

## PREPARING FOR 40 DAYS OF HOME MISSION

### A message from our General Secretary, Lynn Green

#### Mission matters!

Mission matters because we want to be faithful to the command of Jesus Christ, "...go, and make disciples of all nations..." and I am inspired by the many ways that I see Baptists responding. All over this country, people are witnessing to Christ in their daily lives; cooking a meal for a neighbour on a regular basis, fostering young people, praying for a colleague to be healed, moving into an urban area in early retirement rather than joining the exodus for the rural dream, waking with friends who struggle with depression or addiction, donating to the local food bank, sharing prophetic words at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, travelling to a foreign country to work with the poor and marginalised, serving as a Magistrate; the list could go on ... and on ... and on ...

I also see local churches coming together to seek the Lord about their own unique call and then rolling their sleeves up to serve their communities. Night shelters, Messy Church, Street Pastors, Drop in groups, street evangelism, services at residential homes for the elderly, toddler and playgroups, youth clubs, Alpha and again, the list could go on and on ...

As Baptist Christians though, our commitment to personal witness and mission through the local church is enriched by our conviction that we need to work together with others as well if we are to be truly faithful to Jesus' command to make disciples. We see that we need to witness to Christ where churches are not present and in communities and groups which don't have many connections with the good news of Jesus. One of the key ways we achieve this is through our Home Mission Fund. It might sound a bit undynamic, but actually the opposite is true! In reality our prayer, support and giving through Home Mission is transforming lives, churches and communities.



As you become part of this 40 day prayer journey you will share in some of the stories of hope and transformation from around our Union. I do hope that you will be inspired by those involved; who knows, the Lord might be calling you to embark on a new mission adventure with him? If we are to see God's Kingdom come in our land we need all the pray-ers, givers, pastors and pioneers that God has for us!

**Lynn Green**  
General Secretary, BUGB



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### TOTTERIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH



#### The impact of Home Mission on Totteridge Baptist Church, High Wycombe

Having Home Mission as 40% of my stipend made the church realise that we were in need of reaching out. We had an old building that didn't look like a church, more an old village hall, and we had a thriving bible based Friday night kids' club - but no cross-over between it and the church family. So I posed the small membership two questions:

- » Who are we going to reach?
- » How are we going to reach them?

Through various meetings and prayer times they decided that we should primarily, but not exclusively, reach young families; not families with teenagers, not singles, not the elderly, and certainly not everybody! We realised we were part of the High Wycombe church as a whole and together we would reach 'everybody'.

This decision meant we had to decide how to reach young families. We realised we couldn't reach them with buildings that sent out a message that we were old and for old people. We also realised we could no longer communicate church life and the gospel the way we related to it, but the way young families would relate to it. We had to

focus on relationships more than attendance and we instigated termly church services just for the kids' club families - high in quality and content for a modern world. Now, just over two years on, our adult church membership has grown by a third to 31 (5 families have joined through our kids' club), our buildings are almost renovated, the worship experience on a Sunday is more vibrant and engaging, and everyone is involved in moving things forward.

We have found that as we have communicated a clearly worded vision and stuck to it, and have decided on what church should feel like, it has attracted fresh faces and fresh income through gifts, donations and hirings.



Thanks Home Mission, and I don't think it'll be too long before we will have enough income to completely cover my stipend on our own and also enough for a shared children's worker!

**David Hazeldine**  
Minister, Totteridge Baptist Church

#### Please pray:

- » For deepening relationships with young families coming to the kids' club
- » For a continued sense of vision for the whole church
- » For plans to find a children's worker



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## SCUNTHORPE BAPTIST CHURCH



**Crosby is a high priority area for local authorities in North Lincolnshire due to its high levels of poverty, crime, social injustice, and diversity**

Crosby is notorious in the area for prostitution, drugs and homelessness. It also has large Muslim communities.

As a church (Scunthorpe Baptist Church) we have been exploring a model that would be very similar to the missional community approach adopted by many churches across the UK. As a result of this we decided to employ Fiona Doherty as a Pioneer Community Planter in September 2013. Fiona has a real passion for incarnational living and the discipleship of everyone, including the most lost, hurting and broken coming to know Jesus. Fiona also has a real God-given call to the Crosby community, having grown up in Scunthorpe and knowing many of the key issues.



The decision to employ Fiona (who is part-time) was taken with an awareness that her funding would be entirely taken from church reserves.

In the 10 months that we have been working in the community of Crosby we have already seen some incredible and miraculous works, and are beginning to see real fruit from this intentional method of sharing the gospel, and the incarnational way in which Fiona and the team are demonstrating the Kingdom. Their vision is simple - to see the neighbourhood be a reflection of the fullness of the Kingdom of God. Fiona explains the works she and her team do in the following statement:

*I rented a house and knew that we would use this for the base of everything we do in the community. I never understood the power of truly living a life where you have open homes and opened lives. For us living in a way that meant my door was one to be knocked on meant we quickly made friends in the neighbourhood.*

*We try and live by three basic principles; incarnational, intentional, invitational.*



*One of the most amazing examples of this was at Christmas, I had made invitations and knocked on every door on my street to invite people over for mince pies and hot chocolate, for those who didn't answer I posted the invitation. A few hours later I was in the community (but not on my road) and a lady I had never seen before came running over to me saying 'are you the girl from number 18?' She then proceeded to tell me that she, her girlfriend and their son were shocked to be invited to my house and wondered if they were welcome as they knew we were Christians! Through this I was massively reminded that whether you know your neighbours or not*



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*they know you and what you do; witness well - an early lesson we learnt. From that day we have got to know that family very well. We never hide from people who we are or what we believe, in fact we make it a priority to 'set our stall out' with people straight away.*

*Something that we are passionate about as a team is that we are discipling ourselves well and loving God with all that we have, because we believe that as a result of that we will serve and love others well. The family we connected with at Christmas has had a number of questions for us, and so we just kept referring them to Jesus and the Bible. After a few of these conversations they asked for their own Bibles, so we gave the whole family a bible and a highlighter and suggested they highlighted what they thought God was speaking to them about. After a few days they were coming back having read and highlighted the Bible and were telling us what they thought of it. We have had people who have never heard of who Jesus really is praying with us, taking a bible and then telling their family about it.*

*One of our favourite people is a prostitute we know, who has lived in this area all of her life. She has been working the streets for a few years now. She has children and is well known in the neighbourhood. Sometimes after her 'shift' she 'knocks on' for a coffee and brings a list of things she would like to pray for. We love that she finds safety in the walls of my home and sanctuary in bringing her concerns before God.*



*Some of the people we have met have been of different faiths, particularly Muslim. We have had amazing encounters with one guy who has had visions of Jesus and wants to know more. We have spent some time with him chatting and praying it through and he is really discovering more about Jesus, and has been open to receiving prayer for healing.*

*Paul, my fiancé, has started a pool night at our local pool and snooker hall. This has seen him build some great relationships with a group of men who are mainly Muslim, and from all over the world. One of the men, a Muslim who works in a local shop, used to follow Paul and I around whenever we went in to the store. One day he approached Paul and said, "Please can I talk to you, I have problems and there is something different about you!" Paul is finding it exciting to see them grow and learn more about Jesus over the pool table.*

*Those stories give a glimpse of the people we have met and what we do. We have loved getting to know all the local churches, organisations, prostitutes, homeless, drug users, drug dealers alike. The thing we love is they are all our friends and we love to tell them about a God who loves them enough to send Jesus to the cross for them.*

The team do a fantastic job discipling people from the very first encounter they have with their neighbours. It rarely involves deep bible study to begin with, but instead starts with basic expressions of what our God is really like; compassionate, gracious, loving and generous. This work has already come at a cost to the team. They have had items taken from their homes, been woken in the early hours on a regular basis, and have had to give sacrificially to support those they meet in Crosby, but it is a real testament to their character that they do it all with love and grace, being an excellent witness to the community.

We really want to see this missional community flourish and continue to transform the local community, and in order to do so we need to find the funding. Our church reserves are extremely limited and we already have to consider what our future steps will be, so any support that can offered to Fiona and the team would be incredibly welcome.

**Tom MacDonald**  
Assistant Pastor  
Scunthorpe Baptist Church

#### **Please pray:**

- » For Fiona and her team as they engage with their neighbours, and share their faith
- » For the people they meet who are discovering how much God loves them and accepts them
- » For adequate funding to enable this exciting ministry to continue to flourish and transform the community



### BARNWELL BAPTIST CHURCH



Barnwell Baptist Church was planted in the late 1940s in a growing post-war Council estate on the north east edge of Cambridge

Fifty years later, having become independent in the 1960's, the church had been without a minister for almost 30 years and was in decline - the church remaining open thanks to the faithfulness of a few (the average attendance was about eight).

In 2004, with the support of Home Mission and St Andrew's Street Baptist Church (St A's), the Revd Stuart Wood led a team to start work at the Church, moving to Barnwell full-time in 2007 with 12 members from St A's.

Today, membership stands at 48; we've had 18 baptisms over the past five years, and our average attendance is now over 50 - with us creeping towards 60 regularly attending. However, those numbers, while encouraging, only tell part of the story. The ministry of Barnwell Baptist Church extends far beyond the four walls of the Church. As a community we seek to be generous with our resources, our building, our time and our minister.



The Church releases Stuart to serve as Chaplain to Cambridge United Football Club and he is currently in his 10th season in that role. As a Church, we have been blessed as folk have come to faith, been baptised and joined us.

A video was made of Stuart's work at the club which can be viewed at <http://youtu.be/wyilSX5zEdA>.



Through his involvement nationally with Sports Chaplaincy, other clubs up and down the country have appointed Chaplains – Torquay, Barrow, Braintree and Fleetwood among a number, with other clubs currently in discussion (perhaps there are some reading this who would be interested – there is a sports club right near you, and a ministry right there! Get in touch if you want to know more, or visit [www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk](http://www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk)).



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One of the most successful aspects of our work as a church in recent years is the partnership with one of the other local churches and the City Council in running Community Action Days. We held the inaugural one in 2008, and by last year these had increased to 10 across the city (five in our patch), with Council aspirations to double that in 2015. On our five days, we cleared over 40 tonnes of rubbish and made many positive contacts.

During 2014 we partnered with 'Hope into Action' as they opened their second home in Cambridge.

There are currently two young men being supported and mentored by folk in the Church.

We are thrilled that in 2012 we were able to purchase the church's first manse (with the help of the Baptist Union Corporation and other loans). Looking ahead, there is much to do. We are actively praying about a church plant (or two!) and a church re-build. We are trusting God each and every step of the way. Without Home Mission support, none of this would be possible, and we would ask you to continue to pray for us as we

seek to reach a lost and broken community with the love of Jesus.

If you're ever in the area, do come and visit, you'd be most welcome.

Our God is so faithful and has done amazing things at Barnwell – to God be the glory!

**Stuart Wood**

Minister, Barnwell Baptist Church

**Please pray:**

- » Giving thanks for the partnerships with local churches, 'Hope into Action' and the City Council, and for all that they have achieved together
- » With the church about their vision for a church plant and re-build, that God would make his plans clear
- » For Stuart's continuing involvement with Cambridge United Football Club and Sports Chaplaincy
- » That people in other places will be inspired to support their local sports clubs through sports ministry





## HOW WOULD JESUS VOTE?



At the beginning of Luke's gospel, the occasion is recorded when Jesus addressed the congregation of the synagogue in his home town. Drawing in the words of the prophet Isaiah, he proclaimed the fulfilment of what many have come to call his 'Nazareth Manifesto'. His vision of God's Kingdom was one where poverty, injustice and oppression are acknowledged and addressed. Similar messages echoed decades earlier in the words with which his mother Mary responded to the news of his impending birth.

Our faith has clear political dimensions, for these are issues that cannot be addressed in isolation from those who hold authority and government in our world. In a few weeks' time, we will be confronted by the manifestos of every political party, as they vie for our allegiance in the forthcoming General Election. No-one can be certain of how Jesus would vote, but we do have a responsibility to act as a Kingdom people as we engage in the emerging political debates.

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) is a coalition of Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches that seeks to combine our shared resources to help local congregations embrace and understand key issues in society, to reflect on these in the light of our faith, and to give voice to our communities in the public sphere. Through Home Mission support, JPIT is able to resource churches in better understanding and engaging with the communities around them, giving practical and relevant expression to our Gospel message.

JPIT is hosting a national conference today, at which the new General Election resource '*Love Your Neighbour – think, pray, vote*' will be launched. We are delighted to welcome as the speaker Archbishop Justin Welby. The words of Jesus to "love your neighbour" have been deliberately chosen to fly in the face of many political narratives that tend to appeal solely to our self-interest. This is just one dimension of the work that JPIT does in resourcing and representing local churches and Christian communities in public life.

**Phil Jump**



# joint public issues team

Baptist, Methodist  
and United Reformed  
Churches working together

### Please pray:

- » For everyone involved in the JPIT conference, especially our main speaker, that it may be a fruitful and informative gathering.
- » For all those who are engaged in political life, especially those motivated by their Christian faith, that they may have the courage and wisdom to do what is truly right.
- » Together as a local church, and use the JPIT resource pack to consider how you can engage in, and respond to the ongoing political debate as the election campaign gathers momentum.
- » For your local representatives and politicians, irrespective of their party allegiances, that they might pursue truth, justice, peace and common good.

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### WEST BROMWICH BAPTIST CHURCH



Serving the community through the  
**Tantany Lunch Club**

Over the last couple of years West Bromwich Baptist Church (WBBC) have been more intentionally trying to reach out to our community, to show God's love in word and action. The idea of a Lunch Club grew from this desire; it enables us as a church to offer friendship to the lonely, a meal to the hungry and the love of Jesus to everyone we get through the door.

After months of prayer and planning we decided as a church to go ahead with this outreach venture, but obviously, like any new activity, we were aware there would be some start-up costs involved. The kitchen needed updating to reach health and safety standards, as well as some training for the catering volunteers and the correct equipment. We needed some new utensils, tables and even pots and pans.

As a church we sought some support from a Home Mission grant and soon after applying we gratefully received the money in order to get the Lunch Club going.

Now it was time for members from the church to step up to the plate and support this venture by volunteering each week to help. We have a great team of about

12 people, led by Sarah Thomas who is our Church Secretary and a professional caterer by trade. The team get stuck in with cooking, washing up and serving the meals.



As well as reaching out to the community through serving in this way and the opportunities for conversation that arise, we have seen personal relationships between the volunteers grow too and this has been a blessing to work alongside our Christian brothers and sisters. The food is top notch and many of our attendees give compliments to the chef.

We chose the name Tantany Lunch Club because Tantany is the name of the estate WBBC is based on. We advertised by sending out leaflets and posters around the local streets. The best form of advertising is also by word of mouth, but we're aware it can take a long time to grow and we need to be patient. Since starting up in September we have seen various visitors come through the door, there are some who attend every week and some who are less regular. We are aware that the more we reach out to the local estate, the more it raises the profile of the church and this can only be a good thing.

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At Christmas we did a special three course Christmas Dinner and over 40 people attended. This gave us opportunity to sing some carols and to pray a Christmas Blessing upon each person who came along. We also saw some of these people attend our Christmas Carol Service a few days later.

We are praying that in the future we will see the luncheon club expand more. It provides opportunity to share a relevant gospel message from time to time, but also a weekly chance to speak and develop relationships with local people from the community. I am sure that these friendships give

powerful witness to the message of Christ and it is our heart's desire to share this more and more through our eating and spending time together.

It would not have been possible to start Tantany Lunch Club and to run it so well without the support of the Home Mission Grant which we thankfully received. We pray that the lunch club will continue to succeed in the mission to bring God's Kingdom into the lives of our local estate. We are appreciative of Home Mission for helping us with this opportunity.

**Michael Woodall**  
West Bromwich Baptist Church

**Please pray:**

- » For Sarah Thomas and her team as they cook and serve meals, and wash up afterwards
- » For deepening relationships with those who come to the Lunch Club, and other local people from the community
- » That those who come to the Lunch Club will be open to the gospel message being shared



## NORTHERN BAPTIST COLLEGE



### A Learning Community

Baptist Colleges don't just train church leaders for the future. Together with our students and the churches they serve, we are actively engaged right now helping local Christian communities across the country to proclaim Christ and to work for the coming of his Kingdom. Many of the churches where students are on placement are only able to have a minister in training because of the generous giving of fellow Baptists through Home Mission.

It's now over thirty years since Northern Baptist College (NBC) pioneered what was then known as the Alternative Pattern of Training. Instead of students having to go and live in a college building for three or four years while they did their training, the men and women whom God was calling into pastoral ministry learned on the job, leading local churches for three days a week and studying for a degree in theology for three days a week.



It is a demanding pattern of ministerial formation but one that ensures that learning about the ways of God remains rooted in the day-to-day realities of leading God's people in mission.

This is now the standard pattern of ministerial formation used by all the British Baptist Colleges. It is also a pattern of training that has enabled many a local congregation to find the leadership it needed to help it make significant progress in working with their communities. It is not at all unusual for the leadership of a minister in training under the guidance of a Baptist college to help a church reach the point where it can call a full-time minister to serve them in the next phase of their life and growth.

The current batch of NBC ministerial students working with churches supported by Home Mission includes Alan Brand at Thornaby on Teesside. Alan is pictured celebrating a recent



Baptism. Ian Ley and his family minister with Newall Green Baptist Church on the Wythenshawe estate in South Manchester. David Callander, at Trinity Church in Radcliffe, North Manchester headed up the town's Churches Together children's holiday club this Summer.

**Glen Marshall**

Co-Principal, Northern Baptist College

#### Please pray:

- » For Alan, Ian, David and other ministers in training across the length and breadth of the country working with churches supported Home Mission.
- » Please pray that more and more churches will be helped by ministers in training to grow into God's future.
- » Please pray for NBC and our other Baptist Colleges as they support, guide, teach and encourage students engaged in all manner of creative mission in all manner of communities.

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## HAYESFORD PARK BAPTIST CHURCH



### What's so great about being a small church?

*[Jesus] said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch".*

*Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets".*

*When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.*

Luke 5:4-6 NIV

Over the course of the last twelve months or so, this passage of scripture has been brought to us several times from various people. It is the story of the calling of the first disciples. A small group of fishermen are disheartened by the lack of results from a hard night's fishing. Tired and exhausted they had all but given up when Jesus prompts them to go out and try again.



When I first started having conversations with Hayesford Park Baptist Church about becoming their minister, the church felt very much like that group of fishermen. They had been through some difficult times and were ready to call it a day. But like those first disciples, they heard a call from the Lord to try again. And much like those first disciples, even though it made no sense to them, the church stepped out in faith to try again.

So I want to write this article as an encouragement to those of you who are struggling pastors, or those who are in small churches, or even those who are in large churches and don't know where to go next. As we share the story of what God has been doing among us, I hope he speaks to you about what he wants to do in your situation.



In terms of the number of people worshipping with us on a Sunday morning, we are a small church of only around 30 people. However, this has grown from around 20 this time last year so this is encouraging growth. Of course we would say that church growth is not measured by the number of people attending a service but by the number of people entering the kingdom. Nevertheless, numbers are important and many small churches feel restricted because of their size. Many of us try to emulate larger churches in the hope that this will attract people. But one of the key things for us has been to embrace who we are and all that is good about being a small church. So we have embraced the informality and we study the bible



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together using discussion over coffee and croissants. This gives the services a house group feel which visitors have found more accessible.

The informal approach also provides opportunities to pray for each other and we have seen some significant answers to prayer, especially in the area of healing. We have had several examples of significant physical healing with the evidence of medical x-rays or scans. But more than this, God has been healing the church. The church is more united than it has been in the past (many say more than ever). I'm told that in recent years people have left as soon as the service is over, now they stay and we can't get people to leave. People share each other's burdens and pray with each other. The result of all this is that we have new people attending and, as I write, we are in the process of welcoming some of them into membership.

Outside of the Sunday service we have several midweek activities. One unusual activity is our weekly painting group. This was originally started by Age Concern in 2000 to provide a friendly meeting place for older people to enjoy being creative and enjoy time together. In 2002 Diana Knights, one of our deacons took over as leader and the group is now run as a regular activity of Hayesford Park Baptist Church. The group produces some stunning paintings and, as well as sharing a love of painting, it has also provided opportunities to share the love of Jesus. Over the years about six of the group have been baptised and become church members and many others have become regular members of the congregation. However, like the church, it has gone through a thin patch and numbers fell but after much prayer, numbers have increased again with a younger set of very enthusiastic people who are really enjoying each other's company and the warm friendly

atmosphere. At the moment only a few actually attend church but we do have opportunities to invite them to our activities and we are praying that some of these new members will respond to these and find the Lord as others did before them.

Staying on a creative note, Messy Church continues to be one of our most popular events attracting around 70 children each month with their parents. So we get to share something of the gospel through crafts, video, songs and fun. 'Cheeky Charlie' the monkey is popular with the children and helps to illustrate the story for the day. One of our craft tables is always a prayer table. It is both encouraging and humbling to hear some of the prayers written by the children.

We also have a popular toddler group which is growing. To help build relationships with parents and carers we started organising meals out at a local pub. This has led to deeper relationships and people asking us to pray for them. We are also having more meaningful conversations about faith and people seeking to know more. We have recently had so many of these conversations that we are thinking of running an Alpha course or similar in 2015.

We also invited the toddler group to be involved in the Christmas carol service. This had a very positive response from parents and so for the first time ever, our toddler group was part of our Christmas service last year.



We have much to praise God for, but perhaps what I am most proud of is that a church who have been through hardship and brokenness, are now helping others through difficulties and hardships. We have walked with several people through some very tough situations. Through this, people who felt like giving up have experienced the love of their Father God. And we as a church have experienced his love for us and have heard his call to let the nets down once again. We have already seen God do so much that we would not have believed a year ago, but we believe this is only a taste of what is to come.

We give thanks to all those who give so generously to Home Mission. Your support has been invaluable and we are truly seeing God moving in tremendous ways among us. Please continue to pray for us as we seek to follow God's leading for the future.

**Darren Street**

Pastor, Hayesford Park Baptist Church

**Please pray:**

- » For Diana Knights as she leads the painting group, and for opportunities to share the love of Jesus with the newer members of the group
- » For deepening relationships with the children and parents who come to Messy Church and the toddler group
- » For plans to run an Alpha course this year
- » For the whole church as they seek to follow God's leading for the future



### MELLING BAPTIST COMMUNITY



**A 'church without walls' being a Christian presence in a commuter settlement without much centre**

I took on the role of project leader about three and a half years ago. At that time we were running a toddler group called Pops and we were doing a weekly assembly in the local primary school.

Since then we have started:

- » **Melling Community Gospel Choir** which is run on a Monday evening in the little local pub;
- » **The Hub coffee morning** run in the local scout hall;
- » **Flower Power**, which is a gardener who provides me with beautiful planters twice a year to deliver to the elderly and sick around the community;
- » **The local Primary School Gospel Choir**, this is something I have just begun at the school and the children performed at our Christmas event last year;
- » **Shoot!** This is our new photography club that has been started in the last two months it is going very well and a good number of people attend.



**The Gospel Choir** consists of about 35 members who attend every week to practise our traditional and contemporary gospel songs. The group is made up of the most random mix of people. Young and old, male and female, some with a faith in God, others without, people of every different kind of job and status. It would not be normal to find this group of people mixing together! However they all turn up each week and sing and chat and we have truly wonderful relationships with each other. We have become a close group who care immensely for one another and meet each other throughout the week as friends. This is church! And little by little these wonderful people are learning more about the God who loves them.





**Flower Power** started when the mother-in-law of one of my choir members sadly passed away. I delivered flowers to the family. The husband of the choir member was so delighted with the flowers that he came to one of our choir events. He made comments about the singing being really beautiful and the whole event leaving him with a wonderful sense of peace.

He is a gardener. A short time later he contacted me to offer his services in creating planters to deliver to those people I felt needed them most. Since then both of us have gone out twice a year into the community and his planters have brought so much delight and pleasure to many people throughout Melling.

He has a background in Buddhism. Whilst we drive around Melling delivering the planters he asks me lots about my faith and so I have the perfect opportunity to tell him about our wonderful God who loves him. This wonderful kind man and his wonderful kind choir member wife have both become a valuable part of the project here in Melling. God is truly working in people's lives here.



**Jo Hassoun**

Melling Baptist Community Project  
Leader

**Please pray:**

- » For Jo as she leads this project in Melling and seeks to open people's eyes to the ways in which God is at work in their lives
- » For the Community Gospel Choir and children's choir - for deepening friendships and understanding of the God who loves them
- » For the way in which Flower Power is reaching out to the community

## MINISTRIES TEAM

### Home Mission supports the work of the Ministries Team based at Didcot

The Ministries Team is led by the Revd Andy Hughes and has seven members of staff. The team supports all forms of recognised and accredited ministry amongst our churches, as well as providing guidance and advice on ministry-related matters.

They do this through:

- » Offering Pastoral support and advice to ministers and churches as needs arise
- » Supporting the selection, recognition and accreditation processes for ministers, church workers, pastors and preachers
- » Supporting all forms of sector ministry, including chaplaincy to industry, prisons, education, health-care and the military
- » Administering the work of the national Ministerial Recognition Committee
- » Relating to patterns and processes of ministerial training at the Baptist Colleges and elsewhere
- » Assisting in the settlement of ministers and ministerial students through the National Settlement Team
- » Facilitating conferences to support all stages of ministry
- » Administering some financial support for Bursaries and Further Study awards
- » Helping to prepare ministers for retirement



The Ministries Team is a resource for all churches who have ministry or who are currently in a pastoral vacancy and as such is a way in which every church receives the benefit of Home Mission.

The work of ministries is presently being reviewed as we together, in our Union, seek to identify what kind of ministry we need for the next generation.

#### Please pray:

- » For Andy and his team as they support ministers and churches
- » For all those involved in reviewing the work of the Team, praying for a clear sense of God's vision for the future of ministry in our Union
- » For people testing their calling to ministry through the selection, recognition and accreditation processes
- » For people serving on the national Ministerial Recognition Committee
- » For the National Settlement Team as they work together to link churches and ministers



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### BERWICK BAPTIST CHURCH



Over the last year, while working as pastor of Berwick Baptist Church, in a part-time capacity, we have seen God at work in many ways. This is the beginning of a journey of renewal.

While many of the existing ministries - the Ladies' Bible Study and Dot Club (the children's club) - are thriving, we have introduced new ventures which are seeing some success.

The church felt it was time to restart a regular prayer meeting, and in conjunction with this we have taken the month of January in 2014 and 2015 to set aside as a time of fasting and corporate prayer.



The other new ministries set up within the church which meet on a monthly basis are:

- » the Young Adult Group - which attracts from 8-16 young people, both couples and singles;
- » the Men's Night - again this can see from 6-14 men of varying ages;
- » a Contemporary evening service held on the first Sunday of every month, which is open to all churches and numbers can vary from 15-30.

Now that we are receiving a grant from the Home Mission fund, this has enabled the church to offer me for full time hours. This has made a huge difference to my work load, and is enabling me to give time to building relationships with local ministers, with the Travelling community and to consider new ventures.



Recently our Church Secretary has suggested that we develop a chaplaincy amongst the shopkeepers on our local high street. This is something that the deacons and church will be considering. It is because of the support of the Home Mission that such ventures can be considered. As a leadership and a church we are looking forward with expectation at what God will do next.

**John Hodgkins**

Pastor, Berwick Baptist Church

**Please pray:**

- » Give thanks for the thriving ladies' group and children's club, and the support and discipleship they offer to members
- » For the new ministries being started with young adults and men - that relationships with God and one another will deepen
- » For John and the church as they discover where God is leading them next
- » For the deacons and church as they prayerfully consider developing a chaplaincy amongst shopkeepers



### MOUNT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

**South Wales**  
Baptist Association

“Our mission is very much about living Christian values, not much at all about, preaching,” says the Revd Chris Lewis, the minister at Mount Zion, in Bonymaen, east Swansea.

The lower Swansea Valley is an historic place, in the Industrial Revolution it became the world centre for the production of copper and was important for other industries. History has consequences; how do you minister to a post-industrial area with a fair bit of deprivation, in which it has taken half a century to restore a devastated and poisoned landscape? Chris brings the experience of workplace chaplaincy to this ministry.

#### Mission ... all about living Christian values

He continues, “It’s about being with people in a community, sharing their experiences, hardships and good times. For much of my ministry, over a quarter of a century now, I have been a ‘tent making’ minister. I knew at college this was the kind to which I was called. Having your feet on the ground, the experience of work, no work, and sharing a degree of insecurity means I can look people in the eye with honesty.

“What the Home Mission grant has enabled me to do, by buying a day a week of my time, is to join in with important things that will make a difference. I hope it’s building a profile for Mount Zion and the Christian faith.



“The *Swansea Bay Fair Credit Campaign* is perhaps our biggest visible success - and I’m saying this two days after the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) announced their cap on pay-day loan interest rates. I’ve done what I can to support the campaign, mostly through strategic work; the people whom I really admire are the victims - neighbours of ours who’ve had the humility and courage to say that the hundred pound loan left them with a six hundred pound bill, that sort of thing.

“The *Swansea East Side Food Bank* (which is based at Mount Zion) is not just a church initiative; it involves our community and us together. People from the area turn up and help week by week. Some have begun to speak of the chapel as ‘theirs’ even if they don’t come to services. There’s political support too; our councillors are trustees and volunteer along with us and the vicar of Glantawe. Our Welsh Assembly Member (AM) turns up in person with boxes of



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food he's collected, and appeals to local workplaces have been handled with great effectiveness by Carolyn Harris, from the Swansea East Constituency office. It all builds connections and helps those who need it.

"We have a bit of garden at the chapel, so we can give some fresh vegetables to people who come to the food bank and we give and receive seeds, seedlings, herbs, advice and ideas.



"Scratch the surface and you find initiative and talent. Quite unexpectedly, for me, we gathered a group of teenagers. They wanted to put on a show to support the foodbank. I wrote them a play about Bonymaen in 1840, entitled *Copperopolis*, and they brought it off brilliantly.

"A series of sketches to be performed in a Christmas carol service followed. Besides this, a pastoral relationship is growing with them and some of their parents.

"Looking to their futures, three of them went to see Oxford. As a member of that university, naturally, I was interested. I got a text from one of them to the effect that we had all encouraged her to broaden her horizons. I was touched. The message is about abundant life."

**Chris Lewis**  
Minister,  
Mount Zion Baptist Church



**Please pray:**

» For Chris and the members of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Bonymaen as they live out their Christian faith

» For everyone involved in the Swansea Bay Fair Credit Campaign, giving thanks for all that they have achieved already on behalf of others

» For the Swansea East Side Food Bank, based at Mount Zion, giving thanks for the way in which it has brought together so many people and organisations



## REGENT'S PARK COLLEGE



### Establishing Patterns of Lifelong Learning

Part of life for Newly Accredited Ministers, including for those supported by Home Mission, is an on-going relationship with one of our Baptist colleges, normally for three years. This may be the college they attended for their initial ministerial formation or the closest geographically, but the relationship helps encourage lifelong learning for those who are newly ordained. In all the demands of what may be a new context, or perhaps now full-time ministry, without the support of a college, establishing good patterns of on-going reading and reflection is an important foundation. For some, this is through completing an academic course started at college or beginning a new course, such as a Masters' qualification. For others, it is about learning without the structure and pressure of a formal course.

Here at Regent's Park College we normally have 30 to 35 such Newly Accredited Ministers working with us at any one time. There are a number of different aspects involved. In common with all the colleges, one of the key tasks of the first year is to



engage in some kind of mission audit of the congregation or the local community, which is often conducted together with members of the church. Helping a local congregation think carefully about mission involves gathering relevant and important information, reflecting on it both theologically and practically so that any strategy for mission that develops is well thought through and appropriate to the very particular context of the church.



Through all three years of these Learning Contracts ministers choose, with their tutor, a selection of books to read and review, which may help them to think further about issues that might only have been touched on briefly in college or to begin to pursue their own particular interests and specialties, which may well be of benefit to the wider church in the future.

Thirdly, there are aspects which are shared by all new ministers together, with one book each year which we all read, a morning to think further about the book, normally with the author of the book present to engage with the group, and then other moments of shared reflection. In recent years we have read books together on biblical studies, or developing patterns of personal spirituality or understanding and engaging better with our own culture.

In the hope that those whom God has gifted and called to ministry might exercise that ministry over many years, indeed over a

lifetime, and that ministry would not remain the same but grow and deepen with time, these first years of ministry are vital for setting positive patterns. As Home Mission supports ministers to help churches engage in mission so it needs ministers who are always learning and growing, able to respond well to changing times and changing demands.

**Anthony Clarke**

Tutor in Pastoral Studies  
and Community Learning

**Please pray:**

- » Giving thanks for the ongoing support which our colleges are able to offer to Newly Accredited Ministers
- » For the staff in our colleges teaching and nurturing students and providing training and support for these changing times
- » For our ministers juggling the needs of their churches with the need for continued personal spiritual reflection and development
- » For a clear sense of God's call for ministers to help their churches engage in mission and respond to the needs of their communities and changing cultures



## REGIONAL MINISTRY



**In February 2014, The South West Baptist Association welcomed Nigel Manges to their team**

Nigel came with 28 years of ministerial experience which has been well used throughout the year (especially as Jez Brown - our Team Leader - was on Sabbatical).

Nigel's brief was to be a pastor to the pastors and help encourage small churches and in his first year he has travelled 25000 miles up and down the Association visiting and getting to know the churches and their leaders.

Nigel has been encouraging leaders and churches as they seek to minister in very different and sometime difficult locations. Nigel has also been involved in leading Vision days for churches and reflective sessions for church leaders – to help them reflect on the past and look to the future.

In the process of getting to know the churches, Nigel has been sharing the value of partnerships



and caring for one another, whether that be amongst ministers in peer mentoring or in churches working together. In one of the Association mission initiatives we are encouraging this working together through prayer and practical support. As an Association we have been encouraged to see small churches being encouraged prayerfully and financially when the need has arisen.

Next year the plan is to establish a 'Small Churches' day conference and explore the training and resources that are needed to continue enable and encourage ministry in our smaller churches. Small is beautiful and whether in a village, town or city we believe that God wants to bless the faithfulness of his people.

**Nigel Manges**  
Regional Minister

### **Please pray:**

- » For Nigel as he travels around the association encouraging churches and their leaders
- » For the Regional Ministers in your association



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### THIN PLACE, ANDOVER



**God is good all the time;  
all the time, God is good**

The vision for *Thin Place* came in the summer of 2010 when 2 young men from Andover Baptist Church read Pete Grieg's 'Punk Monk' and were captivated by the idea of a new monastic life, a life that was marked by rhythm and service.

Andy Fitchet and Paul Cable were ready to move onto a housing estate, King Arthur's Way, in Andover, which has the highest rate of crime, highest number of unemployed, lowest rate of education achievement. There was a vision to become a beacon of light and hospitality on King Arthur's.



Paul and Andy, however, then both got girlfriends and subsequently both got married; this made the idea of moving in together somewhat more difficult. After much prayer and discussion Andy and his new wife, Zoe, decided that God was calling them as a couple to move onto the estate.

After spending two weeks in Kolkata, India with BMS in May 2012, Andy and Zoe were inspired by the work of Benjamin Francis and Big Life and how they use a 'Person of Peace' model of church planting. When they go into a village they find a person of peace who will be open to their message and also have influence or authority in that place. Usually after that person opens to the gospel, many of the others will also. So Zoe and Andy looked at using this model in the UK.

There was a group of young people they had worked with over a few years at a youth group, of the young people, Tim (*not his real name*), was a man of peace. He just drew people around him. He became a Christian and would come to Andy and Zoe's house on a Sunday afternoon for lunch, bringing with him 6-8 other young people. Sunday afternoon worked



best as many of the young people were on a police tag so had to be home by 5:30.

The church plant grew and people came to know Jesus. Tim, however, moved on after much work reconciling a broken relationship with a parent. Interestingly the



Picture painted at *Thin Place* by the young people, representing every burden they carry.

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other young people stopped coming, as the person who drew them all together was no longer there and many stopped hanging around with each other.

At the current time, no church is meeting in Andy and Zoe's house. This is frustrating and disappointing, after such early success. However, God isn't a God who abandons or leaves. He is a God who plants and waters and grows. So Andy and Zoe continue to build relationships and meet with people, run a youth group and pray. Wondering what God is doing and where he is leading.

The other half of the story is Whitchurch Baptist Church. Whitchurch was a small church with a small amount of money. Discussions were being had about whether/when to close the church.

After discussions with Regent's Park College, Andover Baptist Church and the Southern Counties Baptist Association (SCBA), it was agreed that Andy would be placed half time at Whitchurch and half at Thin Place, in amongst Formation at Regent's.



Over 150 new people came to Whitchurch Baptist Church's Christmas Fayre

Whitchurch has seen growth in a phenomenal way over that last year. Average attendance is up from 28 to around 45. There are now two children's groups meeting on a Sunday morning, where as there were none last year. Membership is up 10% on last year and the church are currently praying through their vision and values and seeing where God is leading them.

The sum up – God is good, all the time; and all the time, God is good.

**Andy Fitchet**  
Minister in Training

**Please pray:**

- » For encouragement for Andy and Zoe as they support their community at Thin Place, and also the church family at Whitchurch alongside study at Regent's Park College
- » For the young people who have stopped coming to Andy and Zoe's since Tim left
- » For a sense of vision for the future of Thin Place - and for another 'person of peace' that they can relate to
- » Give thanks for the signs of growth at Whitchurch Baptist Church

## BAPTIST STEERING GROUP AND TRUSTEES

### Overseeing the governance of our Union

Baptists Together (otherwise known as the Baptist Union of Great Britain) is made up of more than 2000 churches, 13 associations and 6 colleges that relate together as a mission movement. Baptists in England have been around for over 400 years and our Union (BUGB) can trace its roots back some 200 years.

We have some foundational principles that shape our life together which are:

» Recognising that Jesus is the Lord of all and that the Bible reveals Jesus to us as we strive



to understand it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Each local church is called to seek God's will for its life and witness.

- » That baptism by immersion is for all who make a decision to follow Jesus
- » That each disciple is called to be a witness and make Jesus known in their daily living



Our Union is committed to growing healthy churches in relationship for God's mission. In order to do this we believe that we must intentionally develop a culture where we:

- » **Seek to be a movement of Spirit led communities.** As those who have encountered the living Christ, to intentionally seek his will and purpose for our local churches and every expression of our shared life. (*Galatians 5:22-25*)
- » **Feel like one team** – celebrating diversity; valuing, respecting and trusting each other as we work together in partnerships - making sure everyone feels included and listened to. (*1 Corinthians 12:24b-27*)
- » **Embrace adventure** – being serious about discipleship, willing to take risks, pioneer and move out of the comfort zone of familiar ways of doing things. (*Matthew 28:18-20*)



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- » **Inspire others** – with a generosity of spirit, energise and motivate people to be all that God created them to be. (*Ephesians 5:1 & 2*)
- » **Share a Hunger for God's coming Kingdom** – nurturing a 'holy discontent' that arises from our desire to give practical expression to our vision of God's purpose for creation - confronting evil, injustice and hypocrisy and challenging worldly attitudes to power, wealth, status and security both within and beyond our Union. (*Matthew 6:9 & 10*)

The life of Baptists Together is supported by good accountability structures. There are two main groups that serve Council by overseeing the governance and strategic leadership of Baptists Together.

#### **Trustees**

Our Trustee Board is made up of 12 people appointed by Baptist Union Council. Meeting four times a year, the trustees ensure appropriate policies are in place and operated effectively, to oversee our Union's structure and to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.



Though their robust governance we are able to give 96% of money raised through the annual appeal to our charitable purposes of making Jesus known.

#### **The Baptist Steering Group**

is a leadership team responsible for implementing the strategy of our Union as discerned by Council. It meets eight times a year and is made up of leaders from local churches, association partnerships and the national team. It is led by Lynn Green, our Union's General Secretary, and its meetings are founded in prayer and scripture.

This is all supported by Home Mission – the Baptist family purse – that enables us to do more together than we can accomplish on our own. By releasing the resources of Home Mission into our shared life, many people find faith in Jesus for the first time.

#### **Please pray:**

- » Give thanks for those called by God to serve our Union in these governance roles
- » Pray for our Trustees - Malcolm Broad, Barbara Carpenter, Graham Ensor, Marion Fiddes, Stephen Finamore, Lynn Green, Rupert Hill, Linda Hopkins, Joe Kapolyo, John Levick, Clare McBeath and Jenny Royal
- » Pray for the members of our Baptist Steering Group - Geoff Andrews, John Claydon, Stuart Davison, David Ellis, Rob Ellis, Marion Fiddes, Stephen Keyworth, Richard Lewis, David Locke, Richard Nicholls, Grenville Overton and Dianne Tidball
- » Pray for the Baptist Steering Group meeting on 5 and 6 March



## THE CAIRN, KNOWLE WEST



**Called to incarnational living in one of the most deprived communities in the UK**

My wife, Alice, and I have had a long-term calling to incarnational ministry in South Bristol.

Having felt led by God to move to Upper Knowle, in South Bristol, in 1991, we remained there for 20 years. In all the time we lived in Upper Knowle we had been challenged by the presence of a large, predominantly white, urban estate, Knowle West, in close proximity to the area we resided in, but across the divide of the A37 Wells Road.

This interest was provoked by a growing relationship with Mike Pears, a Baptist minister who had himself been led to move from North Bristol to the Knowle West estate, and a growing sympathy for the values of Urban Expression, which seeks to embody Christ through incarnational living in the most deprived 5% of communities in the UK.

With the support of Home Mission, I was one of three students who was able to embark on the new urban mission track at Bristol Baptist College for ministerial formation. I was formally ordained and commissioned as a Baptist minister in Knowle West in July

2014, having attained a Graduate Diploma and MA in Theology.

For my family and I, this has been, and continues to be, an exciting and challenging journey into a deeper experience of incarnational living. [Our daughters Sarah, Anna, and Esther are now 24, 22 and 19 respectively. The oldest, Sarah, is married to Jonny and living in Brighton. Anna and Esther are still living with us].

We left our spacious (and recently much improved!) Victorian terraced home in February 2011, and moved into the former Baptist manse in Knowle West, which was a typical 3-bed estate house. This became home for almost three years, during which time we negotiated



with the Anglican Diocese for the purchase of a derelict vicarage in Inns Court.

Inns Court has had the reputation of being one of the most deprived parts of the estate. The vicarage had sadly been abandoned by the Diocese in the late 1990s due the social problems being experienced at that time, and had been shuttered up ever since. My wife and I have long held a vision for developing a residential Christian community, and this derelict property seemed to present an ideal opportunity.



Phil and Alice with their daughters: L-R - Esther, Anna, Phil, Alice and Sarah

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By the grace of God, the support of many in the Christian community, and an amazing architect and builders, we were able to move into the fully restored (main part of) the house, renamed The Cairn, in December 2013.

The name, The Cairn, is representative of the fact that we invested pretty much all our own resources in this first phase of the project (the first stone). Our hope, belief and prayer is that God will add stone by stone to the work that has been begun here in order to see a work of considerable significance, all to the glory of God.

We are grateful that Home Mission is continuing to support the work of The Cairn as we look to build on the good foundation of missional work accomplished by Knowle West Baptist Church since its inception until its more recent sad decline, alongside the positive partnering with the Anglican Church that has already taken place. It is of particular poignancy to me that the first ever minister of Knowle West Baptist Church, Vivian Evans, was the grandfather of my best friend at college (Jolyon Evans) in Plymouth back in the 1980s.

**Phil Lawrence**  
Minister, The Cairn



**Please pray:**

- » For Phil and Alice as they live out their calling to Knowle West day by day
- » Give thanks for the provision of The Cairn and the amazing transformation which has taken place in its restoration
- » That this house will be used by God to bring about transformation and restoration to the community in which it is situated
- » For Christians in the community to support and pray with Phil and Alice in this new venture



## HOPE BAPTIST CHAPEL

yorkshirebaptist  
●●● association

### Real Hope in Hebden Bridge

Nearly 100 people attending a candlelit carol service is probably what many people would expect to see in an old Baptist chapel on a Sunday evening in late December. But at Hope Baptist Chapel in the pretty Pennine town of Hebden Bridge, it was a complete contrast to last year, when only one visitor joined the two dozen church members. As well as encouraging the members, it was also a fitting final service for the Revd Allan Wolfenden, who had served the church with the help of financial support from Home Mission, during a period of transformation.

Only a few years ago, the large, listed building was leaking in many places and rotting in others. Membership had diminished to a remnant of mostly elderly locals and there was even a rumour that the church had closed. Now, with the help of half a million pounds from English Heritage and grants from many other sources, the buildings are being restored and everyone knows this church is alive. Six new members were baptised last Easter in the baptismal pool that was retiled after lying unused for 17 years.

Prayer and discussion by church members has been informed by public consultation. Although

early proposals involved remodelling the chapel interior, feedback from local people revealed that they valued the cathedral-like sanctuary – a unique community space in a town that has many venues for performing and visual arts. This has guided the church in its aim to create a ‘... valuable community resource’ which, rooted in Christian beliefs, is:

- » concerned about the wholeness and wellbeing of everybody,
- » a safe place for reflection, discussion and spiritual development,
- » space that brings people together and helps to build community.



The result is a church that does much more than open its doors on a Sunday morning and run midweek Bible studies and prayer meetings – although it does these things too. Often working with partner organisations, the church provides a venue for a variety of events that contribute to the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of residents and visitors to Hebden Bridge – a town that has a reputation for being ‘funky’ and ‘alternative’.



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Over the past year, the chapel building has been filled by people attending events as varied as the award-winning Hebden Bridge Blues Festival and a French-style café bar when the Tour de France came through town in July. *Guardian* columnist George Monbiot addressed a packed audience from the pulpit about environmental issues, and the concluding event for the Ted Hughes Festival took place in the church. Various singing groups are now using the chapel because of its unique acoustics and natural reverberation.

Other events, which may attract smaller numbers, are given importance by the church. Midweek meditation and a monthly reflective service make extensive use of silence, and the church has also offered courses in Mindfulness. The process of testing fresh ways of getting alongside people and sharing the love of Christ continues. The December candlelit carol service had been preceded by a Christmas Tree Festival, an a capella music workshop and day workshop using music and dance to explore the Beatitudes. The programme for January included a 'Blue Monday' event to encourage positive thinking about this time of year, as well as a video/discussion event based on the Billy Graham film 'The Cross'.

The recent offer of ongoing Home Mission support is a huge encouragement to the church as it now seeks a new minister. Part of this process will include reflection about new models of ministry and governance as the church continues to find ways in which a church founded in 1777 can serve the real spiritual needs of people in 2015.

**Please pray:**

- » Give thanks for the grants which have enabled the buildings to be restored and let everyone know that this church is alive
- » Give thanks for the ways in which the church buildings are being used, and pray for the people who come into them for a variety of events
- » For the process of seeking a new minister, and for a clear sense of God's vision for the future
- » For ways in which Hope Baptist can be used to bring hope to people in the 21st century



[www.hope-baptist.org.uk](http://www.hope-baptist.org.uk)

**Gerard Liston**



## HOUGHTON REGIS BAPTIST CHURCH



**Home Mission support enabling growth  
and a vision for a Christian presence in new  
housing areas**

We begin 2015, thankful for the fruitfulness Home Mission support has brought to our church and conscious of the substantial opportunities ahead of us.

We have undoubtedly grown! In 2009 we were a congregation of 60 adults and children. Today we have 170 people who worship with us sometimes, a third of them under 18 years. We're located between two large social housing estates set in the three most deprived wards of Central Bedfordshire. It's been a white working class population but it's changing as black and minority ethnic communities develop. Looking back we can celebrate many different people joining our church. Some have been away from church for a long time, for others church is completely new. We've also seen people joining us from a diverse range of backgrounds. We now have 10 nationalities amongst us.

We've worked hard on our 'Sunday welcome' but still need to develop a strong cultural understanding that can bridge our different ethnic and church backgrounds. A key priority is to enable everyone to own our church life for themselves.

Many attend on Sundays but fewer than half the adults are in membership. The autumn saw many new arrivals but so often those who have come have no experience of membership. Church meals do seem to universally work and are a particular joy with a fantastic range of food. As the church develops it's vital we identify people to lead from across our congregation to maintain our momentum. With this in mind we're engaging with BMS in 2015 to help us deepen our fellowship as we set out on a new phase of mission together.

And it feels like we have to force the pace of our growth. In the coming months building work will start on 7,000 new homes - doubling the size of Houghton Regis. We've been leading the discussion with the local authority about the provision by the churches of a community building in the new development, which would also house a new church.



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This would be close to where our church stood in 1750. The original houses are long gone but a new community is about to be formed nearby and we'd like to be present to help welcome, build and nurture a new healthy community with a church at its heart.

We're also discussing other ways of developing a Christian presence across the new estates. We're exploring how local congregations can support pioneer initiatives as the new residents arrive. It's a 15 year vision for community building, church planting and Christian witness. The task feels overwhelming but it is helping us to focus on what is important and it is raising the profile of the church in the public sphere. At Christmas our church was full for the carol service, for the first time in many years, and amongst the congregation were a number of town councillors.

Looking ahead we continue to seek God's way, believing he is calling us on towards this great vision. We will be looking to quickly become a church that can play a significant part in this task. But we will be hoping that the Baptist family will once again be able to play a vital role in supporting a new strategic initiative to shape a community and establish a Christian witness among the many who will be moving here.

**David Skinner**  
Minister,  
Houghton Regis Baptist Church

**Please pray:**

- » Giving thanks for the people from different cultural backgrounds who are now coming to the church
- » For the church as they develop an understanding of each other's ethnic and church backgrounds
- » For the developing relationship with BMS to help deepen the fellowship as they set out on mission together
- » For the opportunities that the new housing developments will bring, and for a vision of where God is calling the church to be a Christian witness

## SPURGEON'S COLLEGE



Not just a degree in Theology  
but a journey

Tim Bright gave up a good life to train for Baptist ministry at Spurgeon's. He is now in the final year of the Church-based course and tells his story to Pieter Lalleman.

At age 12, I drifted away from church but continued to attend Boys' Brigade at Burwell Baptist Church. I gave my heart to Jesus during a youth weekend and was later baptised at Burwell. I did a degree in electronics and when

I returned to Burwell, I became involved in house groups, the drop-in club and the worship group. I completed a youth leader's training course and then spent Friday evenings working with Histon Baptist on their bus project. I worked in electronics for four years but after a trip to Mostar, Bosnia, I wanted a job with more meaning. I trained to be a teacher of science and gained my PGCE in 1998.



### Career ... left

When Carolyn, a police officer, and I got married, we made our home in Suffolk and attended Mildenhall Baptist Church. We ran the youth group together and became involved in the worship group. I became a deacon and experienced the challenges of leading a church. We had two sons and I also became deputy head of the school.

In September 2009, I felt that God was perhaps saying 'go now'. I had always assumed that it would probably be Baptist ministry, and began to test this call. And all doors opened! I gave up my job and career, and moved our children out of private education. This was really difficult; it was a lovely school. We downsized the house, the cars and even the fridge freezer. It continues to be a challenge to adapt to this substantially lower income lifestyle, but God is good.

A wonderful, safe  
environment



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The family has been very supportive. In fact they have coped better than I have. After the initial excitement of College life I realised I did not know as much as I thought. I felt back at square one - a pupil. I did not like writing and wondered what I was doing at Spurgeon's. However, I have experienced fantastic support from the staff. There are always opportunities available to talk things through. The friendships that have developed in the student body enable me to vocalise, deal with and bounce around issues that have troubled me, all within a wonderful, safe environment. Meeting people from other cultures has enhanced my understanding of forces in my own culture that have shaped me.



**Spirituality**

One of my favourite modules is 'Spirituality'. The understanding of the different ways we can pray, worship and spend time with God; how we feed our own spiritual rhythms.

The module on 'Pastoral care and counselling' opened up areas of our own lives that needed working on. This is not just a degree in Theology but a journey, a journey where we learn so much, including about ourselves.

Church-based training involves three days work in a church and three days of study. Mildenhall Baptist Church stepped out in faith to fund me as 'Minister in Training'.

My role has included developing skills as a minister but I also set up and ran a community centre and food bank.

I have realised that I will never really be ready for ministry. It is an on-going learning experience that will take the rest of our lives to complete.

**Pieter Lalleman**  
Academic Dean,  
Spurgeon's College

**An ongoing learning experience**

**Please pray:**

- » For Tim, Carolyn and their family as they adjust to College life and the change in lifestyle
- » For Mildenhall Baptist Church funding and supporting Tim as a Minister in Training
- » For the students and staff of Spurgeon's College as they learn and grow together
- » For women and men testing their call to ministry and exploring the possibility of college study

For an introduction to Spurgeon's College, from the students and staff, have a look at the video at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhdmknCWmXA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhdmknCWmXA)



Whilst our Baptist Colleges are not funded by Home Mission, their work has a huge impact on our Union through forming ministers, and making contributions to local churches, associations and the union as a whole.



## THE OASIS, HUGGLESCOTE



**A place of peace and refreshment in  
Hugglescote in the midst of a busy world**

The Oasis, at 67 Central Road, Hugglescote, had its official opening on Saturday 17 May 2014 when tea, coffee and cakes were served all day. This new community facility, developed by Hugglescote Baptist Church, provides the church with an opportunity to make new connections with the community and is ideally situated in the main shopping area in the village.

A number of years ago the church building in Hugglescote was demolished and that released some funding, allowing the church to purchase and redevelop this

former chemist's shop on Central Road. Church services on a Sunday take place at 10:30 in Hugglescote Community Centre but The Oasis gives the church new opportunities to be more involved in the community. The church realised that for many people, coming in to a church service without knowing anyone at the church is often a daunting prospect, whereas coming in to a café style setting is much more accessible. Rather than holding on to our funds in the hope of one day building a traditional church building for worship, we felt that God was calling us to think differently and focus on mission in a different context.

The Oasis opens on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays as a café with refreshments and light lunches available, providing a relaxing and peaceful oasis where people can take time out from their busy lives to meet friends, chat with volunteers, and reflect on life and faith. Other activities developed in time. In partnership with Heartland Youth For Christ we opened Escape, an after-school drop in café for young people. We began a monthly Messy Church in the room above the café, and we began a weekly group for women –



Wednesday Women – as a meeting place for crafts, chat and relaxing. In our first Christmas at the Oasis, we offered a full Christmas lunch and two carol singing sessions using the Silent Night resources for remembering the World War 1 truce.

The meeting room upstairs can comfortably accommodate 10 to 12 people and there is also a smaller room designated as a prayer room for those wishing a



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quiet retreat. The garden at the rear of the property will be brought into use over the summer months. The Revd Peter Lanigan, the minister of the church, has been very encouraged that the Hugglescote Baptist fellowship, a relatively small group with Home Mission funding to support a part time pastor, nonetheless have a big heart for mission. They have been willing to take on this exciting challenge of running a cafe several times a week and other events in The Oasis as appropriate. "It has also been great to see that as we

have moved out in faith, volunteer help from other churches in the village has been given – and from those who are not yet Christians. We are convinced that God will provide all that we need for the running of this centre."

The Oasis is all about making connections with people at street level, providing a listening ear and an encouraging word, and responding to the needs that emerge.

**Peter Lanigan**  
Hugglescote Baptist Church

#### **Please pray:**

- » Give thanks for the way in which funds have been used to enable Hugglescote Baptist Church to open The Oasis
- » For the volunteers and all those who come to The Oasis - for deepening friendships and opportunities to reflect on life and faith together
- » For the young people who come to Escape - the drop-in cafe - and for the courage to invite friends to join them
- » For the families who come to the monthly Messy Church - that they will discover more about God as they have fun together
- » For the women who come to Wednesday Women
- » For continued support from volunteers from other churches, so that The Oasis will become a vital space for a growing number of people in the community

More information is available at  
[www.hugglescotebaptist.org.uk](http://www.hugglescotebaptist.org.uk)

## SUPPORT SERVICES TEAM

### Home Mission supports the work of the Support Services Team based at Didcot

Over the last two years we have seen child abuse and the mistreatment of vulnerable adults become regular front page news. The Jimmy Saville case, Operation Yewtree, the Winterbourne care home scandal and many others have meant that safeguarding has a profile that becomes more prominent and more complex as the months go by.

Within the Baptist Union, we have had safeguarding policies, procedures and training in place for many years. Thanks to the work of volunteers in churches across the country, supported by staff in the regional and specialist teams, we are able to make sure that all those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are properly checked, and that church leaders have the right level of training to meet their responsibilities.



What does this look like in practice? It shows in the life of our churches in lots of different ways, enabling churches as they set up and operate pre-schools for local children, run youth clubs and holiday camps, run lunch clubs for older people, and visit vulnerable people in their homes.

Like many other denominations, we have chosen to invest time and resources to carry out a major review of our safeguarding approach, and this is currently underway. We will be gathering the views of churches, association teams and the safeguarding advisers and specialists who work with us to look for ways in which we can continue to bring best practice to this sensitive area of church life. This work includes a historical case review as well as an in depth review of the policies, practices and structures in place in other denominations.



Our intention is to continue to offer support to associations and churches as they build good safeguarding skills and practices, and help all those with safeguarding responsibilities to feel confident that they have the knowledge and support they need to deal with questions and concerns when they arise.

**Rachel Stone**  
HR Manager

#### Please pray:

- » For the small team within Support Services who focus on safeguarding as they support churches with very sensitive and difficult situations
- » For the team as they act as our link to national and inter-denominational groups working to improve safeguarding in church life
- » For all those in Baptist churches in the UK who are facing difficult situations and supporting those affected by abuse in any form
- » For the wider Support Services Team as they support churches and associations in financial and legal matters

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## 57 WEST, SOUTHEND



**Planting an emerging missional church among those beyond the church in Southend**

Dan Pratt was sent to church plant in September 2013. Dan comes to work in the Eastern Baptist Association (EBA) from six years working with BMS in Africa and he previously served with Youth with a Mission. He has been working on the church plant for 26 months. Trained at Regent's Park College, he was ordained in June 2014, and is now a newly accredited minister.

With the help of a team of volunteers the 57 West premises have been renovated from an old Barber's shop, to a drop-in coffee/wi-fi hub.

From the start we put energy in to mission among young adults. Despite trying hard we were discouraged after months of fruitless slog. But Christmas 2013 felt like a real turning point with rapid and exciting developments.

A Christmas afternoon playing pool with rough sleepers led to deepening relationships with young adults who could be characterised as the 'poor' of the town: homeless, family-less and with substance addictions. At the same time relationships were now forming with older people of similar backgrounds.



God was leading us into the work by his route a work with people not commonly found in church.



Today 57 West is a thriving community of people exploring faith, supporting each other in their significant needs. Since the beginning of the year we have welcomed 1,500 people through the door, some people multiple times. We give thanks for this exciting breakthrough after a tough year of mission in 2013.



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## Saturday Church

We started Saturday Church at the beginning of January 2014. It is church with a difference. We have two 30 minutes sessions of discussions, prayer, laughter, tears, worship, communion and testimonies - there is a 15 minute break in the middle for those craving coffee or a cigarette.

One recent series focused on Jesus' death and resurrection, which led on to exploring what the early Church was like. Despite people sometimes coming drunk or high, it has been inspiring to see people grow in their understanding of Jesus and worshipping together. The lively, open and honest discussions about life and faith have been challenging and refreshing. The day is completed with 10-30 people sharing in a meal.

## Drop in/Community hub

The hub is currently open on four days per week for a total of 15 hours. We see around 10-30 people drop-in each day with, on average, 70 different people coming during the week.

This means that over 1600 people have walked through 57 West's door since opening! We provide toast and hot drinks throughout week and a community meal on Saturdays (when no other meals are available for rough sleepers).

We currently have eight part-time volunteers, and are grateful for the support given by volunteers from other local churches.

*Hi I'm Lisa and I got involved when I was homeless. It was winter and cold outside and a friend told me a place where we could get a coffee and some toast so we went along and were welcomed. I was soon volunteering and now I help cook the community meal at Saturday Church. Since joining I have been baptised along with Dave and I'm continuing my walk with the Lord.*



*Hi, I'm Els. I started coming to 57 West and helping out which helped me get closer to God. It was the right time to get baptised. Now I can see the Holy Spirit is speaking as I live God's plan for me.*

We've also hosted workshops from HARP (a local homeless charity) in health, and a police pop-up station supporting police and victims after a serious crime amongst the vulnerable on the streets.

57 West provides support, benefit help, housing advice, signposting and provision for some of the most vulnerable people in our area. We've also held social events including a Christmas outing, Open Mic night, Ladies' and Men's Nights, camping trip, craft workshops, discussion groups, movie evenings and beach trips.



## The need for a Home Mission Grant

The minister of the church plant, Dan Pratt began church planting on a faith-funded basis while undertaking ministerial training Regent's Park College and completing a doctorate in theology. The Home Mission grant which came into effect towards the end of his training has been essential in supporting the work of this emerging church. Now that Dan has been ordained, the grant enables Dan to work part-time as a newly accredited minister.

57 West is grateful for God's provision through Home Mission funding.

**Dan Pratt**  
57 West

## Please pray:

- » For Dan and the volunteers who run 57 West as they seek God for more of the rough sleepers and addicts to find freedom and salvation
- » For those who have made decisions to follow Christ to grow into mature Christians
- » Give thanks for baptisms and for 57 West being welcomed in to Eastern Baptist Association as a new church
- » That other churches will regularly support the team
- » For external financial support which is vital to sustain and develop this work

## LENTON'S LANE BAPTIST CHURCH



Home Mission enabling transformation in Coventry

As a small church, located on the borders of Coventry and Warwickshire, Lenton's Lane has, until recently, fallen into disrepair and low numbers. When the previous minister retired in 2012 he had been supported on an expenses only basis and numbers had fallen to as few as six older people gathering together faithfully each week. The decision loomed large whether to close the doors on its 200 years of history.

There came an opportunity in 2013 for the Revd Matt Jeffrey, then a minister in training from Regent's Park College, Oxford, to be placed with them for the final few months of his studies, and the church seized upon this. During these months together, the church worked tirelessly to re-establish



Matt and Vicki Jeffrey



connections with the local community, through a series of outreach events, occasional good quality children's days, and Matt sought to reinvigorate the church to recognise the potential within.

Matt says "I saw the heart of the people of God who met there, and helped them to rediscover their potential to serve Jesus through serving the community."

The church proceeded to call Matt as half time minister from September 2013, and there began discussions with the local Baptist Association to see if a Home Mission grant may be possible. They were thoroughly supportive throughout, and indeed after seeing the seeds of transformation, and the plans for the future, the grant was agreed to commence in January 2015, enabling the church to have a full time minister for the first time in over 20 years.



Matt continues "We know there is a great deal of work still to do; however, as a worshipping community in this small area of the city, we know we can rely upon our faithful God to support us throughout. We are looking to develop many areas, such as the building, which has fallen into some level of disrepair, and seeking to build further upon the collective momentum. Together, we are extremely grateful to Home Mission, as it supports the breadth of ministry. All areas of expectation



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**Please pray:**

- » Give thanks for the Home Mission grant enabling the church to call Matt as their full time minister
- » For Matt and Vicki and the growing congregation as they seek God's plans for Lenton's Lane
- » For the new community forum to continue to develop its support for the local people
- » That the small group meeting regularly will support and challenge each another
- » For an opportunity to re-open to baptistry and celebrate the baptism of new Christians
- » For plans to develop the building which has fallen into disrepair

have risen, and the numbers have followed, with around 30 people now regularly worshipping together each week, bringing together our prayers and song before God."

The church has also reconnected with sister fellowships in the area, holding collective Remembrance Day services with Longford Baptist church. The offering this year was shared between Home Mission and 'Help for Heroes'.

A small group has been established and meets regularly, recently completing the *Life on the Frontline* DVD course from the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC). This was greatly received, and reaffirmed the understanding that God is interested in our whole week, not simply our Sunday morning worship.

One further area of expansion has been to start a local community forum, including support from the Police and local Councillors, to help address the wide variety of issues facing local people. This has been integral to the message that the church is seeking to support both its members and the local community in which God has placed it.

Matt concluded "I long for the coming day, where we can re-open the presently forlorn baptistry and lead local people through the waters as they commit their life to following Jesus. With our faithful God, and the Home Mission support, I know that day is coming."

**Matt Jeffrey**  
Minister,  
Lenton's Lane Baptist Church





## HARLINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH



### A church with a missionary vision supports boys through its Football Project

Supported by Home Mission, Pastor Neemias with his wife Elinere and his two daughters have been working with Harlington Baptist Church since 2012. They have a strong missionary vision which has been shared with the church through these years. The church vision is to give everyone the opportunity to serve God by using their gifts and abilities in such way that through their lives the God's purpose of glorifying his name may be fulfilled.

Organisationally, everyone in the church is encouraged to help the church by being part of at least one of its 'departments' which were created with the purpose of covering every area of the church ministry.

The leadership team is formed by representatives of different nations which tries to reflect the community multicultural population. The church leadership works to reinforce God's vision



for the church, looking at all the things which need to be addressed in helping the church to move forward.

The church's missionary vision is growing. Since 2012, every last Saturday and Sunday of the month a missionary service has been held in the church, aiming to challenge the believers to develop a greater love for the souls in various ways - like spending more time in prayer, investing their resources, cooperating for mission and giving their lives for God's Kingdom work.

Within the community, the church is working with young people holding a weekly activity called Y4J to which the boys from our football project are invited.

The football project has worked as a bridge between the church and the community, beginning in an informal way in 2010. Last year, sponsored by Home Mission, Pastor Neemias got his qualification as a football coach to enable him to develop this role further.



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This year, with the support of Home Mission and Queen's Park Rangers, he has been working with about 30 boys from the community at William Byrd Primary School. The boys were divided into teams and two of the teams have played on the 5 a side Goal Soccer Centre League. On the first season, one of the teams reached third place and other finished in fourth place. In the second season one of the teams finished on top of the League, with the other in second place. At the end of both seasons the church prepared an Awards Ceremony inside the church hall and invited the boys' parents to participate in the ceremony. Many boys from the Football project are coming weekly for Y4J and some of them are coming for the service in the church as well. We praise the Lord and thank Home Mission for such investment towards the Harlington Community.

Our church also works with the girls from the community through Girls' Brigade and with the children, through Sunday School. We have a prayer ministry which goes to every street of the community and we pray for the residents before the Saturday Prayer Meeting in the church.



This year, three people were baptised and there are more two waiting to be baptised.

As part of our commitment to mission, the donations that have been raised every month are gathered together to be sent for BMS, Home Mission and local mission respectively.

Harlington Baptist Church highly appreciates all the support received from Home Mission.



**Elinere Lopes Antonio**  
Church Secretary,  
Harlington Baptist Church



**Please pray:**

- » For Pastor Neemias, giving thanks for his missionary vision and all that he has achieved in setting up the football project
- » For the boys who take part in the football project, and that others would also come to Y4J to learn more about God's love for them
- » Give thanks for the success which the football teams have enjoyed in the past two seasons, and the encouragement it brings
- » For the girls who are members of the Girls' Brigade as they learn about God and grow in relationship with him
- » For those being baptised, giving thanks for the encouragement this brings to the church

## SOUTH WALES BAPTIST COLLEGE



Based in the vibrant, capital city of Cardiff, the South Wales Baptist College is a community of disciples seeking to equip men and women for effective ministry and mission in a fast-changing world.

Our core task is providing ministerial training and formation for people preparing for various forms of ministry within both the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Baptist Union of Wales. Recent graduates are serving God in Wales, England and Italy.

In these days of challenge and opportunity all ministers are called to be missional leaders. Whilst patterns of training and formation continue to change and develop, some constants remain. For the church's mission still needs people who have a healthy understanding of the heart of the Christian faith, an ability to communicate this in relevant ways, and the Christian character and spirituality needed to sustain ongoing ministry.

With this in mind the College seeks to be a community of believers which encourages the development of exemplary disciples; who can both indicate the life God intends for all his people and activate believers to play their part in the mission of God.

In practice this means offering a holistic programme which integrates biblical and theological studies, training in the skills needed for mission and ministry, experiential learning in placements, and personal and spiritual development.

All of the tutors are experienced Baptist ministers who are deeply involved in church life; and the college's programmes are regularly enriched by input provided by a wide network of colleagues from across the UK.

The college enjoys a close working partnership with Cardiff University and St Michael's College, Llandaff. One aspect of this partnership is that the college's tutors also have the real privilege of teaching



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Christian theology to a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate students at the university.

As part of their package of training and formation, students at the College are able to work for Cardiff University awards. This grants access to all the resources of a major Russell Group University, alongside belonging to the supportive learning community at the college.

Whilst our major focus is equipping people for various forms of accredited ministry, the college gladly welcomes 'Open Option' students who are exploring God's plans for their lives.

One of the ways in which the college supports the mission of the Baptist family is by training people for various forms of recognised ministry. In addition the college serves a wider constituency through its Pathways course,

delivered one Saturday a month, which makes training available to members of local churches.

'At such a time as this' we thank God for guiding and sustaining the life and work of the college. We press on into the future, confident that this God will continue to guide and direct our paths.

**Peter Stevenson**  
Principal,  
South Wales Baptist College

**Please pray:**

- » For Peter and the staff as they enable students to follow God's calling into various forms of recognised ministry
- » For women and men considering study at the college which would equip them for ministry
- » For members of local churches who have embarked on the Pathways course each month

Further information about the South Wales Baptist College can be found at [www.swbc.org.uk](http://www.swbc.org.uk)



### CHELWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH



**Daring to dream big!**

We have been incredibly blessed by Home Mission for a number of years and this financial, prayerful support has seen God do above and beyond what we could have imagined. Some people say that as a church we ‘punch above our weight’ but actually it is God doing all the ‘punching’!

In the past we have run a community cafe on our local estate and launched a very successful foodbank and homeless charity, but in 2015 we are embarking on a new adventure.



At the beginning of 2013 our minister, the Revd Steve Hough, felt that God was telling him to step aside and let our new minister in training, Andrew Phillips, step up to lead the Church into a new phase



of Chelwood’s mission with family at the heart of it. Andrew has now been in post since September while he trains at Northern Baptist College. We have realised that our foodbank ministry grew so big so quickly (which was really positive) that it took our focus away from our local community - one which we have always been at the heart of. We feel called to get back to our community and make a difference as locally as possible. We also sense God calling us to model family life, both in the household but also as the family of God together.

Our Bible passage for 2015 and beyond is Ephesians 2:19-22:

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.*



Andrew being inducted by Tim Presswood

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This was the passage that the church was given when it began nearly 20 years ago and now we feel God saying we need to revisit it. The first part of 2015 will be spent in preparation for all that lies ahead. We plan to meet regularly to pray, to prayer walk and to plan the nitty gritty. Then we aim to get out and show our community what the household of God looks like. We have some activities already planned such as a monthly all-age meeting on a Friday night after school, an Easter fancy dress hunt and we are even aiming to bring the beach to Stockport! We are also excited by our Home Mission hub of four churches working together and being accountable to each other in mission. There are events already being planned for the year ahead.

We aren't entirely sure what the next few years will hold for us here at Chelwood but what we pray is that God will bless us and that we will continue to see him do more than we can ask or imagine!

Thank you so much for our Home Mission grant. It means so much to us.

**Andrew Phillips**  
Minister in training,  
Chelwood Baptist Church



**Please pray:**

- » For Andrew as he leads the church in this new phase of mission
- » Give thanks for the way in which the church has been involved in the community cafe, foodbank and homeless charity and seen such success
- » For a clear sense of God's vision for the church in 2015 as they discern the new direction in which he is calling them
- » For those involved in the detailed planning of events - that teams will work well together and affirm one another in all they do

## BAPTIST UNION COUNCIL

The Baptist Union Council meets twice a year and is made up of 80 members mostly drawn from churches, Associations, colleges and co-opted delegates. At Council, the work of our Union and issues facing it are reported on and discussed.

Mission matters. Relationships matter. One is inextricably linked with the other as it is through our relationship with the Lord and with others that mission is experienced and expressed. So being together is important for us so that we can worship, pray, discern and encourage each other in our common purpose.

We do that nationally through our Assembly and also through our Union's Council which is a realistic way in which we can share, listen and discern what the Lord is saying to us as a whole movement of churches, Associations and Colleges.

### Please pray:

- » As Council meets today, pray that Jesus would be at the centre of all that we are and do
- » One of the key things we will be considering is what Ministries we need for the future and how we support and deliver them
- » Pray that we would have clarity about how the Lord is leading us, and confidence to make decisions that will enable effective mission

**Lynn Green**  
General Secretary



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## THE SANCTUARY



A good news story from Watchet

Watchet is a small port on the north Somerset coast and at the heart of the community there is a faithful Baptist church that has been supported for over 10 years by Home Mission.

In the last few years the church had major building issues which raised the question – do we repair, sell and rebuild or do something completely different? The building was sold and they decided to do something completely different. The church meets on a Sunday in a school hall and with the proceeds of the church sale they purchased a shop in the heart of the town. This shop was converted into a mission / prayer station called 'The Sanctuary' and it is very well used by the church as a mission station with the Friday night community meal being a highpoint.

The church itself has continued to grow spiritually and numerically and they have requested that their Home Mission Grant to be halved for 2015, with the intention to be off Home Mission funding in



2016. They are now looking ahead towards future ministry and the possibility of more staff to help with a growing vibrant church – they simply want to say a big thank you to the Baptist family for all the support that has been given and made this ministry possible.

**Nigel Manges**  
Regional Minister



### Please pray:

- » Give thanks for this growing vibrant church which is meeting the needs of many people in the community in Watchet
- » For the people who have contact with the church each week through The Sanctuary - at the youth cafe, groups for older people and a weekly community meal
- » Give thanks that the need for Home Mission funding has been reduced this year, enabling this money to be used elsewhere



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## NEW LIFE CHURCH, BLACKBOYS



New Life Church Blackboys was planted out as an autonomous Baptist Church in December 2012. This was certainly a 'stepping out the boat' experience for all those involved. A move of faith encouraged and facilitated greatly by generous Home Mission Support.

Blackboys is a small rural community in the heart of mid Sussex. The rather unusual name is thought to either derive from the once local charcoal industry or from Richard Blakeboy who lived here in the 1300's.

The village has a pub, a petrol station, a Church of England primary school, a shop/café owned and run by four church members, three of whom are on the leadership team, and of course the church. We don't have a church building as such. We meet in people's homes, in the Grove Café, at the school, and on Sundays we gather in the village hall. We find the lack of building not to be a hindrance, but rather liberating. Indeed, it reflects and reinforces who we are and how we do things, expressed by our motto 'We are Church.' Church can't be a building, a place you go to, if you haven't got one!

### Building through blessing in Blackboys and beyond



In many ways though, what we do together during the week is not dissimilar to other church families. Having said that, we do place an emphasis on the scattered church, being a disciple where God has placed us. In addition, we are determined not to be driven by activities and programmes. However there is one particular initiative which I would like to share with you which is rather unusual.

As Christians we are used to prayer happening before, during and as a consequence of mission but perhaps not as a way of mission. Let me explain. I practise a form of contemplative prayer known as Centering Prayer. This takes place in my study/office from 9:15-10:15 each weekday and is open to anyone who wishes to join me. I use the Northumbria Community liturgy which leads into 25 minutes of silent contemplation.



Most days I am joined by at least one person, the most was nine - which was a bit of a squeeze! More excitingly though, as an outworking of this I was asked by the Head of the local school to set up a lunchtime Centering Prayer Club. The initial sign up was 20 children from years 1-5, including two reception children who were told they were too young. Now after a bit of settling down we have

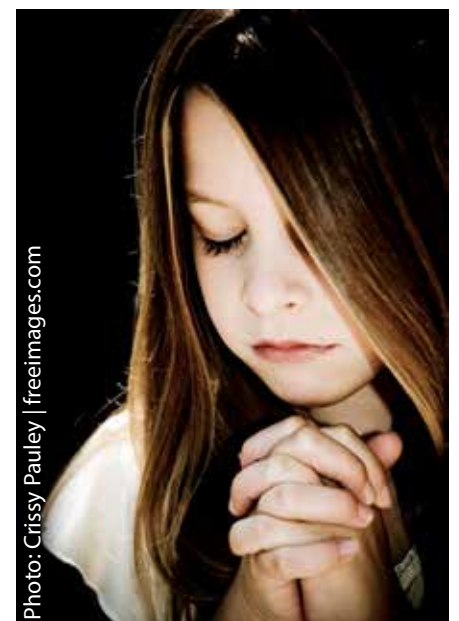


Photo: Crissy Pauley | freemages.com

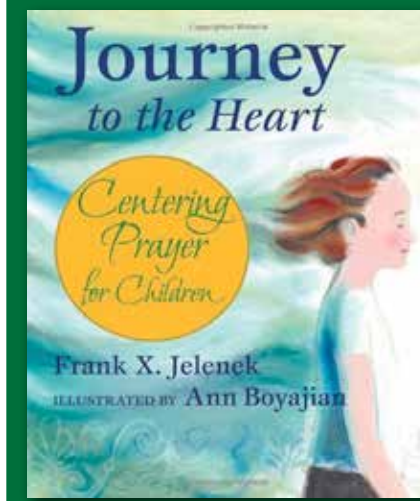
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a core group of 11 children, 3 boys and 8 girls, for half an hour each Wednesday during their lunchtime. As a basis for our time together we use a book called *Journey to the Heart: Centering Prayer for Children* by Frank X. Jelenek. The children are a delight and their enthusiasm (a little too much sometimes) is wonderful. Please pray for them and for me as I am certainly out of my comfort zone on this.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me ([guy\\_newlifechurch@btinternet.com](mailto:guy_newlifechurch@btinternet.com)) and thanks again for your support - because without Home Mission this would not be happening. You may find the following link to a recent e-bulletin from the Contemplative Outreach website, the home of Centering Prayer, helpful especially as it includes various video links. Have a look at: <http://eepurl.com/8HjK9>

**Guy Partridge**  
New Life Church, Blackboys



Centering prayer is a way of opening our whole being to God, beyond thoughts, words and emotions. This guide for children both instructs and inspires, making it easy for children to share in the spiritual nourishment of centering prayer, and is ideal for ages 3-10.

Publisher: Paraclete Press (2007)  
ISBN: 978-15572 5482 5

**Please pray:**

- » For Guy as he encourages children each Wednesday to spend time with God through the Centering Prayer Club
- » For the core group of children, that they will continue to grow in their relationship with God and share their love of him with their friends
- » For other opportunities for the church to be a presence in the school
- » For members of New Life Church as they live out their lives as disciples, wherever God has placed them
- » Give thanks for the freedoms which being church without a building can bring

## SPORTS CHAPLAINCY

### South Wales Baptist Association

I have been the minister of Aion Baptist Church, Bryncoch, Neath for 12 years. Seven years ago I was approached by the professional rugby team the Ospreys to serve as a volunteer chaplain with their Academy. This role has involved:

- » Pastoral and spiritual care for the Under 16years (U16s ), U18s and U20s players, their families, coaches and backroom staff.
- » Input into the Ospreys Academy's formal training programme where I lead on the delivery of subjects concerning life skills and holistic development (the development of these young men as people and not just as players).

### Serving sport through excellence in chaplaincy - supported by Home Mission

The chaplaincy has been well received and has increasingly led to requests and opportunities to develop similar arrangements at other sports clubs by introducing them to other pastorally-gifted church leaders interested in exploring sports chaplaincy as mission. Over the past number of years one issue stood out over and over again - effective development of this kind of incarnational mission in the sporting world was impossible to do in the one day a week that my church was graciously releasing me for and in my spare time. There were, and still are, simply too many opportunities presenting themselves for development.

Additionally, having served as one of the sports chaplains at the Paralympic Games in London 2012, this subsequently led on to a growing number of requests from the disabled sporting world in Wales to consider developing sports chaplaincy support to disabled and special-needs sport. The Christian Charity Sports Chaplaincy UK (formerly SCORE) asked me two years ago to formally take on a part-time development role in Wales in order to further this form of Christian mission. And so, with the prayerful support of my



church and of the charity, I reduced my hours with the church down to a part-time role and now give two days a week to sports chaplaincy development.

To date, sports chaplaincy in Wales is more developed in rugby than in football, with only a handful of chaplains currently serving in Welsh Football. It is hoped that the next 12 months will see a redressing of this imbalance. In December 2013 I was invited by the Welsh Premier League to address a meeting in Newtown, mid Wales, of all the chairmen of



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Welsh Premier football clubs on the subject of sports chaplaincy. As a result of my presentation to that meeting, the league administrators have now commended chaplaincy to all their constituent clubs and we hope to see a number of new appointments in 2015. The BUGB Home Mission grant enables me to make journeys such as the above to Newtown and even further north in Wales (Wrexham, Colwyn Bay, Caernarfon) to further this type of incarnational Christian mission in Wales for the glory of God.

As a result of a number of such journeys I was able last year to introduce the Revd Rhun Murphy to the Directors of Wrexham FC in February of this year and he is now all set to take up a volunteer sports chaplaincy role with their Academy set-up in the town. Further new chaplaincies have been brokered at Newport RFC, Cardiff RFC, Newport Gwent Dragons RFC and the academies at Llanelli Scarlets and Cardiff City FC.



Rhun Murphy



Other areas identified for priority development in the next year are:

- » chaplaincy to women's sports (at the moment we have only one female sports chaplain in Wales). I have been working to raise awareness of this type of ministry amongst Welsh churches, and have spoken at a number of different forums, trying to develop this type of ministry across denominational boundaries and to foster partnership working.
- » a growth in the number of Club Christmas carol services facilitated by club chaplains. Christmas 2014 saw 3,500 people gather for a Carol Service at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea where the Christmas story was read from the Bible by players and club administrators, with the chaplains leading in prayer and a Christmas reflection. This event is now set to become an annual one.
- » chaplaincy to the disabled sporting world. The second half of 2013 saw the signing of a formal engagement agreement between Sports Chaplaincy UK and Disability Sport Wales (DSW), the lead organisation in Wales for the development of sport for disabled people.

**Please pray:**

- » For Steve and the growing number of sports chaplains serving sports clubs in Wales
- » Give thanks for the spiritual, pastoral and linguistic support which can be given at international sporting events
- » For the development of chaplaincy to women's sports

- » For more Club Christmas carol services in 2015
- » For the support which chaplains can offer to sports people with disabilities
- » For the ministers in training who have an interest in sports chaplaincy, and for opportunities for them to explore this calling through placements

This has led to two new chaplaincies which now provide volunteer chaplaincy support to the athletes in their Academy and High Performance departments. The Revd Dave Hibbin of Ararat Baptist Church and Heather Lewis of Highfields Church, Cardiff both give a day a week of their time to support the Wales's disabled sports people, and it is hoped that this model can replicated elsewhere.

Building on my experience of serving at the London 2012 Paralympics, I served in July 2013 as a Chaplain and Interpreter at the International Paralympic Committee's World Athletics Championships in Lyon, France I was asked to dedicate his time to providing spiritual, pastoral and linguistic support to Team GB.

I also formed part of the Swansea Organising Committee charged with the planning and delivery of the International Paralympic Committee's European Athletics Championships that took place from 17 - 24 August 2014. This resulted in a team providing a comprehensive sports chaplaincy service to athletes, coaches, and their families. Included in the team were a number of 'trainee' sports chaplains - ministers in training / ordinands who have expressed an interest in sports chaplaincy and whose training institutes agreed for their summer placements to be on secondment to the chaplaincy team at these major athletics championships.

I have been greatly encouraged by the number of doors that the Lord has opened over the past two years, with a growing number of pastoral and mission opportunities to myself and the other chaplains that I am encouraging. May his kingdom come in the sporting world of Wales. the UK and of all his world.

**Steve Jones**  
Chaplaincy Support Director for  
Welsh Sport

## BRISTOL BAPTIST COLLEGE



**Luke is a second year student at Bristol Baptist College, with a placement at Honiton Family Church**

Luke Mansfield started at Bristol Baptist College in September 2013. Before that he'd worked as a youth pastor and for the London City Mission. He and his family had always been part of larger churches, so his placement at Honiton was a whole new experience for him. The church had 22 members, a weekly attendance of about 30 and nearly everyone apart from Luke and his family were elderly. However, Luke was encouraged because the congregation knew they needed to change and wanted to work with someone who ensure that they were 'taken out of their comfort zone.'

God gave Luke a vision for a church of all ages, somewhere his own family would feel at home. He knew there had to be radical changes for this to happen and so he sat with the leadership team and shared with them the idea that, while God never changes and the gospel never changes, people do change; the church needed to find a way to present the gospel in ways local people would grasp.

The leadership and membership agreed to explore new ways forward so that church would not just be about attendance on Sundays but a community to belong to and a safe place to grow.



The church changed its name to Honiton Family Church. The structure of the services was changed. New things were added without abandoning the best of the past. New ministries were begun with children and young people. A monthly evening service in the local pub was launched. And people prayed.

In the last 12 months the church has grown to 42 members and there are now 70 in attendance on Sunday mornings. A number of people have become Christians. The one toddler who came along with his grandparents when Luke first started is now joined by around 20 other children every week. Before this year there had not been a baptism for five years. January 2015 saw the fourth in 12 months.

The church has a new lease of life. Many have rediscovered their first love. Everyone is excited about what God may do among them in the future.



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Luke and the congregation know they are not yet the finished product but are determined to continue to follow God's leading as they become a community in which all are welcome, all can meet Jesus, and all can grow in relationship with him regardless of their background.

Luke attends the College two days a week in term time. On one of those days he is working towards a degree in theology. On the other, he is engaged in the College's ministry programme. This is where he learns about prayer and spirituality; he is tested to see that his character is suited to the task of church leadership; he learns how to reflect on his own practice so that he is constantly thinking through how God might make his ministry even more effective; and he enjoys the opportunity to talk informally with staff and students.

The College, like the others in membership with the Baptist Union of Great Britain, is not funded by Home Mission. Its income comes mainly from fees from students, occasional grants and from direct gifts from the churches. Through students like Luke the College makes a significant contribution to the mission going on among the churches.



Luke says, "One of the aspects which has been most helpful to me during this period has been being part of Bristol Baptist College. I have learned so much and had my thinking stretched, eyes opened and found support and wisdom from both the students and tutors. Through the process of being at the college I feel that I am being truly formed into the minister God is calling me to be and I believe it is having an impact on the church in Honiton."

**Stephen Finamore**  
Principal,  
Bristol Baptist College



**Please pray:**

- » Give thanks for the new lease of life which has come to the church, and the sense of excitement about what God has in store
- » For Luke and his family as he continues to juggle study, church commitments and family life
- » For other students serving in Home Mission funded churches around our Union as they seek to bring a fresh approach to mission and ministry
- » For the staff and students at Bristol Baptist College, and those testing a call to ministry and further study





## LIFE IN THE SOUTH WEST



Using Home Mission resources to respond to a sense of calling

It's that time of year again! The Home Mission grant application forms have been sent out and we are waiting to see what the level of take-up is. Here in the South West Baptist Association (SWBA) we are working in partnership with three other Associations (Southern Counties, South Wales and the West of England) in trying to ensure that we use our allocation of grant resources to best effect. This means that we have agreed not to make payments to 'prop up' churches that have lost their way. Neither will we use funds to support a church that already has significant resources 'squirrelled away' in their bank accounts!

We are looking for missional passion... for a love of the lost... for a sense of calling and a desire to respond to that call. Put simply, we are looking for evidence that the Holy Spirit has planted a vision into the heart of his people and that they are determined and focussed enough to see that vision through. We want to see the Kingdom of God more rooted and more firmly established here. We want to see his Church making a difference in local communities and in the lives of individuals and families. Am I being too idealistic and theatrical? Well, maybe... but there again, I am taking my lead from Jesus



himself - the master story-teller who spread the Gospel by telling good stories, and by being the good story.

I love the way in which, as stories are shared of what God is doing in one part of our patch, so it seems to spark off a fresh consideration of possibilities somewhere else. From Watchet to Devonport, from Yeovil to Yeoford, from Wincanton to The Lizard Peninsular... they all have their stories to tell - and so the baton of faith is passed on. Incidentally, we are delighted that in June we will be celebrating as the Lizard Church is formally constituted and joins the Association!

**Jez Brown**  
Regional Minister, Team Leader



### Please pray:

- » Some years ago now I travelled out to the Isles of Scilly to meet some Christians on St Mary's who were wondering if the time was right to begin meeting as a Baptist church (the last Baptist Church closed on Bryer in the 1960's). We are still watching and waiting – looking for the wind of the Spirit to blow through those islands. Is it now Lord? Please pray and let me know what the Lord says to you.
- » We also have a husband and wife team - both Baptist ministers - moving to Penzance later this year from the Midlands with their young family, with a real sense that the Lord is calling them to plant a church there from scratch! This couple come with a warm commendation from our friends in the EMBA. When I met with them last year they didn't lead off with questions about financial support and housing. They simply told me that they were being called and wanted 'to belong' and to 'be accountable'. I can work with people like this! Please pray.

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## PIONEER MISSION ENABLER



**Ali Boulton uses her experience of pioneering mission in Swindon to encourage pioneers in SBCA**

It was at a Baptist ministers' cluster lunch in January 2008, that I experienced a call from God to move with my family to a new housing estate in Swindon (at that time unbuilt) to holistically bless and serve the new community and be a Christian presence.

I immediately joined in with what God was already doing locally, by becoming part of an ecumenical group praying for the area, and engaging in a discernment process with a variety of Christians.

The West of England Baptist Association (WEBA) shared the vision and partnered us right from the beginning. They supplemented the money we could raise, enabling us to buy a house on the estate to use as a home and an initial community space - as there would be no community buildings for some time.



Fourteen months after the initial call from God, we were the first to move onto the new estate and, supported by a team, we began to bless the community.

Initially there were no residents, but we began a partnership with the housing association and council. As people moved in, I visited them with a welcome basket, introduced myself as a neighbour and Baptist minister who wanted to serve the community - all faiths and none - and asked if there were things we could do together. This meeting was unconditional. I made myself available but expected nothing in return; people shared and joined in as much or little as they liked.

Over the first year, people from all backgrounds came to me for pastoral support and asked us to help them do all sorts of things, including a community day, games on the green, toddler group,



times for coffee and chat - and a Halloween party, a community Nativity and an Easter exploration! This set the pattern for our holistic community engagement.

We felt that God said we should talk about him - we shouldn't raise the subject - but people chatted to me about faith a lot and ended up asking us to start a kids' *God club* and a year after we moved in we were asked to start a church gathering!

Praise God, people came to faith and have been baptised and some have grown into leadership. We now gather for church in the local community centre and we were welcomed into membership of BUGB at Assembly 2013.



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In September 2014, I accepted an invitation to join the regional ministry team with the Southern Counties Baptist Association (SCBA) as the half time Pioneer Mission Enabler. This involves remaining grounded in local pioneering whilst seeking God and working out how we join his mission across the association.

There are already some great pioneers and pioneering in SCBA, so in these early days in post I have been engaging with churches and individuals across the association to discern new pioneering opportunities and to encourage those just beginning to pioneer.

In praying about how to approach this new role, I have drawn on my experience of local pioneering. I have seen God do more than I could have imagined, and importantly much more than I could have instigated on my own. Learning to discern and join in with where we have seen God's Spirit at work has been fundamental to my work across the association. In a regional context this involves listening to individual Christians in the Baptist family, church communities, ecumenical friends, alongside stakeholders of local communities such as housing providers, councils etc, and noting opportunities, coincidences and people of peace. Working translocally has also involved identifying places into which God is calling us to pioneer within the Southern Counties.

During these first six months, I have been able to visit a variety of contexts within SCBA and join with individual pioneers and established church communities in seeking to discern what God is up to! It's been a highlight of this role to prayer walk through the streets of established and new communities, in towns and villages, around schools, community centres, open spaces, shops and even an allotment in order to pray blessing and listen to God. It's also been a privilege to journey with churches who are seeking to call a pioneer or mission enabler, and to seek and discern God together. It has been so encouraging to witness God's faithfulness already as people are stepping out in faith missionally.

Given my background and networks it is unsurprising that God has been drawing my attention to opportunities on new housing developments. I thank God that through various 'coincidences' I have been able to link community stakeholders with churches and 'faith groups' who are responding to God's call to love the community. These stakeholders are people of peace who are keen to partner and fund groups seeking to serve their local communities. It's great to see these opportunities opening up. There is a great deal of new housing across the Southern Counties area and this feels like a real opportunity to share God's love as people wonder what new life on a new development looks like for them. These new



estates are at various stages of development - it was great to walk through a series of fields with Jacky Storey (another SCBA regional minister) recently and pray blessing into an as yet unbuilt development. It will be interesting to see how God will be at work there in the years to come.

Of course there also challenges, discerning where the Spirit of God is at work can be very tricky! One of the biggest challenges is that we can get very busy 'doing church' which makes it hard to respond to God's missional opportunities - I hope this is something that we will pray into and be able support and encourage each other as we make courageous decisions about how we 'do church' together and use our time.

I'm hugely grateful for the giving of the Baptist family through Home Mission that makes this role as Pioneer Mission Enabler possible - I pray I will remain faithful to God in this and we will continue to see God do more than we can ask or imagine.

**Ali Boulton**

Pioneer Mission Enabler,  
Southern Counties Baptist  
Association



**Please pray:**

- » For Ali and her family as she juggles her work at The Stowe with her half-time role as pioneer mission enabler in SCBA
- » For wisdom and discernment as Ali supports the pioneering ministries in the association
- » For missional opportunities to open up in the new housing developments

### THE BAPTIST ASSEMBLY

*baptist assembly*

Saturday 16 May 2015

As a Union of Churches, Associations and colleges, once a year we gather together as Baptists Together at the Assembly. This year it is being held at the KingsGate Conference Centre in Peterborough.

The Assembly gives opportunity for our shared life and interdependency to be celebrated. With the foundation in the Word and worship, each Assembly gives time to celebrate what God is doing across the country and also to explore what has been accomplished through Home Mission, our Baptist Together 'purse'.

Recent years at Assembly have seen Home Mission granted churches being given prominent space in the programme. In 2014 a focus on the pioneering work of the churches of our Union showed how, through Home Mission, Jesus is being made known in places where there was not a Christian presence.



Assembly is changing, as so much in life is, but it is still holding on to its key aims of fellowship, worship, scripture and deliberation. Every person who attends a Baptist church is welcome to join us.

For more details see [www.baptistassembly.org.uk](http://www.baptistassembly.org.uk)



**Please pray:**

- » For the team of people planning and delivering the programme, children's and youth work and logistics for this year's Assembly
- » For safe travel to Peterborough for all those who attend
- » For a sense of God's presence and vision in all aspects of our gathering together
- » For the staff of the KingsGate conference centre hosting this year's event



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## STONEHOUSE BAPTIST CHURCH



**An exciting future - seeking to reach out in creative ways to the local community**

Stonehouse Baptist has been experiencing wonderful growth and renewal in recent months. Where once only a few faithful friends would gather on Sunday morning, the church is now packed almost to capacity with people who are coming from the local area, some of whom have not been to any church for years and are returning to find a loving, worshipping community.

Our services are refreshed by more contemporary worship, open prayer and sensitive use of the gifts and we desire to see the Holy Spirit move among us. Numerical growth is being matched by a deeper spiritual growth in personal discipleship and by enthusiasm for the gospel in Stonehouse.

In addition to already existing Bible-based mid-week meetings, in the past six months three small groups have started to meet in homes and as these are already at capacity a fourth started in the New Year.

Being part of a small town means that when the churches act ecumenically we are able to make an impact beyond our own walls - this was seen at the recent

Christmas Festival Evening when we initiated a town wide 'Prayer Paper Chain' which stretched up the High Street carrying the 'hopes and fears of all our years'.

Thousands of prayers were made and each request prayed for later within the local churches throughout advent. The gospel is for Stonehouse.

Everything happening at Stonehouse is exciting but our newest move to relate the gospel in the community in a fresh way has seen the launch of 'Stonehouse Baptist Community Church'.



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Affectionately known as 'Church with Toast and Yoghurt' we meet in the local Community Centre at 9am and we start with breakfast. Focussing on Bible-based family oriented activities we gather around the story of Jesus' life and some of the stories he told; we do craft together, have fun and laugh together, read the Bible, talk, pray, relate and are church together. In December both congregations came together with new people from the community to take part in a 'Pop Up Nativity' with real animals - it was a great success and through it we made more contact with local families.

Traditionally, as a Baptist church in Stonehouse, we have not had children or any younger people as part of our gathered community, but now - in just four months - there are over a dozen children and their parents and carers meeting weekly and discovering what 'church' looks like for them.

The future holds many exciting challenges as we seek to reach out in creative ways to the local community through children and families' work and in less conventional gatherings in the pub, estates, coffee shop and park. We have a saying at Stonehouse Baptist Church... 'We have not been this way before' ... and that is true.



We are a group of people, nearly all of whom are new to each other, joined by our love of Jesus and a desire to know him and his people better. We don't have an elaborate 'blue-print' but through prayer and love we are seeking to be his Kingdom people here and together for the Kingdom. We are seeing his hand working restorative wonders among us and our community.

**Anne Dunn**  
Minister,

Stonehouse Baptist Church

**Please pray:**

- » Give thanks for the signs of growth and renewal seen at Stonehouse in recent months
- » For the children and young people who are now part of the church
- » For the exciting challenges ahead as the church sees God at work through them





### CONNECT CAFE

yorkshirebaptist  
●●● association

**A new venture from St Thomas' Church, Philadelphia in Sheffield**

"Its about connections – connecting people and much, much more!"

Thanks to a grant of £2000 from the Yorkshire Baptist Association (YBA), we were able to launch our 'Connect Cafe' on our church campus in September 2013. Twelve months on and the project has become a mainstay of our weekly activity and support to people experiencing poverty, isolation or difficult times in their lives across Sheffield.

The mission project is aimed at anyone who has recently received support from our Foodbank initiative or our CAP Centre at St Thomas' Church Philadelphia in Sheffield. It offers a weekly drop-in meeting place every Thursday from 10.30am – 12.30pm for people to connect with others over tea and toast in a relaxed and informal environment.

The project is led by Danny (one of our church evangelists), Angela and Franci with support from other regular volunteers who provide amazing help in a variety of ways.

"Its about connections – connecting people and much, much more!"

Connect Cafe has become an integral part of our weekly support to people living in the surrounding areas offering befriending, signposting and a range of opportunities for people who are often isolated to get involved in the life of our wider church community.

The cafe has helped to offer hope to every person who walks through our doors, even in the most desperate of circumstances. Our team spends time listening to people's circumstances and through these conversations builds relationships that the person feels able to share and be open. We can then direct clients to a range of organisations or activities in the local community as well as being able to pray for people where appropriate or share the gospel with people.



Danny and Angela –  
leaders of Connect Cafe



#### Key progress so far:

- » We are getting 6-10 people coming along most weeks. Many are unchurched and have heard about us from the Foodbank or CAP team. Some come as a one-off for support and others have been coming more regularly.
- » We have signposted people to other local agencies and projects including mums/toddler groups and healthy eating/cooking courses.
- » CAP clients have found it especially helpful for being a place to drop-in and meet up with their befrienders as well as meeting new friends.
- » Have had lots of opportunities to pray for healing and restoration with people and see transformation happening step by step.
- » There is a real sense of belonging building up amongst people who attend who are often on the edge of society and church.

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"It's like a family – people popping in for a cup of tea and chat with us. There are all age groups there from kids to grandparents. It's been a great way to talk to people about our church and Jesus!"

### **Funding:**

The Home Mission grant has enabled us to pay for the involvement of our church evangelist who is able to lead and attend the project each week and has also paid for some set-up costs for equipment in the cafe and ongoing food and drink costs.

### **Stories / Testimonies:**

One client came along one week via the foodbank and the team were able to listen and pray with her as she grieved following a recent death in her family. She went home that day and her dad noticed such a change in her that he came back with her to the cafe the following week to find out more!

A couple who were about to lose their home came along together one Thursday having been to the foodbank the previous week. They were able to have some coffee and toast and chat to some of the team and other regular attenders at the cafe. As a result, they were able to get some respite and immediate

Chapel – where cafe happens each week



support for their housing needs and came along to our 'Streetwise' Sunday service and start to feel that sense of belonging to the church family.

**Andy Niblock**  
Team Leader,

Restore & Social Transformation  
St Thomas' Church Philadelphia

"I couldn't have planned it to be as good as this! It's all because God has blessed the project and it's now really thriving. Lots of different people are coming in – some have been to our Sunday church gatherings as well and are now exploring what it is to be a Christian, which is so exciting!"

### **Please pray:**

- » Give thanks for the way in which Connect Cafe has been offering support to people experiencing poverty, isolation or difficult times in their lives
- » For Danny, Angela and Francy and their team of volunteers as they encourage a sense of belonging and offer hope to those who use the cafe
- » For all the people who help with the Foodbank and CAP centre
- » Give thanks for the encouraging testimonies already shared with the team
- » That God will continue to use Connect Cafe to bring about transformation in people's lives

## FAITH AND SOCIETY TEAM

### Passionate about Justice Communicating the story

Faith and Society is one of the three Specialist Teams based at Baptist House in Didcot (alongside the Ministries and Support Services Teams).

The Team's responsibilities include:

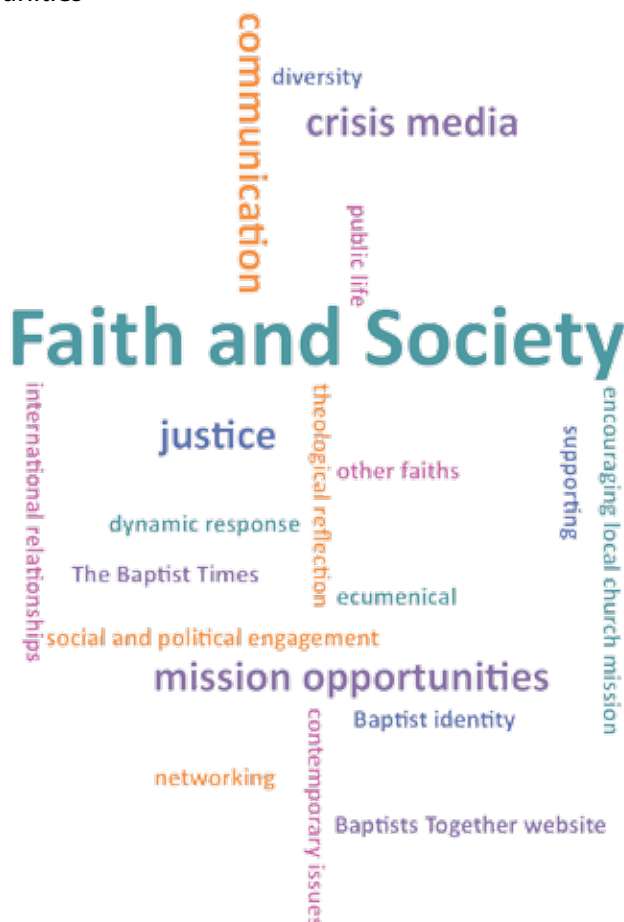
- » Theological reflection on key areas of shared belief and concern
- » Representing our Union in areas of public life and with other Christian denominations and faith communities

### Intentional about Mission Reflecting on our shared life

- » Communicating news on contemporary issues, particularly regarding issues of justice
- » Communicating the key values and priorities of our Union
- » Raising awareness of areas of need and mission opportunity
- » Enabling churches to respond to the changing needs and opportunities within their communities



This is a small team who hold a broad range of responsibilities to resource the life of Baptists Together in practical and other ways.



### Communication

Nearly everything that comes out of the national resource in the form of communication, be that web, email or printed comes from the Faith and Society Team. The recent developments, including the new *Baptists Together* magazine, are created within this Team. One example of the communications developed is this 40 Days of Home Mission resource that we have put together. The Faith and Society Team are not the story though; the communication is about what is happening in the whole of our Union, from local church to Association and the national expressions of the Union. The Assembly office sits within this Team. For the latest news of our Union please do look at the *Baptist Times* part of the website.

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## Crisis Media

Engaging with the media can be an excellent way of letting your local community know your church is there and to share the message of what you are doing. However, from time to time things go wrong in the local church - there could be a child protection issue, or a local disaster or tragedy might occur. The Faith and Society Team are here to help local churches create press statements, and statements for the church, at these difficult times.

## Ecumenical Engagement

Many Baptist churches are involved in a 'Churches Together' group in their town or city. Some are part of a more formal Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP), covenanting with other churches to share aspects of their life together. We encourage Baptists to engage ecumenically at whatever level they feel able and offer guidance to LEPs - including help in applying for Charity Registration.

## Evangelism

We encourage local churches to engage in ways of making Jesus known, and support them in this through some national mission initiatives. Last year many people responded to a *BIG Welcome* invitation by a friend in a Baptist church.

We have also encouraged churches to get involved in *Get in the Picture*. This simple initiative enables churches to bring Jesus onto the High Street at Christmas as they take photos of people in a nativity scene. It's a great opportunity to talk to people about what their church is doing, and how God is at work today. For details see: [www.getinthepicture.org.uk](http://www.getinthepicture.org.uk)



## Justice

We believe that justice concerns belong at the heart of our faith, and so we are seeking to ensure that the life and structures of our Union reflect our commitment to these issues, and that we work together to build inclusive communities. Key areas of work are with racial, women's and disability justice. In addition, sexuality issues are being recognised as part of this broad agenda. Work is continuing on the implementation of the recommendations of *The Journey*, alongside the Sam Sharpe Project, to ensure that our Union develops to be fully multicultural. Find out more at: [www.samsharpeproject.org](http://www.samsharpeproject.org)

## Society

As Christians we do not live separated from society, but are called to live in society. Part of the work of the Faith and Society Team is prophetically being involved in shaping and challenging issues within the public space, be that making representation on issues such as Trident, or government benefit cuts, or empowering local

churches to become active at significant times within our nation's life, such as an election or time of national crisis. Much of this work we do in partnership with the Joint Public Issues team (a partnership of many of the free churches who work together)

## Please pray:

- » For this small Team as they juggle their broad range of responsibilities
- » For wisdom and discernment for those involved in supporting churches through times of crisis
- » For inspiration and creativity for the Team developing new resources and initiatives to help make Jesus known
- » For the editorial group who work with the Team to develop the *Baptists Together* magazine
- » For those working to ensure that our Union is one which embraces and demonstrates inclusivity
- » Give thanks for the opportunities to make representation on issues of national interest, and for the partnership with the Joint Public Issues Team

Having followed these 40 days through Lent, and very nearly reached the end, is there a Home Mission story you would like to tell? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact us on [faithandsociety@baptist.org.uk](mailto:faithandsociety@baptist.org.uk) to share your story.

## SCOTTISH BAPTIST COLLEGE



**Alice McDermott completed her ministerial training at the Scottish Baptist College in 2014, and is now a minister in Watford**

In the four months since I have arrived at St James Road Baptist Church (SJR), I have been encouraged. The church had come through a long vacancy and called me as their next pastor straight from college. And they had to wait! A faithful core of members who had remained steadfast and committed throughout the vacancy were exhausted but they managed a few months more. Once I had finished my studies at the Scottish Baptist College, we moved south. Having spent 20 and 30 years in the RAF respectively, I and my husband, Colin, were accustomed to moving.

As a newly accredited minister (NAM), the support of my Leadership Team and Regional Ministry Team are essential. I am surrounded by a strong team within SJR who are committed to working alongside me. The Regional Ministry Team (Central Baptist Association) were quick to support me as I began my ministry. We have good fellowship within Herts, with regular ministers' meetings, and within the wider Association with a ministers' conference. I also have the chance to join with other NAMs on reflection days as we seek to explore various topics.

A mentor in these early years is also essential, and I am fortunate to have Ruth Bottoms keeping a pastoral eye on me, offering advice and being a general sounding board as I grow in my role.

The transition from military pilot to pastor has been challenging, college was the easy bit! It takes time to harness and focus my enthusiasm while at the same time ensuring that I maintain a work/life balance and get some rest. In the early weeks it was hard to take time off! There is always

more work I could do than time available, especially as I see visiting and spending time with others as a priority. I believe that ministry is founded on being relational, showing love and care to others whilst teaching, growing and inspiring those around you... this is what I see when I look at Jesus' life. In amongst all this, I need to do my NAM studies!



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Advent was a particularly busy time with so many 'firsts'. But to see the church filled for our Carol Service and to see many families come together on Christmas morning gave me confidence that we are moving in the right direction.

These early months at SJR have been joyful with a sense of expectation. We are seeing growth and we are looking forward to welcoming into membership a new couple, dedicating a child and baptising one of our young people. There are signs that God is at work and we are excited about what the future holds. This could feel like huge pressure, but I know that in the power of the Spirit we will achieve what we are called to do as we seek vision and discern where to focus our energies in the coming months.

We have amazing opportunities to reach out through our toddler and pre-school families and my prayer is that God's plan is clearly revealed for SJR.

**Alice McDermott**  
Minister, St James Road  
Baptist Church, Watford



#### **Please pray:**

- » For the students and staff at the Scottish Baptist College in Glasgow
- » Give thanks for the support and training which Alice and other students have received from the Scottish Baptist College
- » For Alice and her husband Colin as she spends time getting to know people, and seeking God's priorities for her ministry at Watford
- » Give thanks for the encouraging signs of growth and the sense of expectation amongst the church over the past few months
- » For a clear sense of vision for the church as they discover new opportunities to reach out to the local community
- » Give thanks for the support which the regional associations provide for newly accredited ministers

## THE PIONEER COLLECTIVE



A five year initiative with the vision to identify, release and resource 400 new Baptist pioneers: **'GOING** to where the church isn't, **DOING** what Jesus does, and **SEEING** what happens'.

Our society is changing fast, and in a post-Christendom culture 93% of the UK population do not regularly go to church. Many of these struggle to connect with established forms of church, but thankfully God is raising up pioneers who are taking on this missional challenge and imaginatively sharing the good news of Jesus. As a result new expressions of Christian community are emerging and existing congregations are experiencing renewal.

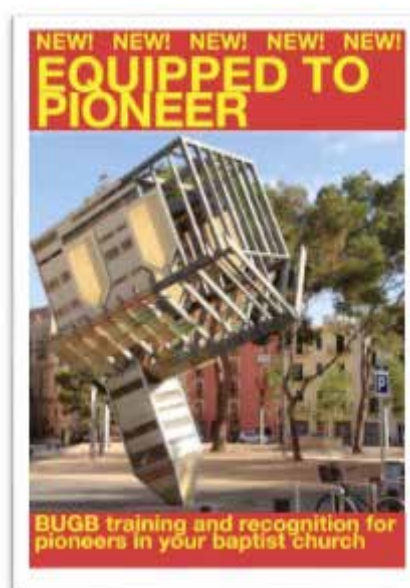
The partners involved in helping to fulfil the Pioneer Collective vision include:

- » Baptist Union of Great Britain
- » Regional Associations
- » BMS World Mission
- » Light Project
- » Urban Expression
- » Incarnate Network
- » Fresh Streams

Since January 2014 we have been working with the Associations to identify some of these new pioneers. We have been gathering their stories on the website as an inspiration to others, and have been finding more-established

pioneers to be a 'coach' for them on their pioneering journeys. These new pioneers include accredited ministers sensing a call to do something different and church members being prompted to go and begin something new.

What they have in common, however, is the willingness to take risks and to be sent beyond the fringe of the church to advance the Kingdom in new and creative ways. They seek to follow the



incarnational example of Jesus, and some of them have even 'moved into the neighbourhood' (see John 1:14 in *The Message* paraphrase). They have sowed seeds of the gospel by being willing to lovingly give time and energy to the people that they meet; and they nurture Christian communities that are relevant to the people whose lives are being transformed by the living God.

The Pioneer Collective is providing opportunities for pioneers to gather together for mutual support, for example at the recent Fresh Streams conference. We are also finding placements for those wanting to test the call and experience a pioneering context first hand and helping pioneers to access appropriate training opportunities. One of these is the *Equipped to Pioneer* course which leads to national recognition as a Baptist pioneer and is made up of modules provided by Crucible and the Baptist Colleges.

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The Pioneer Collective has also facilitated a partnership with Fresh Expressions to deliver the successful Mission Shaped Ministry course in an online format. This is designed for groups in churches who want to explore together how to begin something pioneering in their own context. The aim is for it to feel a bit like a small group study, but instead of using a DVD the training is delivered live and interactive over the internet. It is hoped a pilot course will start in September 2015, and more details about MSM Online can be found on our website.

This has all been made possible by Home Mission who made a grant, alongside BMS, to support the contribution to the Pioneer Collective being made by Chris Duffett from the Light Project. The Eastern Baptist Association, also funded by Home Mission, has generously allowed Simon Goddard, one of their regional ministers, to co-ordinate the work of the Pioneer Collective.

Chris Duffett



Simon Goddard

Maybe you have recently begun to pioneer, or perhaps you are sensing a call to serve God in this way? Whatever stage you are at in the pioneering journey we invite you to contact us and share your story.

**Simon Goddard**  
Coordinator,  
Eastern Baptist Association

**The Pioneer Collective**  
[www.pioneercollective.org.uk](http://www.pioneercollective.org.uk)  
[www.facebook.com/pioneercollective](http://www.facebook.com/pioneercollective)  
[www.twitter.com/baptistpioneers](http://www.twitter.com/baptistpioneers)  
0845 475 4003

**Please pray:**

- » Give thanks for the funding which has enabled the launch of this exciting initiative
- » That people in our Union who may be sensing a call to serve God in this way will have the courage to test this calling
- » For Simon, Chris and other experienced pioneers as they support, encourage and equip each other
- » Give thanks for the new expressions of Christian community which are emerging and the renewal being found in existing congregations

***“We need an explosion of new pioneers”***

**Lynn Green**

**General Secretary, Baptist Union of Great Britain**

