

Community Life

Introduction

'And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.'

Hebrews 10:24-25

Faith House is a three-story 19th century building that started life as a Mission House serving the parish of Stepney Green. For the last few years it has been home to successive cohorts of Stepney Interns, so today once again it is home to those engaged in mission and ministry.

2020-2021 the intern scheme is not running so the house is being used to house interns, ordinands and other Christian workers committed to local church ministry and mission.

The info sheet on the house included the following statement:

It is expected that all residents will be primarily committed to their own churches and the wider mission of the church¹, but that living together they will also commit to create community², through sharing from time to time in prayer³, food⁴ and fellowship⁵ within Faith House.

As such, by taking a license to live in Faith house September 2020 – August 2021 all residents have agreed to build this foundation to their life in Faith House, and for simplicity sake the five elements are explored in more detail below along-with a few simple 'house rules'

1. A community committed to the wider church mission

Each resident of the house will be committed to their respective church and the wider mission of the Church across East London and in particular within the Stepney Episcopal Area.

As a community it is important *to respect* the various traditions and models of ministry that other residents are involved in, *to pray* for one another 's flourishing and *to support* as appropriate the calling, gifting and serving of the other residents.

2. A community creating community

Community doesn't 'just happen' between people who share a living space, set of beliefs or a purpose. Community springs up when people commit to each other and to see each other flourish; shared space, beliefs, concern and purpose are all seeds of community. Each of these seeds need tending, time and care to become fruitful.

As Faith House Community it will be vital *to 'want the best for each other'* in all areas of life purpose, faith and relationships. This is the beginning of community life. *Forestall one another in paying honour* St Benedict Rm12.10

3. Community Prayer life

It is expected that the Faith House community will establish a pattern of regular prayer for one another and importantly, with one another. *And let them first pray together so that they may associate in peace* St Benedict

As a community it is important *to set aside regular times at least every three weeks* (and keep them) to come together as a community to pray for each other the life and witness of Faith House and the wider mission of the churches and settings residents engage with. These times of prayer should ideally reflect the various traditions and approaches to prayer all the residents inhabit and thrive in.

3. Community Food

It is expected that food will be a key component of harmonious shared community life. The kitchen is often at the heart of healthy community living - how you live and work around the kitchen and food will be key to a happy house.

As a community it would be highly appropriate *to have a shared meal at least every three weeks*, shared as in all residents partake of it, and that over time all are committed to its cost and preparation.

4. Community Fellowship

Fellowship is Friendship infused by the Holy Spirit. The intimacy and discipline of life grows out of the presence of the Spirit and we ask you to encourage the gift of God's spirit in your prayer, generosity, honesty, humility, respect, trust and good humour, seeking the Spirit's presence and power for yourself and your housemates.

All Faith House community residents should choose *to seek a deeper truer spiritual life* for themselves and each other. Key to this will be house meetings to discuss the shared life and in the early days *to discuss the shared Christ-like values of house life* such as: honesty, generosity, relational engagement and spiritual encouragement. (The first will be in the company of the House (Intern) Manager.)

HOUSE RULES

Responsible Behaviour

- a) Respect and protect the health and well-being of self, others, and the environment.
- b) No smoking or use of any illegal drugs in the house.
- c) There is no strict prohibition on drinking alcohol, however moderation is expected in this area.
- d) Cleaning and tidying the common areas will need to be worked amongst the community out and committed to equally by all living in the house.
- e) Managing the kitchen together will take everyone's commitment to each-others comfort and one's own cleanliness.

Visitors & Relationships

- f) Life within Faith House should prioritise relationships within the house.
- g) Where conflicts arise between residents all individual's must be willing to discuss this with others and/or with the House (Intern) manager.
- h) Friends and family may visit, lodging and meals should be worked out according to available space. Visitors should make a contribution to help cover extra expenses, and not stay more than a few days, they are prohibited from moving in, or using the Intern house as a personal address.
- i) In keeping with the Christian identity of this house, relationships should reflect the teaching of the Church of England, it is assumed that **no sexual activity will take place in the houses** except where a married couple are part of the community. Boyfriends or girlfriends should not share your bedroom.

Grievances

- j) For any grievances that might arise in the house, the House (Intern) Manager will be available for mediation, accountability, and reconciliation. In all situations, all that is possible will be done to work towards a mutual understanding.