

Faith in Cambridge

Introduction

Moving to a new city and a new phase of life is an exciting and challenging time. For many people, it also means being away from the family members, local communities, and faith communities that have supported you in your faith while growing up. It can sometimes be difficult to work out how to live faithfully as a student, due to pressures of time, what feel like the prevailing social norms, and so on. And for some people, University may be a time of exploration, when the nature of our faith changes, matures, or is challenged.

This brief guide to Faith in Cambridge is for people of all faith traditions, and is offered by the Deans and Chaplains group because we are here to support all our students, of any faith or none, and we hope that you will feel able to approach your College chaplain or equivalent (most Colleges have one) if you need any advice or support with living faithfully, whatever your faith tradition. We hope that this brief guide will be helpful to you, wherever you are on your journey of faith, and that you will feel encouraged to seek support if you need it.

Where possible we've tried to include web addresses so that you can go straight to the organisations themselves for first-hand information, rather than having us speak for those organisations. Faith in Cambridge is dynamic and always growing, and so if you spot any omissions or have suggestions for improving this brief guide, please contact Ally (email below).

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Support for living faithfully as a student

Time for prayer

Cambridge life is really busy, and can feel like it's being lived at a hundred miles per hour. A regular routine of prayer or meditation or quiet reflection can help give structure to your time, and also ensure that you take a break from your academic work. But it can sometimes be difficult to maintain such a routine, especially when you're tired and your days are very full. And if you have a particularly heavy timetable of lectures and practicals it can be difficult to carve out time to pray or meditate when you need to. Some Departments and many Colleges have prayer rooms, which can really help – there are spaces set aside for prayer at West Cambridge, Addenbrooke's, and Sidgwick Site, as well as central locations. There's a (non-exhaustive) list of university departments with prayer rooms here: <https://www.equality.admin.cam.ac.uk/projects/faith-and-belief-practice/facilities-reflection-or-prayer>. Do ask your College Chaplain (or equivalent) for help finding somewhere to pray if there's nothing advertised near where you're studying.

Food

Your College's catering department probably already publishes information on how they cater for dietary restrictions including those that are for religious reasons as well as allergies. You can always talk to your College catering staff for more information. Communal eating is a really important aspect of College life, so if you find that you can't eat the catered food, please do raise this with your catering department, and ask your Chaplain to support you if you need it. Some students find that

sharing a fridge with other students is difficult due to the risk of contamination between different people's food. Often this can be dealt with by asking your neighbours to ensure that any food they put in the fridge is in sealed containers, but if it's still problematic, do speak to your Chaplain, who may be able to help. In terms of eating out, Cambridge has some amazing, diverse restaurants, many of which are located on Mill Road, where you will also find a number of excellent international supermarkets. A list of local sources for halal and kosher food can be found at the end of this guide.

Alcohol

It can sometimes feel as if alcohol is a necessary aspect of student life, but if your faith or personal beliefs means you don't drink, you may not be as alone as it seems: many students choose not to drink for all sorts of reasons, and it can be really helpful to support one another if you are choosing not to drink, whatever your reason. If you find yourself feeling isolated or being pressured into drinking, please do feel free to contact your chaplain or welfare team. If you're worried that someone may try and spike your soft drink, or if you think you may have been spiked, reach out for support from a friend, a porter, or the police straight away (for more information <https://www.studentwellbeing.admin.cam.ac.uk/support-particular-issues/drink-spiking>).

Sex

As with alcohol, it can sometimes seem as if sex is also an expected part of student life; if your faith commitment or personal beliefs mean you don't want to have sex, it's important to know that it's absolutely possible to live a full student life without it. If you don't want to have sex (whether that's for religious reasons or any other reason) you don't have to and that's perfectly fine. Understanding consent is taken very seriously in the university, and all Colleges run consent training for freshers. Students arrive in Cambridge with all sorts of different expectations and from a really diverse backgrounds so there may not always be a shared understanding about social norms. This means it's also helpful to reflect carefully about your own boundaries – what you're comfortable with and what you're not comfortable with - and how to articulate these boundaries to people who may have very different boundaries of their own. For some people university is a time for exploring these boundaries, and working out afresh what faithful living means for you.

If you would like some help with thinking about any of this, please do speak to your Chaplain or welfare team, who will be very happy to support you, whatever you decide to do. And if you have any kind of sexual experience that makes you feel unsafe or anxious, or which wasn't consensual, please do reach out to someone you trust for support – this could be your College's chaplain, welfare team, or Discrimination and Harassment Contact, or the university's [sexual harassment and violence](#) team. There is a lot of support available, and all discussions are treated confidentially and free of judgment. You can access support without having to make a formal report.

Sexuality and Gender identity

For many students, university is a time for exploring identity in all sorts of ways. It can be really challenging if you start to feel that there are aspects of your identity that seem at odds with religious teaching that you hold dear, or that are important to your family, or that makes you worry that you might not be accepted in your faith community. Please be assured that your College Chaplain or welfare team will be happy to offer confidential, non-judgmental support for anyone on this kind of journey of self-discovery, whatever your faith tradition.

If you are an LGBTQ+ student looking for a Christian church to go to in Cambridge, you will probably want to find one that is inclusive, welcoming and affirming. Some of Cambridge's churches have signed up to 'Inclusive Church' (www.inclusive-church.org/) which is a useful marker – though many other churches are also very welcoming and affirming. Your college Chaplain will be happy to help you find a church that is fully inclusive and welcoming of LGBTQ+ people.

Faith and Academic Work

Your tutor and DoS (for undergraduates) and your supervisor/department (for postgraduates) are generally your first port of call for issues that are impacting your academic work (or when academic work impacts the practice of your faith), for example, if fasting means you may have a bit less energy during supervisions or labs, or when a major festival means you need to ask for an extension. The University tries to ensure that the exam timetable takes account of religious observances, but this isn't always possible because the exam timetable is so complicated – it may be possible for College's to make alternative provision if necessary. Your College Chaplain will be happy to help you speak with your Tutor or DoS, and support you in asking for special exam arrangements, if you need it. (For more information, see <https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/faith-provision-university-exams>).

Existential questions

As a student you may find yourself asking big existential questions – wrestling with what life is about, your sense of purpose (and how that relates to your plans for further study or career), and how we, as human beings, can learn to live well in an increasingly complex world. For many people, exploring these questions has a spiritual and/or moral dimension. If you don't come from a particular faith background, or if you're not sure you want to explore these questions from the perspective of a specific religious faith, your College Chaplain will still be very happy to have a conversation at your own pace, without judgment, and without pushing you in a particular direction; they can also signpost you to places and groups where you can meet others who are exploring similar questions.

Faith and worship in Cambridge

There are some helpful links to local and university-based faith communities here:

<https://www.equality.admin.cam.ac.uk/projects/faith-and-belief-practice/directory-faith-and-belief-communities-cambridge> and there are many more below.

You may also be interested in **Cambridge Interfaith Programme** (<https://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/>)

The list below is not exhaustive, and while all links were checked at the time of publication, please do let Ally know of any errors or omissions.

Islam

ISoc – Cambridge University Islamic Society

<https://isoc.co.uk/>

ISoc serves the social, spiritual and academic needs of Muslim students and fosters community through a vibrant and inclusive society based on mutual beliefs and strengthened by friendship. Absolutely everyone is welcome, whether you're Muslim, interested in Islam or simply looking for a friendly face!

Cambridge Central Mosque

<https://cambridgecentralmosque.org/>

The Central Mosque is located at the far end of Mill Road, only about two miles from the city centre. It is a brand new, stunningly beautiful, eco-friendly building with a large, diverse worshipping community. There is also a garden and a café!

Prayer times for Cambridge are available here: <https://cambridgecentralmosque.org/prayer-times/>

Sikh

Cambridge University Sikh Society

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/cusikhsoc/>

<https://cam.sikhsoc.org/>

The Cambridge University Sikh Society (CU Sikh Soc) is a small but budding society, bringing together Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike to provide an insight into the Sikh religion, and sharing vibrant culture, traditions and values to enhance the society's members knowledge of key aspects of the Sikh religion, through talks, exhibitions and other events including Rehraas, Gurburab and Vaisakhi dinner.

Cambridge Gurdwara

<https://www.cambridgegurdwara.org/>

Buddhism

Cambridge Buddhist Centre:

<https://www.cambridgebuddhistcentre.com/>

Meditation classes, events, yoga, mindfulness, Dharma Night classes, and community – located on Newmarket Road, close to the Grafton Shopping Centre.

Cambridge University Buddhist Society

<http://buddha.soc.srcf.net/>

This is a student-led society offering weekly discussion evenings, meditation, social events and more.

Judaism

Jewish Chaplaincy in Cambridge is offered University Jewish Chaplaincy (mychaplaincy.co.uk), whose current Cambridge/East Anglia chaplains are Rabbi Ben and Atira Baruch:

Ben Baruch: ben@mychaplaincy.co.uk (07916 139974)

Atira Baruch: atira@mychaplaincy.co.uk (07783 367703)

Cambridge University Jewish Society

www.cujs.org/

The Society is open to all Jewish students, regardless of affiliation, background, or level of religious observance. They offer Friday night dinners, socials, speaker events, and discussion groups.

Beth Shalom Synagogue

beth-shalom.org.uk/

Beth Shalom is a Reform Synagogue, located on Aukland Road, which is just off Maid's Causeway, close to the Grafton shopping centre. It has a choir, and drama and dance groups, as well as regular Shabbat worship and more. Their website also has a useful page on other Jewish organisations and activities in Cambridge: <https://beth-shalom.org.uk/jewish-cambridge/>

Chabad of Cambridge

www.cuchabad.org

Rabbi Dr Reuven & Rochel Leigh founded Chabad of Cambridge in 2003, whose programmes include the Cambridge University Chabad Jewish Society, The Cambridge Hebrew School, Ganeinu Childcare Service and The Cambridge Mikvah.

Hindu

Cambridge University Hindu Cultural Society

cuhcs.soc.srcf.net/ <https://www.facebook.com/cuhcspage/>

The Hindu Cultural Society is one of the largest faith societies in the University, and provides a community for all students to practise Hinduism and learn more about the Hindu religion. The Society fosters community and encourages its members to cultivate and explore their Hindu identity through learning and celebratory events, and providing opportunities for social and charitable action.

Bahá'í

Cambridge University Bahá'í Society

bahai.soc.srcf.net/

The Society runs weekly evening discussions, and is open to anyone who is interested in learning more about Bahá'í teachings and practice.

Unitarian

Unitarian Church

www.cambridgeunitarian.org/

A small, open and inclusive community located just beyond the bus station, opposite Christ's Pieces.

Humanist

Cambridge Humanist Group

cambridge.humanist.org.uk/

CHG runs discussions and social events focused on promoting skepticism, humanism, and responsibility for personal actions.

Christianity

College Chapels & Chaplains

Most Colleges have a Chaplain or equivalent. If your College doesn't have a chaplain you are welcome to get in touch with the Chaplain of a neighbouring College, and if you're not sure who to approach, contact Ally Barrett chaplain@caths.cam.ac.uk for suggestions. Most of the Chapels are affiliated with the Church of England (though Robinson is ecumenical, and St Edmund's is Roman Catholic). College Chapels offer a regular pattern of worship during term time, which is often (but not always) centered around the choral tradition. There are usually opportunities to get involved with Chapel life, whether through the choir, as a Chapel warden, reading at services, joining in with discussion groups and social events, and more. People go to their College Chapel services for all sorts of reasons – you don't have to be religious. And most Chapels are open all day and available for people to wander in for peace and quiet / reflection. Most Chaplains (and Deans of Chapel) are also very involved in student welfare and wellbeing work, and some are also tutors or occupy other roles in College. Some, but not all, are academics. All chaplains are available to students for pastoral care, support and a listening ear, and can also help signpost you to where you can find more specialist help if you need it.

Student-led Christian organisations

Student Christian Movement / Heartsease

<https://cambridgescm.wordpress.com/>

SCM is an inclusive, nondenominational Christian community of students and young people, meeting weekly to share worship, fellowship and Christian witness. Diversity of thought, identity and spirituality are encouraged, and the aim is to provide sanctuary and spiritual welcome to all. SCM is explicitly inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ+ people.

Heartsease is SCM's weekly meeting (at Michaelhouse) for reflection, discussion, and worship.

Just Love

<https://justlovecambridge.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/JustLoveCambridge>

A student-led movement focusing on social and environmental justice, which runs events, lunch and discussion, prayer guides, and opportunities to engage in transformative social justice projects locally and beyond.

Cambridge Intercollegiate Christian Union (CICCU)

<https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeCU/>

<https://ciccu.org.uk/>

CICCU is an evangelical Christian student society, with reps in each College who convene the activities and encourage people to participate in university-wide events and programme.

Fisher House, the Roman Catholic Chaplaincy

<https://fisherhouse.org.uk/>

Sr Ann Swailes, OP acs92@cam.ac.uk

Fr Paul Keane (priest-chaplain) pjk1001@cam.ac.uk

Fisher House is a lively community offering worship, fellowship, discussion groups, and opportunities for social action. It's located close to the market place, behind Lion's Yard / the Grand Arcade, on the corner by the Corn Exchange.

Church of England

There are so many C of E churches in Cambridge it can be hard to know where to start! Here are some that are centrally located and/or have a significant ministry to students. Where a church is explicitly LGBTQ+ inclusive this is mentioned below, and there are also plenty of other churches further away from the centre of town that are part of the Inclusive Church network, including St Luke's (Victoria Road), St Gile's (on the corner of Castle Hill), St Augustine's Church (further up Huntingdon Road), and St Edward's (between King's Parade and the Market Place).

Great St Mary's, the University Church (also known as GSM)

greatstmarys.org

Great St Mary's offers a variety of worship and fellowship, including a significant choral tradition, and events and services six days a week in the church and at nearby Michaelhouse (half church, half café). Great St Mary's is the very large church directly opposite King's College Chapel and the Senate House. Michaelhouse is just down Trinity Street, on the right. Great St Mary's is a member of Inclusive Church.

St Bene't's

stbenetschurch.org/

St Bene't's is an inclusive church in the liberal catholic tradition, and a reputation for beautiful liturgy and high quality preaching. The Eucharist is celebrated daily. St Bene't's is explicitly inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ+ people.

St Paul's, Hills Road

www.stpaulscambridge.org.uk/

St Paul's is a thriving Christian community with a diverse range of ministries and a particular emphasis on social outreach, spiritual exploration and welcoming those on the edge. It's located on the way from the centre of town to the railway station. St Paul's is a member of Inclusive Church.

Little St Mary's (known as LSM)

www.lsm.org.uk/

LSM is an anglo catholic church, with a daily mass and an established choral tradition. It's located on Trumpington Street, opposite Pembroke College.

St Botolph's

www.stbotolphcam.org/

All the worship at St Botolph's is from the Book of Common Prayer (ie 16th-17th century English) and there's an established choir that's always looking for new members. You can expect traditional worship, thoughtful preaching and a warm welcome.

Holy Trinity (also known as HT)

www.htcambridge.org.uk/

HT is a large and lively Evangelical Church right in the centre of town (near Waterstones) with a significant ministry among students and special student focused services, groups and events during term time.

St Andrew the Great (usually known as StAG)

www.stag.org

A large evangelical church in central Cambridge (round the back of Lion Yard shopping centre) with a significant ministry among students during term time.

St Mark's

<https://stmarksnewnham.org/>

Located on Barton Road, St Mark's is the parish church for Newnham, where many Colleges have post-graduate accommodation. It's a family friendly church with good preaching and a small choir, and regular arts events.

Roman Catholic

The Church of Our Lady of the Assumption and the English Martyrs, Hills Road (known as OLEM)

olem.org.uk/

OLEM is a large Roman Catholic Church within easy walking distance of the city centre, and with a fine musical tradition (including a small number of choral scholarships available). There are masses planned to serve Cambridge's international community, including regular celebrations in Polish, as well as a sung Latin mass.

United Reformed Church

Downing Place

hdowningplaceurc.org/

Downing Place is a really inclusive church with a particular focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion, and an Open Table. It's located on Downing Street (next door to the Sedgwick Museum and opposite the side entrance to John Lewis). Downing Place is explicitly inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ+ people, and is part of the Open Table Network, offering services with a particular focus on LGBT+ folk and their allies.

Methodist

Wesley Church

www.wesleycam.org.uk/welcome.htm

The largest Methodist Church in Cambridge, Wesley Church is located between Jesus College and the Grafton Centre. To get there, head towards the bus station, then continue through Christ's Pieces towards Midsummer Common. You'll see Wesley Church on your left at the roundabout.

Castle Street Methodist Church

castlestreet.org.uk/

A warm and welcoming church with a good mix of ages and a heart for social justice. Located just up Castle Hill (before you get to Fitzwilliam and Medwards). Castle Street is explicitly inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ+ people.

Baptist

St Andrew's Street Baptist Church

www.stasbaptist.org/

The Church is on St Andrew's Street, near 'Spoons, and has its own café. It's often used as a venue for events and has a welcoming congregation across the whole age range.

Eden Baptist Church

eden-cambridge.org/

There's a regular student night, and plenty of other things to get involved with at Eden Baptist Church, which is located near the Grafton Centre.

Zion Baptist Church

www.zionbc.org.uk/

Zion Baptist Church is a strongly multicultural church on East Road, and is well known for its work among Cambridge's homeless population via Jimmy's Night Shelter (which is housed in its basement!).

Salvation Army

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/cambridge-citadel

The Citadel is located on Tenison Road (just off Mill Road). They also run a rather good charity shop in the building next door!

Quaker

Jesus Lane Quaker Meeting

www.cambridgeshire-quakers.org.uk/meetings/jesus-lane

Jesus Lane is very central, close to the ADC theatre. There are meetings for worship on Wednesdays (with lunch) and Sundays, and an additional meeting for worship in the evening once a month, looking at various themes.

Hartington Grove Quaker Meeting

www.cambridgeshire-quakers.org.uk/meetings/hartington-grove

Hartington Grove is between the railway station and Addenbrooke's, just off Hills Road. The Meeting for Worship is on Sunday mornings.

Orthodox

The Church of St Ephraim

saintephrain.org.uk/#/

St Ephraim's welcomes a diverse international community, with worship primarily in English. It is located at St Clement's Church, on Bridge Street. The Rector, Archpriest Raphael Armour, is also the Russian Orthodox Chaplain for the University, and can be contacted on 07953-326779 or by email on father.rafael@saintephrain.org.uk.

St Athanasios (Greek Orthodox) is at 154 Cherry Hinton Road <http://stathanasios.uk/>

Lutheran

Resurrection Lutheran Church

lutheran.co.uk/directory/cambridge

Resurrection Lutheran Church is located at 25 Westfield Lane, Cambridge, which is up Castle hill and then right down Benson Street

Presbyterian

Cambridge Presbyterian Church

www.cambridgepres.org.uk/

CPC meets on Sunday mornings (at Queen Emma Primary School on Gunhild Way) and on Sunday evenings in the Resurrection Lutheran Church (see above). They can help students with travel to church services and members of the congregation offer welcome and hospitality.

Independent

Kingsgate Community Church

<https://kingsgate.church/cambridge/>

Kingsgate is a charismatic free church that meets on Sunday mornings at West Road Concert Hall.

C3

thec3.uk/

C3 is an charismatic Evangelical church on the Coldham's Lane roundabout (by the huge Sainsbury's).

Halal, Kosher Groceries in Cambridge

A non-exhaustive list of halal, kosher, and vegetarian resources in the Cambridge central area.

Midan World Foods (Halal)

18-20 Histon Rd, Arbury, Cambridge CB4 3LE

www.midanworldfoods.com

01223 500500

A wide selection of international foods (including African, Italian, South and East Asian foods), as well as a halal butcher, Midan also offers homemade samosas and other baked and cooked foods and an extensive selection of locally-made frozen halal South Asian dishes.

Iqbro Halal Grocers (Halal)

184b Histon Rd, Arbury, Cambridge CB4 3JP

iqbrogrocer.co.uk

01223 778504

Iqbro has recently expanded, and offers an extensive selection of halal food, including a large, well-stocked halal butchers, as well as packaged and non-perishable foods, fresh veg and fruit, and frozen seafood.

Al:Amin (Halal)

100a, 102A Mill Rd, Cambridge CB1 2BD

www.alamin.co.uk

01223576396

Perhaps the best-known halal shop in Cambridge, Al:Amin offers halal groceries, take-away hot food, a halal butchers, spices, and a bakery.

Al Noor (Halal)

1C Arbury Rd

01223 514820

This small halal grocery in Arbury offers a selection of halal meat and other groceries

Spice Gate (Halal)

14 Mill Rd, Cambridge CB1 2AD

01223 513097

www.spicegate.co.uk

Near the top of Mill Road, Spice Gate is smaller than Al:Amin but stocks a wide range of non-perishable halal and international food, baked goods, and a halal butcher.

Derby Store (Kosher foods)

26A Derby St, Cambridge CB3 9JE (Newnham)

Tel: 01223 354391

Derby Stores stocks a wide range of kosher products and can often also order on request pre-packed Hermolis meals and other foods available in kosher shops in Golders Green, London, including fresh meat. Products available usually include dry goods, chilled, and frozen items including meat and Tivall vegetarian products. They also have Kosher wines, cakes and chocolates. Kosher bread is brought from London for Shabbat, and arrives around 14.00 on Thursday afternoon. You can order by phone and they will hold for you to collect.

Sainsbury's (some Kosher, Halal items)

Coldhams Lane, CB1 3HP, particularly, but also other Sainsbury's in Cambridge.

Tel: 01223 246183

Sainsbury's has a selection of kosher and halal items including chilled and frozen goods, cheese and meat, and dry goods such as crackers, cakes and tinned foods, and has kosher chilled and ambient sections. For kosher foods, you can use www.kosher.org.uk to search for any food item and see which brands are certified if you are unsure.

Revital Health (vegetarian, some Kosher)

Bridge Street, CB2 1UA

Tel: 01223 350433

This health food shop stocks Tofutti & other brands of non-dairy 'cheese', Tivall vegetarian products, Swedish Glace & other parev ice-creams. They also stock Clearspring soy sauce & other kosher sushi products. Many of their other imported ranges are also certified as kosher.

Vegetarian/Vegan Restaurants

While most restaurants offer some vegetarian options, there are several spots in Cambridge which are exclusively vegetarian or vegan. These are not necessarily certified halal or kosher (though there are a number of halal restaurants, especially along Mill Road).

The Topsy Vegan (6-8 Quayside, Cambridge, CB5 8AB; 01223 350542; thetipsyvegan.co.uk)

Thrive (5-7 Norfolk St, Cambridge CB1 2LD; 01223464899; thrivecambridge.com)

Stem & Glory (50-60 Station Rd, Cambridge CB1 2JH; 012239 53539; stemandglory.uk/cambridge)

Garden Kitchen (82 Mill Rd, Cambridge CB1 3AS; 01223 315205; thegardenkitchencambridge.co.uk)

Doppleganger Burger (59 Regent St, Cambridge CB2 1AB; dopplegangerburger.co.uk; 01223 665917)

