



# Église évangélique baptiste

*Membre de la Fédération des églises évangéliques baptistes*

*Membre du Conseil national des évangéliques de France*

*Membre de la Fédération protestante de France*

64, rue Guynemer - 63000 Clermont-Ferrand

Tél. : 04 73 91 06 13

1<sup>st</sup> November, 2016

Dear friends of the EEB, Clermont-Ferrand.

Thank you for your past interest and support of God's work here in the town of Clermont-Ferrand in central France, and in particular through the "Eglise Evangélique Baptiste".

The purpose of this letter is to bring you up to date with the latest news concerning our Church growth project, and to encourage your support of this adventure and challenge into which we believe the Lord is leading us.

Over the past couple of years the Church Council (Pastor, elders and deacons) has felt an increasingly strong motivation to better live out our God given missions as a local Church – and to more actively seek the growth that we know God wants for His Church here in Clermont-Ferrand where He has placed us.

This conviction has led us progressively to more clearly define and share our vision of growth for our local Church, and to seek a Church building better adapted to this vision than our current premises. This vision and the associated building project are outlined in more detail in the following pages...

## **In summary...**

We are moving forward on a project to acquire and adapt an old but well situated commercial building. We were planning to purchase half of the building, which seemed a reasonable step of growth for our Church and a feasible financial challenge, given our capacities. The owner had accepted our proposition, planning to sell or rent the remainder of the building.

But... seeing that the official sale agreement signature was taking a long time in the hands of the solicitors, and that the other part of the building was still not sold or let, the elders began to wonder: is the Lord perhaps leading us towards a more ambitious project?

At the end of October, the owner contacted us unexpectedly to propose to us the sale of the whole building at a very attractive price. This development has taken us by surprise, and we have decided to take the month of November to study this proposition and to seek the Lord's will in prayer.

## **How can you help ?**

Even at an attractive price, the purchase of the whole building would be a major challenge for the Church on its own.

If you feel motivated to contribute financially, to any degree, to this Church growth project, we thank you sincerely, and invite you make contact with the Church treasurer on the following e.mail address:

[tresoriers@eeb-cf.org](mailto:tresoriers@eeb-cf.org)



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Whether you are able to contribute financially or not to this project, please pray for us, that the Lord will guide our choices, that He will help us to be and to do what He wants of us here in Clermont-Ferrand, and that He will give the increase in His Church that we know he wants!

We thank you in advance for your prayers and support.

Yours in Christ.

Eric Le Guéhennec  
(Pastor)

Ivan Blemings  
(President)

Tomas Zajicek  
(Treasurer)

*"The Churches were strengthened in their faith, and grew daily in numbers." Acts 16 v 5.*

**"Making Jesus known!"**

# Our Church vision and project...

We want to be a Church that fulfils the mission given to us by Christ – that of **making disciples, that make disciples**. A mission which is aligned with a vision of growth in numbers and in maturity, and which relies on the help and power of the Holy Spirit.

We want to...

- **go seek** these future disciples outside the Church: arouse their curiosity by our witness, invite them among us, trusting in God to put in their hearts the desire to "come and see".
  - **make welcome**: do our best so that each new-comer feels at ease and wishes to come back, by showing Christ's love, trusting in God to reveal himself to them and to give them a hunger to want more.
  - **preach the gospel / baptize**: live and proclaim the gospel message, trusting in God to convince and to lead people to conversion. Accompany new believers in their engagement through baptism and membership of the local Church.
  - **teach**: to train disciples capable of living out the commandments of Jesus Christ in today's world, trusting in God to do his work of sanctification.
  - **send** : to encourage the development of ministries inside and outside the Church, by encouragement and by training, trusting in God who equips His Church...
- ...for the glory of His name.

## In practice...

We want to organize our Church life around two themes:

- a Sunday worship service accessible to all, Christians or not (dynamic, simple, jargon free, not too long), where everyone is motivated to invite their family, friends , neighbours, colleagues, where everyone feels welcomed
- a network of small house groups allowing interactive and pertinent exchange, the sharing of joys, sorrows and needs, encouragement for action, prayer.

We want to build on the following principles:

1. A Church council unified around our Church project and active in its realization
2. A true welcoming spirit for everyone who comes into our Church, Christian or not, adults and children, locals and visitors.
3. A visibility of our Church within the town of Clermont and with the local authorities
4. A recognition of the universal Church: respect of and friendship with the other Clermont Churches, a willingness for cooperation, concern and actions for the wider Church (missions, support of the persecuted Church...)

# The building: an important tool in the service of our Church project

Our "Church project" starts **now**, in our present location! However, to better live out our vision, we wish to move to new premises at 106 avenue Edouard Michelin, a building 400m from our current location.



This building is a former vehicle spare parts supplier. It is situated close to the town centre (20 minutes on foot, 10 minutes by public transport) on one of the main access roads into the centre of Clermont-Ferrand. It is set back from the main road and several car parking spaces are available inside the gates. Many parking spaces are available along the main road, which is a significant advantage compared to our current premises.

The owner is in agreement to divide the building. We plan to purchase and renovate a surface of 432m<sup>2</sup> (approximately the left half of the building). We will construct a fire-proof and insulating dividing wall from the remainder of the building. We will have access to 4 car parking spaces in front of our part of the building and the avenue on which it is situated offers many more.

The remainder of the building will be sold or rented to someone else.

## Contribution of this building to the Church project

This building will allow us to significantly improve in two important areas: have space to grow, and to improve our welcome facilities.

**Have space to grow.** Currently, our main service hall is regularly over 80% full, and at special events (Christmas, baptisms...) the hall is overflowing. The side rooms are too small to correctly accommodate the children. The kitchen area is totally inadapted for our fellowship meals, which can currently attract over 100 people.

We wish to have space to grow and to welcome and integrate new people into the Church.

**Improve our welcome facilities.** We wish to have a building which meets the expectations of people for a welcoming environment. In particular, we want to have a layout that allows us to welcome people, discuss, have a coffee, without being in the service hall, surrounded by chairs, and in competition with the musicians preparing for the worship service.

## Layout possibilities

This building offers us numerous possibilities of layout to better put into practice the different facets of our growth project and vision.

A main service hall of up to 300 person capacity should be possible, as well as a separate commons area for welcoming, discussion, coffee. A good kitchen area, and dedicated classrooms for teaching and crèche needs will also be possible.

The interior height will allow us to add an additional floor, when needed. We will integrate access and facilities for the handicapped.

We are currently working with an architect to define the layout and renovation plans. He will also help us with the administrative procedures with the town planning and building regulation authorities. The future needs have been defined on the basis of a 10 year projection by the elders and with the contribution of the different activity teams.

## Financial Planning

We currently plan a total project cost of 850,000 €, with the following split:

- Building purchase: 370,000 €
- Renovations: 425,000 €
- Fees and charges (architect, solicitor, administrative costs...): 55,000 €

We foresee the following project funding:

- Available reserves: 220,000 € (at end February 2016)
- Sale of our present buildings: 180,000 € (sale agreed to the Auvergne Adventist Church)
- Bank loan funding: 450,000 €.

In order to finance the bank loan, we have already launched an appeal within the Church for gifts to boost our reserves, and the members have accepted the challenge of a 20% increase in future offerings.

## A new opportunity !

Last week (end October), the owner of the new building made us an unexpected proposition to sell us almost the whole building...

- The total ground floor of 783 m<sup>2</sup> (instead of 432 m<sup>2</sup> initially)
- The total first floor of 458 m<sup>2</sup> (instead of 258 m<sup>2</sup> initially)
- 133 m<sup>2</sup> of the basement (keeping only a part for his own personal use)

He has proposed to sell us these 823 m<sup>2</sup> for 640,000 € (compared to 370,000 € for the initial project with a part only of the building).

This proposition would allow us to reduce the renovation costs (no elevator, no separation fire wall...) and would give us access to all the car parking spaces (over 20 spaces possible on the property).

We have decided, with the seller's agreement, to take one month to study this proposition with our architect.

# The history of the building project...

## Or how we are seeing God at work...

**Oct. 2015:** Church residential week-end. "Why are we here (as a local Church)?" with Pastor Pierre Civelli (EEL Valence)

**Nov. 2015:** "We have a dream". The vision of our Pastor and elders for the EEB in Clermont-Ferrand. "To be disciples, that make disciples... that make disciples...."

**Dec. 2015:** An architect's proposition to expand and adapt our current premises is judged insufficient for our needs, and too expensive.

The possibility to purchase a part of 106 ave Eduard Michelin (400m from our current building) is brought to our attention. The location, the price and the possibilities seem right!

**Jan. 2016:** Visit of the Church members to this prospective location, followed by a week of prayer, fasting and reflexion. An informal meeting of the members confirmed our collective interest to follow up on this possibility.

**March 2016:** A further informal meeting of the members indicated a strong common motivation for the Church vision and the pursuit of the purchase and renovation of half of 106 ave. E.Michelin.

The owner of this building gives his verbal agreement to our propositions and purchase price!

The investments committee of the French Baptist Federation (FEEB) gives its support to the project (for confirmation by the annual Federation convention in May).

The 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist Church, to whom we have been regularly lending our current building, confirms their interest in purchasing it!

The formal annual Church members' meeting votes at 86% to support the presented Church vision, and the associated financial commitment for the purchase and renovation of half of 106 ave. E.Michelin!

The Baptist Federation's bank agrees in principle to the loan requirements.

**May 2016:** The French Baptist Federation annual convention confirms the Federation's support of the project. The project is officially under way!

Several weeks after this meeting, a special offering organized for one of our services collected 19,000 € (which continues to be added to since), confirming the commitment of the Church.

**June 2016:** The monthly offering target agreed by the members' meeting in order to finance the future project is met.

**Oct 2016:** Church week-end retreat. "Lord, direct our project!" with Pastor Chris Short (EPD Pontault-Combaut).

The signature of the legal sale agreement, that had little advanced since May, is finally ready.

Just before signatures, the property owner makes us an unexpected proposition to sell us most of the building for a very attractive price...

This requires our attention, study, and prayer!