

# Sharing Our Story...

## Forest Gate Baptist Church, Blackpool



**The church community at Forest Gate Baptist Church, based in the heart of Blackpool, take seriously God's call to 'Love God and Love Their Neighbours'. Here, one of their deacons Gill Gascoigne, shares something of the church's story over the course of the last year:**

"As a church, we have experienced many ups and downs during the past 12 months but have all tried to adopt a positive attitude. We have encouraged our fellowship and others to keep contact with each other in whatever means possible. We're not a big group but there are some big hearts! It's been very encouraging to welcome some new friends who don't attend church but who are keen to be involved in various ways. Our prayer is that they will see and get to know Jesus for themselves.

We've taken a number of steps to stay connected and build each other up during this time. We started a church WhatsApp group, sending out daily encouragements; we hold weekly 'Prayer & Share' and 'Hangout' sessions where we come together on Zoom to swap news, hold quizzes and learn more about the Bible. On special days of the year, we have taken out goodie bags to our ABC Mums & Toddler group. We produced a book of our daily encouragements and gave away 80 in total; Our Pastor keeps us positive with his Sunday messages and encouragements. His evangelistic approach with voluntary contacts such as the Police, Army Cadets and other organisations have proved to be a valuable asset in sharing the Good News of Jesus."

Pastor of the church, John Rogers, shares a recent example that serves to highlight the impact of his work in the community through his role as a police chaplain: "On one occasion, I was called with a police officer to check on the welfare of a lady who was at high risk of suicide. I was able to build a rapport with her and realised she had a Catholic background but, following a significant bereavement had not been to church in some years. I was able to pray with her and connect her to a local church in her area, where I was informed by the minister that she had booked to attend an in-person service.

The police officer I was with shared with me in the police van afterwards that he felt my presence had made a real difference and we then had a lengthy conversation about a pastoral issue in his own life, which concluded with me praying for him in the van. This incident happened in the last couple of weeks so I am looking forward to following these encounters up to see where they might lead for the benefit of all involved and the extension of the kingdom."



It's amazing how God uses us as we make ourselves available beyond the walls of the church building - how might God want to work through you at this time?