

# Sharing Our Story...

## Aintree Baptist Church, Liverpool



**Geoff Bentley is a Baptist Minister in Aintree, where two congregations have come together as one church. Here, Geoff shares the story of developments in the prayer life and the young life in the church:**

“This year has seen us attempting to balance our resources between enhancing the building and outreach to the community. We have had so much work done on the premises that it has required many hours to supervise the work that needed to be done, but as you will know, the life of a church is not simply in upgrading a building!

We started monthly evening prayer meetings last year which have been going well, and in October we also started a Morning Prayer meeting on Tuesdays for those who don't like to come out at night. We hold this after our coffee morning and this combination also seems to be working well, although it is early days. I put together a prayer diary so that everyone in church gets prayed for at least once a month, but as so many requests were coming in for prayer, often for family and friends, I had to do a separate update to go out every two weeks for the more urgent requests.

Since the two churches merged in March 2017, we have set up a programme of teaching for our children. We started with just one or two children and now we have a group of eight who are regularly with us, their ages ranging from two to 11 years old (and two more on the way!) When we first started we felt it would be good to teach the children the stories of the Old Testament which many of them were not familiar with. We didn't use any particular material but simply told the stories and then engaged the children through games or other fun activities. Recently, we have welcomed Jenni and Phill McGowan on board to support us with planning our teaching programme. Using the same series of teaching that the adults are receiving, they have adapted it making it relevant to the children's ages. We've been so encouraged to see the children's confidence grow as they've got to know each other and got to know us. They now love bringing their homework back each week and standing at the front of the church to show the adults! They've also enjoyed singing songs they have learnt and doing their 'prayer drill' before we pray for them! We've also been amazed at how well they've learnt their scripture memory verses, especially the fruits of the Spirit. We've had many comments from their families saying how much their children love coming to Sunday School.

We're very excited about the future of our children's work, so much so that we're planning to start a baby and toddler group in the new year in the hope that we'll see some more children and families coming along. So keep praying and watch this space!”

**Reflective Questions: In what ways does your church connect with children and young people? Does your church have a programme / process for growing disciples from an early age? How would you describe the prayer life of your church?**

**Home Mission: Supporting, equipping and enabling churches in God's Mission**

