



Sharing Our Story...



## Union Street Baptist Church, Crewe

**Union Street Baptist Church has been a Christian presence in Crewe for more than 100 years, reaching out and connecting with the local community in a number of different ways, including Brownies, Rainbows, Beavers, Cubs, coffee mornings, choir and 'T Club'. Here, church secretary Helen Birtles shares the story of T Club and how the church has stepped up to serve the community when funding stopped.**

"T club was originally started here by Age UK but when their funding ran out, members of the church decided to continue running the group. The members are all retired people from the local community who enjoy meeting together and sharing their experiences in a pleasant environment. Friendships have been formed which continue beyond the walls of the church building, with members keeping in contact by phone even if they are unable to visit each other. The leader keeps contact with absent and/or sick members by phone and members are encouraged to call if they have problems. We meet once a fortnight on a Monday afternoon. Each session begins with a cup of tea and a catch-up chat followed by an activity and finished with another cup of tea and some delicious cakes provided by church members. Over the years, activities have included games such as dominoes, beetle, Countdown and musical bingo. At times, our volunteers run craft sessions including making greeting cards, painting and flower arranging.

From time to time, members are asked to suggest activities they would like. As a result, we have invited visitors to entertain us, such as Guide dog trainers, a fireman and a Scottish dancing group, as well as church members willing to accompany hymn and community singing. On occasion the members have provided their own entertainment by reading their favourite poem, guessing the members from childhood photos and talking about an item that holds precious memories for them. Our members and helpers contributed articles for a booklet, 'T club Life Stories' which was a great success and copies were purchased for family and friends.

On special occasions, we start earlier and have a buffet lunch, a time for even more fun and laughter. Cake providers and drivers are invited on these occasions as a "thank you" as without their help we could not continue to provide companionship and fun for those few hours a month. We are pleased that our T Club is working well in the community and hope to become involved in new projects in the coming months."

### **For your consideration, reflection and prayers:**

In what ways does your church connect with the local community outside and beyond Sunday services?  
Where has a need in your community stopped being met through 'funding reductions' and could your church respond?  
How good is the church at care and friendship for the elderly?