

## Blackburn Baptist Church, Lancs



At the beginning of 2014, after more than 100 years as a worshipping community in one building, Leamington Road Baptist Church in Blackburn held a service there for the final time, before embarking on a missional move into a new location. Chris Gee, of the Lancashire Telegraph followed the story, and writes...

“The final service at Leamington Road Baptist Church took place last week but the 80 or so church members are positive about 2014 and beyond after the move from their historic building on Granville Road, Blackburn to Pleckgate Community School.



The decision to sell the building, which opened in 1895, has been nearly two years in the making and was made by a consensus of the members, who have autonomous control of all church decisions. Spiralling maintenance and repair costs, which were anticipated to run into hundreds of thousands of pounds in the next few years, were the primary driver for the move.

One of the church’s deacons, Paul Wicks, said, “The church has an immense history and has served our fellowship well for generations but after evaluating the future costs we thought it best to sell and move on. The building is in relatively good shape but in the medium to longer

term the costs of repairs and maintenance would have been very high. He went on: “We have hired space in the school for three months but I anticipate we will be there for a while longer. That being said there are plans to look for other suitable premises for the church in north-west Blackburn.”

The land on which the church was built in the 1890s was vacated by Blackburn Rovers who played for several seasons at Leamington Road, immediately before moving to Ewood Park. In a delightful twist of fate, the church celebrated its centenary on the very day Rovers won the Premier league title in May 1995.

The inaugural Sunday morning service at the church’s new venue, Pleckgate Community School took place tin January this year, and the church’s weekly activities have been transferred to other locations in the Corporation Park Ward area. Rather than shut the doors and disperse quietly, this move sees a congregation reaching out into new territory, with the same heart to share the love of God within this new community.



*“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’ Matthew 28: 18-20*

### For your thoughts and prayers:

- Is God prompting your church to reach into new areas and communities?
- Do you have a heart for church planting or new expressions of church life ? What could this look like for you?