

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

