

## Ellesmere Port Community Ministry



**Rose Uitterdijk is Community Minister in Ellesmere Port, and here she shares the story of the mission and work that is ongoing there....**

“Thanks to Home Mission and the support of NWBA there has been a Baptist expression of mission in Ellesmere Port for the last seven years or so. I have been working here as Community Minister for three years and absolutely love what I am doing. My work is varied and I am involved in a number of projects and activities. When I came I wanted to be an extra pair of hands that would strengthen and support the work already being done and so I have been keen to work in partnership wherever possible. The last three years has also been a time for us to sow seeds and to see what emerges and as a response to the tiny fragile shoots we have seen growing is a project called CrossOver. This has two elements; CrossOver Mentoring and job opportunities for those looking to make a change in their lives (especially ex-offenders) and CrossOver Community, a place for people to belong. Life is never dull and I love what we do despite the challenges and disappointments along the way.

One really good thing happened in Ellesmere Port recently. In fact I am sure lots of good things have happened, most of which we will never get to hear about, but I want to big it up for some of our young people. For two days in July some pupils from Catholic High and the Academy got together to work on a Community project called 'Engage'. Some of the pupils worked on a brilliant art piece for the Port Arcades shopping centre which is open for the public to see.

The rest of the pupils prepared an event, a VE day celebration to which they invited some older members of the community. On Tuesday the students baked bread, made cakes, learned war time songs, wrote poetry and learned about VE day from those who had experienced it first-hand. They also made decorations to make Trinity church look festive.

On Wednesday, the morning was spent making scones and sandwiches, decorating the cakes and getting the building ready for the 50 guests who arrived ready for lunch at 12. Students sat with the guests and talked of war times; they made sure a steady supply of tea and coffee was on hand and were brilliant at showing kindness and consideration. We had a sing along, led by the students, they presented their poetry, and some of them even had a go at ball room dancing! It was so lovely to see how hard the pupils worked and to see different generations eating, talking and learning from one another. It was a picture of the kingdom with older and younger sharing, laughing, serving. All in all it was a great success and most thanks go to the wonderful pupils....



### For your thoughts and prayers:

- How does your church relate to other churches / ministries in the local area? How do you 'bless, strengthen and support what is already going on'?
- Beyond 'the Sunday service' where and how could young and old come together in your community? Could you as a church be a catalyst for drawing people together from different age groups / stages of life / contexts?