



# NWBA Sharing Our Story...

North Western Baptist Association

## Edge Side Baptist Church, Waterfoot

In the lead-up to Christmas 2016, Edgeside Baptist got involved in an event called 'Carols on the railway.' It was 'full steam ahead' on this mission initiative, and Glenn Scott, minister at Edge Side, gives us the lowdown: "This was initially promoted by our local Methodist circuit and involved chartering a steam train. It was the children's group leaders that first decided to make it a Christmas treat for the children and then others also said they wanted to go. It finished up with over 40 Edgesiders boarding the train for the event. We almost took over a whole carriage. We had a few of the older people, the middle-aged and families aboard; the youngest was only two and the oldest was 86. There were long time church members and those who have only visited occasionally for Messy Church or family services.

Our destination was Bethlehem (sometimes known as Bury!) Aboard the train were a young couple 'Mary and Joseph', I believe they were named. Apparently they were visiting Bethlehem for a census. I felt a little sorry for Mary she looked tired from the journey and she looked like she was expecting a baby very soon. Anyway, they were a nice couple, going from table to table introducing themselves, posing for selfies and so on. Another guy with a red suit and white beard was also aboard giving gifts to the children.

Once in Bethlehem, there was some carol singing and short talk and sure enough, Mary and Joseph appeared and she had given birth to a baby boy. Back aboard the train, Mary and Joseph came to show us the child. We were fortunate because others came by who seemed to be struggling to find them. First there was a bunch of shepherds and then some Kings from the east.

All in all it was quite a trip for a cold winter's evening in December. One three-year-old was totally convinced she had met Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus, claiming she heard him cry (it was only a doll, but don't tell her!) Edgeside Baptist is always looking for new tools to engage people with the Christian community and the gospel story in fun ways. Whether it be Messy Church, a trip on a train or a church service, we try to make the church community a fun place to be. Not only did we all enjoy our fantasy trip to Bethlehem and the nativity, but since the trip two of the mothers and daughters who attended have visited church activities more frequently.

### **For your consideration, reflection and prayers:**

How could you use creative ways to share the good news of Jesus? What does outreach 'out in the community' look like for your church? Could your church gatherings be considered 'fun' and 'seeker-friendly'?