structure for the organic to take place, for the vine to grow. Our organised activities tend to focus on concentric circles of influence - our church, city, region and world. We aim to be a hub church for the region, drawing people and resources in, to then send them out to places in need.



organic

Much of what happens in a church is organic - from chats on a Sunday to midweek hangouts to phone calls for prayer. Being a city-centre church means people join us at all stages on their journey. Some of us will only be in Manchester for a short period and eventually end up elsewhere. Others will come initially for a short period and end up putting down roots. We would love you to invest in Manchester for the sake of the gospel - the need and incredible opportunity here is unparalleled in the UK. Whatever our situation, it's important to bloom where we are planted and invest in building relationships with each other, even if it's not instant. We all benefit when we all invest! So why not take a step towards getting to know others this week? You will reap the rewards soon enough!



**how
we
grow**

explore

Maybe this is your first time in a church and you're just curious about Christianity? We love that you've taken the brave step to come and want to help you on your journey to understanding what Christianity is all about – the person of Christ. We want you to meet Jesus! So we regularly run short courses to explain who he is and how he is the answer to all of life's big questions.

Or maybe you're brand new to faith and wanting some help and guidance on where to go next in your learning? We offer short courses to get to know the Bible and get to know others at the same time!

Or maybe you're visiting churches to find one to make home? You are so welcome. We hope this booklet is a good first step to help you decide if City Church could be your church. Once a month, we run a Welcome to City Church session to help you get to know us and us get to know you!

Whichever situation best describes you, please don't be shy. We would love to meet you and help you figure out what could be a good next step. We also encourage you to hang out on Sundays after the service – It's the best way to informally explore faith, church and community.





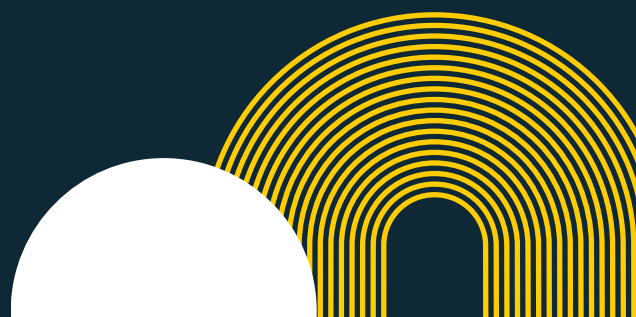
grow

The Christian life is one of continuing growth. It may sound obvious, but one of the primary ways you can grow is by regularly coming along to the organised events here at City Church – Sunday services, kids, youth and student groups, prayer meetings, book clubs, Connect groups and Bible studies.

In a church of our size, it's easy to think 'It won't matter if I'm not there.' But this isn't true! Each of us has something unique to bring to the table – our upbringing, our cultural perspective, our life experience, our learnings. So please come along as regularly as you can. It matters.

Of course, there are lots of organic ways to grow too! Reading God's word and praying to him in personal devotion and study, sharing the gospel with people, listening to Christian music or podcasts, reading Christian books, discussing faith with others, spending time with more mature Christians, creating art and music to glorify God, spending time with family and friends, enjoying nature and infinitely more!

The list is endless because God never stops wanting to teach us about himself if we are willing to learn.



contribute

Jesus said it's better to give than to receive. The best way to feel more invested? Invest! We reap the spiritual blessings God promises when we give to him and to others.

There are organised ways for you to contribute. We recommend joining a serving team as a good way to grow in servant-hearted giving alongside others. Taking the step to regularly give financially is another great way to grow in faith and contribute to furthering God's kingdom in Manchester. Our church relies completely on donations. Even if you can only give a small amount, the Lord can multiply that gift a hundred times.

We serve in outreach ministries across Manchester – care homes, international students, vulnerable families, and homeless people. Could you consider getting involved with one of these?

There are also plenty of ways you can contribute in a more organic way - hosting people in your house, offering lifts, praying for people, reaching out to neighbours and coworkers to invite them to church events, offering to babysit, helping someone move house, going for a coffee or a walk in the countryside. Every contribution is valuable. Every contribution is needed.





commit

Commitment can feel scary. But investing for God's kingdom work will always be worth it. So why not commit to the organised offering at City Church?

Connect groups meet all over the city in homes to fellowship, eat, pray, study the Bible and be part of each other's lives. It's one way of committing to a group of people who are able to know us more deeply, help us in day-to-day life and grow alongside us.

Setting up a regular giving direct debit or standing order is another way to commit. Jesus said that where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. So when we give to our church, our heart grows in love for our church.

Membership is another way to invest. As members, we make a covenant to each other and to the Lord to help each other and help the mission and vision of our church (see page 21).

Committing to staying in Manchester is another way to invest ourselves in God's kingdom work. Under 1% of Manchester's 2.8 million people attend a gospel-preaching church! We want to change that statistic. But the transient nature of city life means it's vital for churches to have mature Christians who will stay put and invest long-term into this city, building a legacy for generations to come.

Will you consider putting down roots in this needy city?



lead

We want to raise up mature Christian men and women to lead. But leadership is a challenge to courageously step out in faith, trusting that though we may not have everything it takes to be a good leader, God's power will be made perfect in our weakness.

Some of the organised ways we raise up leaders are helping them grow to lead Connect groups, discipleship groups, seeker groups, ministry teams, and serving teams.

We also raise up elders to help lead the church spiritually and pastorally and deacons to help lead by example in service.

There's also a long list of organic ways we can grow in leadership.

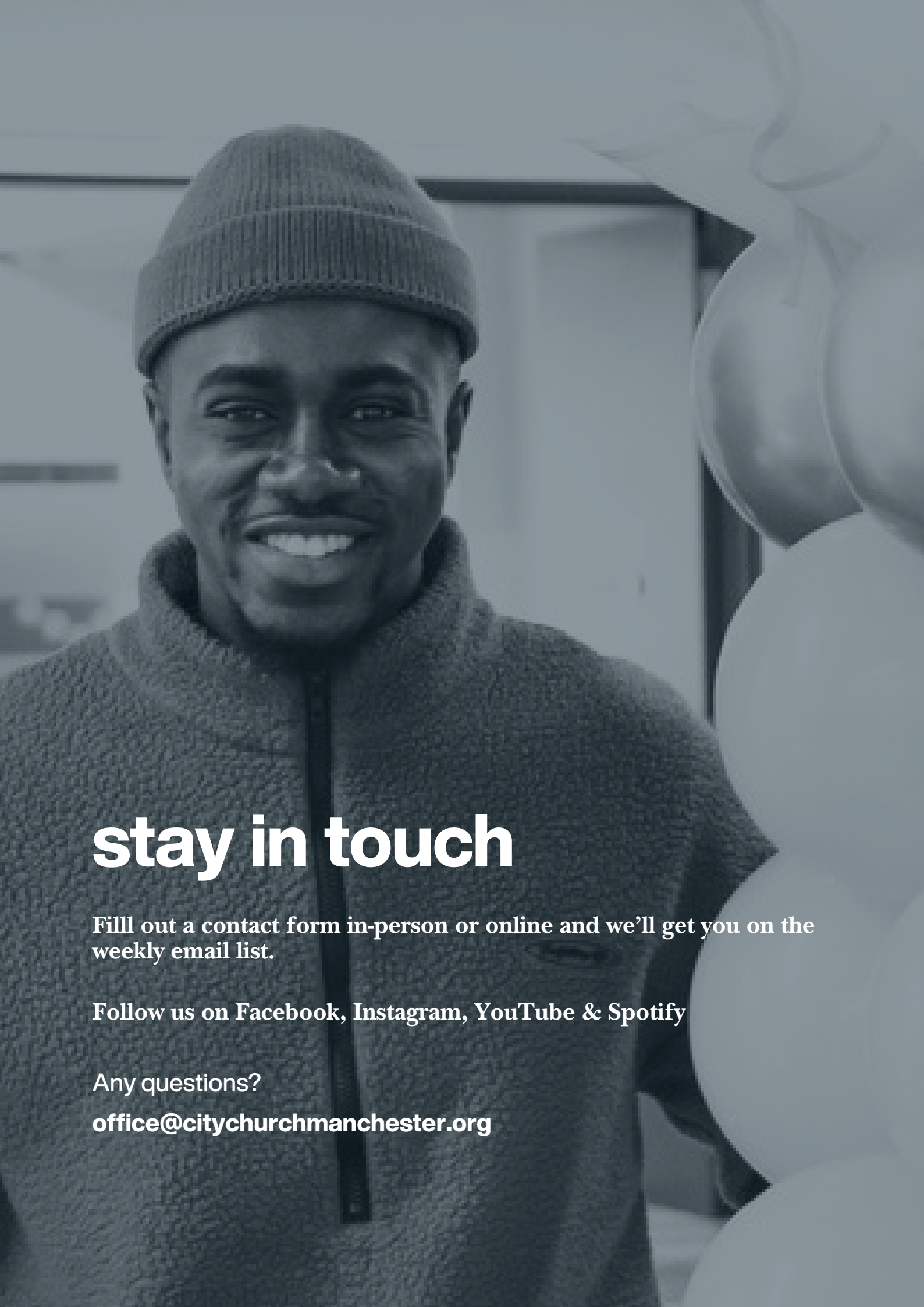
We can take the lead in organising social events, talking to new people, mentoring or discipling younger Christians, creating works of art, writing articles and blogs, producing content, leading well at work and at home, getting involved in our street or community networks, sharing Christ with our friends, neighbours and colleagues, connecting people together, and so much more!

If your primary leadership skills lie outside the formal structures of the church, those are as valued as those who lead inside the church. If you'd like support in growing in leadership in or outside the church structures, please speak to one of the leaders.

what's *next?*



	ORGANISED	ORGANIC
explore	Sunday services Explore Christianity courses First Connect Welcome to City Church	Hang out on Sundays Make new friends Pub hang out after service And so much more!
grow	Sunday services Prayer meetings Age-specific events Book clubs Connect groups Bible studies One-to-ones	Regular attendance Reading God's word Personal devotion Christian music/ podcasts/ books Discussing faith Fellowship Sharing the gospel And so much more!
contribute	Serving team Giving Outreach ministries	Hosting people Offering lifts Praying for people Babysitting Helping move house Organising socials And so much more!
commit	Connect group Regular giving Membership	Regular attendance Staying in Manchester And so much more!
lead	Serving team lead Connect group lead One-to-one lead Discipleship group lead Explore Christianity lead Deacon Elder	Welcoming new people Discipling others Creating art Writing books, articles and blogs Producing podcasts, online content Leading at work Leading at home Leading in community networks Sharing Christ with others And so much more!!

A black and white photograph of a smiling man wearing a beanie and a jacket. In the background, there are several balloons, some of which are partially visible on the right side of the frame.

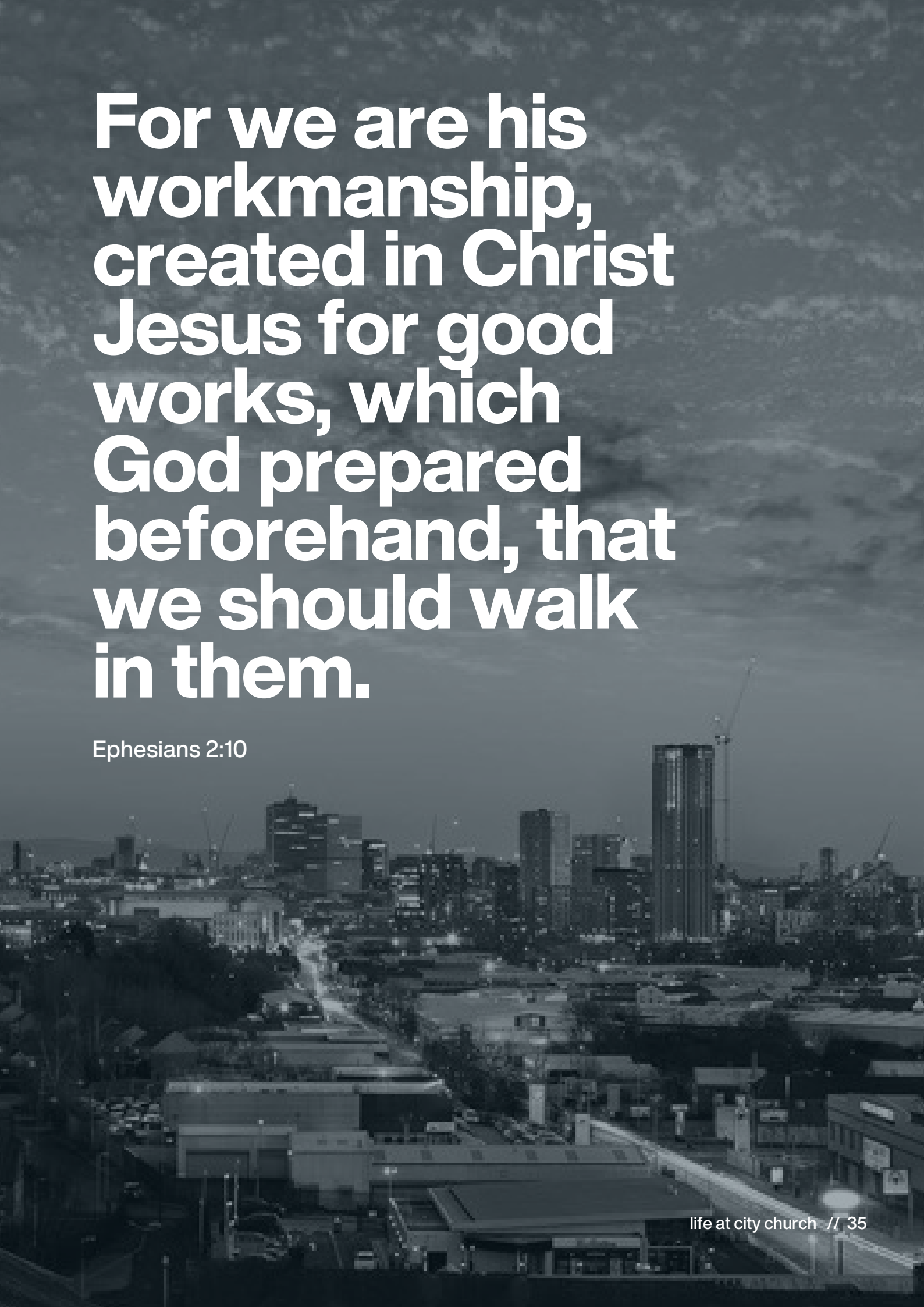
stay in touch

Filll out a contact form in-person or online and we'll get you on the weekly email list.

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube & Spotify

Any questions?

office@citychurchmanchester.org



**For we are his
workmanship,
created in Christ
Jesus for good
works, which
God prepared
beforehand, that
we should walk
in them.**

Ephesians 2:10

