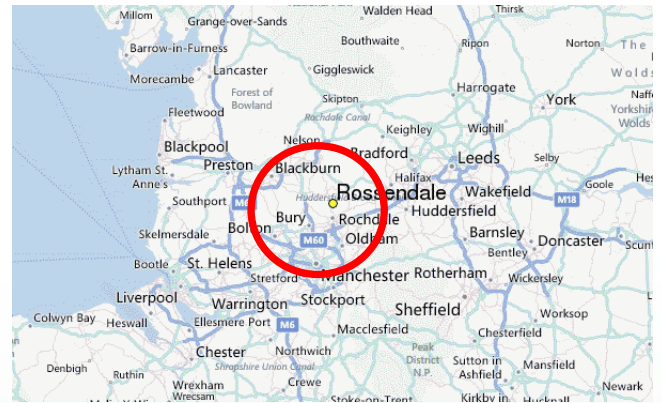


Edgeside Baptist Church, Waterfoot



Edgeside is a former council housing estate in the Waterfoot area of the Rossendale Valley, Lancashire. One of the things that had troubled Edgeside Baptist's minister Glenn Scott for a number of years was how to get people who come to church events such as fun days, Christmas fairs and midweek activities such as toddler groups and children clubs begin to engage with the Christian faith. There may be many answers to this question but one answer was 'let's simply make church more fun.' Glenn explains:



"We wanted to make our regular Sunday service more accessible and fun for people to attend, yet still allow them to engage with the Christian faith and something of what church is traditionally about. In addition, we wanted people to discover that Christians are loving and friendly people. Although on a theological basis there is no reason why this meant Sundays had to change, for practical reasons it made sense. We already had a group of people attending including musicians and those who would help with catering and other roles. So our services began to include more and more fun and some Sundays we really went to town."

One new attender was impressed and made the following comments on her facebook timeline on Sunday afternoons. "Red nose Sunday at church- dancing, eating pizza and cakes etc, telling jokes (and throwing balls at people who told naff ones) oh and wearing red noses obviously! Brill day. ace church xxx"

"Church service today- kids squirting shaving foam beards onto men, Xmas quiz, decorate Xmas trees in under a minute followed by 3 course Xmas dinner- best church ever!"

This was Alison Ashworth, who had come to the church's "King's Own group" when she was growing up. In the years that had passed, Alison had often attended churches but they were nothing like she encountered at Edgeside. Sadly, she found they were not child-friendly for her daughter Lexie. This was why she decided to visit her childhood church Edgeside again, and since then she and Lexie have not looked back.

A challenging conversation with Glenn resulted in Alison realising that she needed to add discipleship of Christ to her belief in God and Christ. Soon she was attending Baptism classes. However, by this time Alison and Lexie were not the only members of the Ashworth family to attend the church. Alison had been telling her mum about the church that was like no other and mum, Colette also began to attend. We might say the story ends with both Colette and Alison being baptised in July 2015; but then baptism is really just the beginning of the story....

For your thoughts and prayers:

- How is your church perceived by the local community? And is that perception true to the reality?
- What steps could you take to engage in 'fun' to reach your community?

