

Dukinfield Baptist Church, Tameside



For the last two years local community radio station Tameside Radio has been growing its audience around Tameside, broadcasting popular music, local news and interviews. During that time the station had given permission to Samson Ake, who has been the minister in training in Ashton-Under-Lyne's Baptist Church, to broadcast a Christian music show called 'Love your neighbour', with local interviews and news from the churches around Tameside. The show has steadily increased in popularity and in the past year Jonny Hirst, minister at Dukinfield Baptist Church, has joined Samson in producing and presenting the show. Jonny picks up the story...

"We believe that being able to produce and broadcast a Gospel-driven show on an otherwise secular radio station is an exciting and valuable opportunity that has been given as a gift to the churches around Tameside. What makes this such an exciting and enjoyable experience is not only that we are radio enthusiasts, but knowing that we are broadcasting to a largely non-Christian audience. This gives us an incredible opportunity to reach those who will generally not cross the threshold of our church doors with a message of good news, hope, and a challenge to view God, the Church, and the world differently. Incredibly, we have been given the freedom to broadcast what we want, but we know that this also comes with a degree of responsibility too. So we are taking this opportunity to be openly evangelistic whilst also trying to be sensitive and culturally relevant to our audience.



Our playlist is varied playing a mixture of contemporary worship and gospel songs and hymns, to more widely known pop songs, which lend themselves to us to explore some form of spiritual meaning. An example of this could be the song 'Open Arms' by the Manchester based group Elbow. Well known by most people, as it was prominent in the pop scene in 2012, the song is not 'Christian song', but clearly evokes thoughts and imagery around the parable of the prodigal son. So we might use the song to strengthen a thought on the theme of grace, or perhaps reconciliation between families, or between ourselves and God. We also encourage contribution from other church leaders, and try to share community views and opinions. We are very grateful to the new station controller and presenter Gareth Cottrell, who is a Christian and has put time and effort in showing us the ropes and helping us improve the show.

As a minister being part funded by Home Mission had enabled the church to call me to 20 hours per week rather than the 10 hours that they could afford alone, which has made a vast difference to what I can undertake for the church and allows me to engage in wider community work. In the position of minister at Dukinfield Baptist I have been able to engage in voluntary chaplaincy work at Willow Wood hospice, producing this evangelistic show for Tameside Radio, working with our resident pre-school at the church, and Home Mission funding has allowed me time to form ecumenical partnerships between other churches in Dukinfield and around Tameside.

Recently, on seeing the community engagement opportunities and the mission potential here, the NWBA have pledged to increase the funding the church receives, and the church, so encouraged by this, has risen to the challenge and pledged to match the figure received through Home Mission, meaning that moving forward I'll now be able to work 60% time. Dukinfield Baptist Church survived without a minister for the previous six years before my appointment just over eighteen months ago, but because of Home Mission all of this community engagement has been possible alongside the work of building up the local congregation."

If you would like to listen to 'Love Your Neighbour' on Tameside Radio then tune in to 103.6FM in the Manchester area on a Sunday evening between 7-9pm, or visit tamesideradio.com and click on 'listen again'. Or even try the Tameside Radio App!

For your thoughts and prayers:

- Are there 'outside the box' ways you and your church could share the Gospel with your community?
- How well connected is your church to the community it is trying to impact?