

# Sharing Our Story...

## Farnworth Baptist Church



Farnworth is situated three miles south-west of Bolton. The church building is located just outside the town centre and was extended and refurbished in 2012. Since then, it has become a hub of the local community and numbers attending on a Sunday morning have grown steadily. The local area is one of the top 5% of most deprived areas of the UK and the church has developed its ministry to the whole community, including a recent opportunity at the community Christmas light switch on, as John Bradbury explains....

“November 29th was the evening of the Christmas lights switch on in Farnworth. For the second year running, Farnworth Baptist Church was invited to host a pop-up coffee shop as part of the event. The Well Coffee Shop is the heart of our church building and is the hub around which all of our community activities take place. The coffee shop team set up the pop-up coffee shop under the town centre canopy serving home made cake and hot drinks.

Associate minister, Rev Helen Bradbury, is currently studying an FdA in Theology, Mission and Evangelism with the Light Project in Chester. As part of this course, she has developed a range of outreach activities to engage the people attending the event and a team of people from the church were involved in the various activities she had planned.

Team members offered free hugs and prayers and some gave Christmas cards with pre-written messages of hope to people who they felt led to. We also invited people to sign a birthday card which we had on a table by the coffee shop. When they asked why, we explained it was a birthday card for Jesus and this provoked conversations about the real meaning and hope of Christmas. We gave out invitations to our Christmas celebrations at the church but our goal was to make people think again about the Christmas story and to begin to realise the significance of the baby in the manger, God’s gift for all humanity.”

**Reflective Questions:** What are the upcoming key community events in your area? How could your church connect with those organising this? In what ways could your church be a visible blessing to the community? In what ways does your congregation engage with civic life?

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