



Little Hill Church 50th Anniversary 1972-2022

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever
Hebrews 13:8





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'Not one of all the good promises the LORD our God gave us has failed.' Joshua 23:14

On this 50th Anniversary of Little Hill Church we are grateful to God for many things.

We thank God for His faithfulness in establishing and sustaining the work over five decades. We have proved the text of Joshua 23:14 that 'not one of all the good promises the LORD our God gave us has failed.'

God has blessed us with a body of people eager to serve him together and remarkably united in love and joyful witness. He has enabled us to sow the seed of his word and to reach people of all ages. He has given us an evangelistic heart. He



has added to the church over the years, many who have been saved.

God has given us a building that has served us well. He has amply supplied our financial needs enabling

us to be generous to our gospel partners overseas. He has kept the church faithful in putting Christ and His word at the centre. The church has been committed to proclaiming the whole counsel of God so that many have 'grown up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ' (Ephesians 4:15).

God has done this through four key ministries of men called to devote themselves wholly to the pastoral ministry. And he has done this through our Elders, Deacons and very many dedicated church workers. God has encouraged us through our fellowship with like-minded churches who have stood with us and prayed for us. We are grateful to many men who have preached for us and faithfully brought God's word to us.

The God who has blessed us in these many ways has supremely blessed us in his Son who is the ground of all our future hopes: 'He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?' (Romans 8:32)

We continue therefore to look to the God of all grace, to 'Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday and today and for ever' (Hebrews 13:8) and we pledge ourselves to serve Him for all the years to come. 'Give thanks to the LORD for he is good; his love endures for ever' 1 Chron. 16 (34).

Little Hill Church Elders 2022

1970s *'During the 1970s the church grew and the work among students was especially blessed by God'.*

In June 1972 Gareth Crossley joined Bethel Church, Wigston, as an Associate Pastor. Bethel Church was hoping to plant a church on Little Hill Estate: some members were already meeting for prayer at a home on the estate and others were engaged in house-to-house evangelism. Gareth, his wife Joan and their three small children moved to Little Hill in October 1972.

A weekly prayer and Bible study was soon established. On 5th November 1972 the first worship service was held in the hall of Little Hill Infants' School. About a dozen members from Bethel were regularly present in support of the small but growing number of people gathering from the estate. During school holidays, worship was conducted in the British Legion's Room of Remembrance on Launceston Road.

By September 1973 there were over twenty believers committed to the congregation on Little Hill. With the full support of the church at Bethel, Gareth Crossley and Michael O'Mahoney moved from Bethel to become the Elders of the new Little Hill Church.



The land on the corner of Launceston Road and Redruth Avenue, originally earmarked for a petrol station, came back on the market. The members of Bethel borrowed £26,000 to purchase the land and divided it into two: one half to be used for the construction of Bethel flats (sheltered housing for elderly Christians), the other rented to Little Hill Church at the cost of £1 per month. Bethel's Pastor, Harry Sutton, learned of a wooden building for sale and a team of men dismantled the building (24 x 24ft), transported it in Bethel's removal van and erected it on the newly acquired



land. The permanent brick building was eventually constructed around this wooden hut.

A constitution for the new church was formulated. Some key features were the plurality and parity of the Eldership and no formal membership (membership being recognised in all who loved the Lord Jesus and were committed to Little Hill Church). The Breaking of Bread was celebrated fortnightly at the midweek meeting. It was a moving occasion when Fred Freer, a believer for several years, with tears running down his cheeks took the bread for the first time and gave it to the congregation.

A large proportion of the church was composed of young families. There was a crèche at a nearby home and children's work on two evenings a week. The church became well known on the estate.



Work on the church building started in 1974. Financial resources were limited but Gerald Davies, a qualified master-builder from Bethel Church, trained a number of the Little Hill Church men in basic bricklaying and gave up his weekends and holidays to direct construction.

During the 1970s the church grew and the work among students was especially blessed by God. By the end of the decade nineteen families were walking to church – a significant witness in itself.



Once the Bethel flats were built and occupied, some of the residents joined the church which improved the age balance of the congregation. Even the four Elders, Allan East, Alan Stenfalt, Barrie Cooke and Gareth Crossley, were only in their thirties. In these early years, the Lord was among his people and it was a time of growth and unity.

In 1980, recognising Alan Stenfalt's gift of preaching and teaching, the congregation felt that either Gareth or Alan should move on to a church planting ministry. On the basis of Acts 13:1–3 it was decided that Gareth, the more experienced of the two, should move on.

Alan became the full-time, financially-supported Teaching Elder in September 1980.

Gareth Crossley
Pastor: 1972-1980

1980s *'The Bible spoke afresh with its amazing message of the grace of God'.*



One sunny, summer Lord's Day in 1973, I walked up to the British Legion and found a church was meeting there. I had never heard of Little Hill Church, but the moment I sat down, I had the overwhelming impression that I had come home. God was very real that day. I was extremely conscious of an unseen hand guiding me. The world appeared wonderfully insignificant and eternity near at hand. The Bible spoke afresh with its amazing message of the grace of God.

Later, as I read from the letters of Paul, it seemed as though God was addressing me

personally. I read of a Saviour who died for the ungodly, that 'there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' (Romans 8:1) and that He was all the righteousness I needed. As these truths were applied to my heart, I was quite overcome and could only weep for joy that God could so love a sinner. The world was all marvellously new, the people of God seemed to be a beautiful people and every meeting of the church was eagerly anticipated. I remember thinking, 'It's like being in love.'



And that was not all. Some six weeks later God graciously brought salvation to my wife Ann and since then to another seven members of my family. I spent thirteen years at Little Hill, during which time God called me to serve Him, first as a Deacon and then as an Elder of the church. I was privileged to enjoy some wonderful fellowship with those who served with me. I was also privileged to witness the faithfulness of God in the way He provided for us throughout the building programme: sometimes we had nothing in our account except faith!

More thrilling still has been the sight of the 'living stones' who, over the years, have been built into a house for God. Nothing can surpass the delight of seeing the joy in the faces of those who have newly found, in Jesus, a loving and mighty Saviour. If you don't know Him, the Good News of forgiveness of sins and peace with God is still being proclaimed by Little Hill Church; salvation is still freely offered by a God who delights in mercy. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. My prayer is that Little Hill Church will continue to preach this gospel, in all its beauty and simplicity, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, to future generations, until Jesus comes again.

Alan Stenfalt Pastor: 1980-1986

1990s *'I hear you are going to Little Hill. You'll be all right there.'*

As I arrived in Huddersfield station at 5.30pm one Friday in 1986, having spent the week studying at the London Theological Seminary, I happened to meet a Christian friend who said to me, 'I hear you are going to Little Hill. You'll be all right there.' I wondered how he knew that I would be 'all right' at Little Hill, but what he said proved correct because that was my experience as minister of Little Hill Church for over fifteen years.

And yet, for four months in 1985 it had seemed that Little Hill was the last place in the world to which I would be going. My wife, Elizabeth, and I disagreed during all of that time about the rightness of going south to the Midlands. She considered that there were evangelical churches in need of Ministers in the North of England and that we should stay in that area where our ageing parents lived. However, through the providential visit of a wise Christian friend, God clearly showed us both that it was His will for us to go to Wigston, Leicestershire. How glad we are now about that.



When people ask me about Little Hill Church, I say that it is a very faithful Reformed church and that we both learned a lot there – that in every aspect of Christian life and church life, the truth of the Bible has to be central, serving as the criterion for every judgment and decision. In addition, the church was of the New Testament pattern, an independent congregation practising self-government under God, while having good relationships with similar Reformed churches.

The two Elders of that time, Barrie Cooke and Faqir Kallow, helped me to accept these principles and the church members reinforced them in my mind. I also found a very healthy love for the Lord and for the whole church family: this continued to grow during our time there.



Certain very worthwhile activities began during our years at Little Hill Church: Senior Citizens' teas, Mums and Toddlers (now Little Ones), the Ladies' Bible Study and the Monday Meeting (for study of the Bible and eating together). All these brought rich contacts with many people, believers and unbelievers and, over the years, we saw

people become Christians through them.

The children's evangelistic meetings were already well established when we arrived. Several of our young people began to attend Christian camps in Wales. Soon the churches in Oadby and Wigston began organising their own annual camps in Wales and these have been very fruitful. Our two daughters, Katharine (then 12 years old) and Ruth (11), both grew spiritually in a remarkable way through this effective work with young people in the church. In addition, in the late 1980s, we were able to institute periods of evangelistic outreach on Little Hill estate with special speakers and distributing testimony leaflets.



Elizabeth and I found Little Hill to be a most attractive, loving, Christ-centred, evangelical church with a real concern for individual people. When I twice had periods of severe clinical depression, the Elders, Deacons and members showed a very understanding, caring attitude for which I shall always be grateful. Although we feel that God was very much behind our move in January 2002 to Reeth in the Yorkshire Dales, a very different, rural congregation which we have served since, we will never forget our time at Little Hill Church. I can identify with the words of the Apostle Paul when I think about Little Hill Church: 'I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ' (Philippians 1:3, 8).

David Gregson
Pastor: 1986–2001

2000s *'God blessed the church with a great sense of unity and the membership grew'.*

It was difficult to imagine another man filling David's shoes but in 2001 the church embarked on searching for a new Pastor. More than eleven years passed before Joshua Harrison was called to be our full-time salaried Pastor-Teacher but during this time God blessed the church with a great sense of unity and the membership grew. The Elders remained committed to the scriptural pattern of plurality of Elders but also to the setting apart of men for teaching and pastoral ministry (1 Corinthians 9:14, 1 Timothy 4:13-15, Ephesians 4:11).

Retirement and voluntary redundancy enabled three of the four Elders to increase their service in the church and beyond. This was a great help to the stability of the church and its pastoral care during this period. There were also beach missions, evangelistic camps, door to door and open-air work and school assemblies. Missions were also shared with other local churches.

Faqir Kallow helped to maintain a sense of continuity as the Sunday morning 'anchorman' – giving a friendly welcome, the notices and a pastoral prayer for the fellowship. He also did a sterling job in booking preachers who brought biblical



exposition and many series of consecutive messages. From outside the church, Nigel Brunsdon, Peter Anderson, John Todd, Gareth Crossley, Stephen Carter, Simon Clarke and Roger Hitchings all visited regularly and opened the Scriptures.

The church was also indebted to 'home-grown' preachers: God both added to the church men who were able to preach and enabled others to exercise their

preaching gift more fully. Each Sunday Little Hill Church is still able to send out a number of men to support smaller churches.



The Deacons oversaw building work including accessible toilets and disabled access to the church. There was also a new wooden ceiling in the main hall

which improved both the look and the acoustics of the interior. Little Hill Church

loves to sing praise to God and 2009 saw a new edition of our 'Supplement' to be used alongside 'Christian Hymns'. The weekly welcome sheet, with news and information about what is coming up in the life of the church, has been very helpful to inform the fellowship and stimulate prayer.

Evangelism continued to be a major focus in the life of the church (summer camps, Bible Clubs, Easter and Christmas services) and for all age groups from the very young (Little Ones at Little Hill) to the young at heart (Senior Citizens' teas). Kids' Club for primaries thrived and every Sunday morning there was a Bible story for children during the service, followed by 'Lion's Cubs' (our 'Sunday School'), where children engaged with a Bible-based activity.



Friday Club for age 10–14 years involved Bible stories and teaching combined with friendship and fun. 'Park Life' involved sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with local young people in the Wigston parks and on the streets during the summer months. This work is ongoing and still leads to lively and encouraging conversations.

God blessed the church with a number of conversions and baptisms (from ages 13 to 85!). There were also several members who went home to glory and were missed greatly. God also blessed the church with many willing workers who contributed to a myriad of tasks, often unseen. Unity and love and gratitude prevailed in the fellowship and they looked forward with confidence because 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever' Hebrews 13:8.

Little Hill Church
Elders: 2001-2012

2010s to present day *'Every anniversary that we celebrate as a church is the story of God's great faithfulness'.*

I had known of Little Hill Church for many years before I ever became involved in the work here. I grew up in Thurlaston, a village out towards Hinckley, Leicestershire, and attended the chapel there.

I used to visit Little Hill when we had joint meetings: there was always a very warm and genuine welcome and a blessing sharing ministry and fellowship together.

In 2008, my family and I moved onto a street in South Wigston... only a few doors down from a family that worshipped at Little Hill. We would wave to each other as we left on Sunday mornings to attend our separate services (we were still at Thurlaston Chapel). I was a serving Police Officer with Leicestershire Police which involved shifts over the weekends. On some Sundays this could make things a little tight getting to church with the family and then having to quickly get on duty. We started to pray about the situation: we wanted to know where the Lord would have us worship and serve, and somewhere for our three young daughters to join in with children's meetings more locally. The Lord clearly led us to Little Hill Church, having given many encouragements to us in his word, and through sharing and praying it through with our pastor at Thurlaston, my dad Nigel Harrison. In March 2010, we started to attend Little Hill Church.



We were very warmly received by the fellowship and made to feel at home. There were things for us to get involved with – helping with the Kids' Club and Youth Club on a Friday, and I was sharing some of the midweek and Sunday ministry with other men in the church. These were times to grow more into what the Lord had in store for us, and to get to know folks at the church.



In January 2013, I was appointed as an Elder at Little Hill, and then in August 2013 as the full-time Pastor. The Lord so clearly led the way in this – giving me very clear guidance in his word, through the support and help from my wife, Chloe, the

prayerful consideration and support of the other Elders, and the great encouragement of the church fellowship. I had the privilege of studying on the Evangelical Movement of Wales Theological Training course for four years whilst serving as the Pastor, and this was a huge blessing and help to me. It was also wonderful to start in ministry in a fellowship that knew the Bible well and had a great

amount of love and patience for someone starting out in ministry. It has been exciting to be part of what was already happening in the life of the church, but also to see new things starting up and new folks joining us as the Lord worked to save them or they moved to join us.



I greatly enjoyed my time as a Police Officer, serving Her Majesty the Queen, but there is a greater enjoyment and delight in serving the King of Kings! In more recent years, I have become a chaplain with Leicestershire Police, and really enjoy seeing friends I used to work with but in a very different context now!

It has been very humbling to see how the Lord has been working to bless us at Little Hill. He has been gracious to provide so generously for the needs of the church, allowing us to continue supporting many other gospel activities near and far. I am continually blessed by the willingness of God's people here to serve in and support the work and witness to this estate, and they continue to be a great blessing and encouragement to me and my family – which has grown with two boys joining the ranks.

Every anniversary we celebrate as a church is the story of God's great faithfulness. He has done the work. Without him, we would be able to achieve nothing of any eternal significance. His constant grace and goodness towards us have kept us, his glory has delighted us, and his gospel inspired us. *'Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!'* **Ps. 115:1**

Joshua Harrison
Pastor: 2013- Present

Changes

The church has changed substantially in the last ten years. Five church officers stepped down after significant periods of service: three Deacons, Trevor Bowman, Derek McDonnell and Nick Stenfalt; and two Elders, Barrie Cooke and Paul Linnell. Two new Deacons took up office in Sept 2016: James Harrison and Andrew



Irvine. In addition, Joshua Harrison was appointed as a salaried Pastor-Teacher in August 2013, working part-time for the church whilst he completed a four-year theological training course by extension with the Evangelical Movement of Wales. After looking so long for a Pastor from outside the church, the Lord, in His time, raised one up from within.

Numbers attending increased during this period with morning congregations reaching 70-90 and evening ones of 40-50. This increase was largely due to believers moving to us from other churches but there were also conversions. Five people were baptised in Sept 2019 and a further four in 2021/ 2022.

Membership Little Hill had enjoyed a status amongst local believers as being 'that church without a membership'. This was perhaps regarded as rather unorthodox and

dangerous! Every believer is, of course, already a member of 'THE church' and this is expressed outwardly by commitment to a local church. Those so committed to Little Hill Church were regarded as members and shepherded as in any other church. All members and officers were subject to church discipline and involved in significant decision-making (such as calling a Pastor). The confusion was really to do with the lack of formality with which membership was announced, recorded and ended.

In 2018 a new, more formal recognition of membership was introduced with a church booklet explaining the privileges and responsibilities of membership and including the church Basis of Faith, Constitution and Trust Deed. This was welcomed by members as a positive move which has given clarity. The formal membership currently stands at 82 (2022) compared with 59 in 2010.

Church Giving

Reflecting numerical growth, church giving has also increased. In 2015-16 it rose by 22% and a further 10% the following year. The generosity and giving of church members reflects gratitude to God and has enabled the regular salary of a Pastor to be met, along with improvements and maintenance to the building. Little

Hill Church also supports other ministries with substantial gifts (about 22% of the church's annual income).

During the Covid Pandemic restrictions (2020 – 2021) when many churches and charities reported a substantial decrease in donations, giving at Little Hill dipped only by 10%. We rejoice that our Lord has



continued to meet our needs in this as in other ways. We pray that we may be wise and faithful stewards of all that he has given us and that the whole congregation will live to his praise.

Covid Pandemic

During the pandemic we were grateful for the technological gifts God had given to several men in the fellowship. We began 'live-streaming' services, firstly from the vestry using a fairly basic camera before purchasing more sophisticated equipment. This allowed

excellent quality video footage of services which were recorded and uploaded to our website. These live-streamed services also served other local churches that were not yet set up online.



At first each service was viewed by hundreds of households, reflecting a hunger in the general populace for spiritual help and direction. We still have one avid viewer from Shropshire! From a maximum of more than 800 views, these figures settled into a regular pattern of 100-200 before reducing to around 100 as churches began to meet again in person. Evening services were introduced online from July 2020 via Zoom. Thursday meetings during lockdowns consisted of a recorded message on the Little Hill YouTube channel followed by a live meeting on Zoom for prayer.

The pandemic also saw helpful improvements made to the church website. This included a secure database of addresses plus links to the YouTube sermon library, the church calendar, prayer letters, the library index and other useful features such as an emailed rota reminder for those with church duties.

To maintain fellowship and cohesion, the whole church was divided up and allocated to Elders and Deacons to make regular pastoral phone calls. Zoom meetings also proved vital for fellowship, maintaining prayer and the business meetings of the church.



Our weekly notices sheet became a vital electronic link for the fellowship and continues to be distributed, with a few printed copies for those not online. It is well named the 'Little Hill Link'.

The pandemic proved a sifting time as a few people left the church and others joined us, some after tasting ministry via the website.

We are very grateful to our deacons who oversaw health and safety during the pandemic and managed numbers via a booking system on-line or by phone to ensure adherence to Government Guidelines for Safety.



New Ventures Many new ventures have begun or become more established in the last ten years:

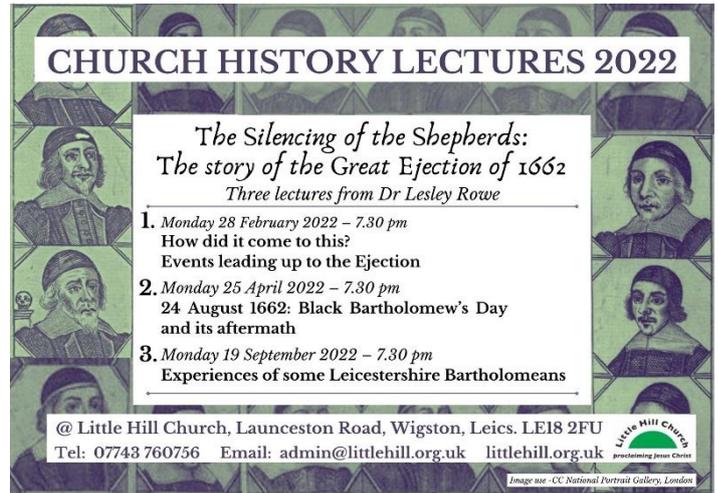
Women-to-Women: these are informal evangelistic events designed for women. Most years have seen three very popular events attracting 40-60 women. There have been BBQs, Craft Nights, Choir Evenings and always a gospel presentation.

Men's events have also continued - some in homes and others in a restaurant or at church. These have usually involved food such as Chinese meals, fish and chips, a quiz and a gospel talk. Good numbers usually

attend which is encouraging in our efforts to reach men who are perhaps more gospel-hardened than women.

SHED meetings have also been useful in developing relationships among men as well as giving some gospel opportunities. SHED meets fortnightly and stands for Support, Help, Encouragement and Development. These aims are well met with coffee and chat, occasional meals and activities such as walks, bowling, a health question-time and informative talks. There is a short devotional message from the Bible each time. SHED is much appreciated by the 10-15 men who attend.

Church History Lectures: the first of a series of Historical Lectures on the Reformation was held in February 2018. This was delivered by one of our members, Dr Lesley Rowe (Associate Fellow in History, Univ. Of Warwick). Around 80 attended from a range of local churches, to be challenged and encouraged by what God had done through John Wycliffe and his followers in the centuries prior to the Reformation. These lectures are now a popular annual fixture with three held each year and recordings made available on our website.



Foodbank: The church now has a collection facility in the foyer for a local foodbank which is managed by another local church.

Weekends Away: The Church has enjoyed four weekends away at Conference Centres in Swanwick and Lichfield. Richard Underwood, Mike Stringer



and Ed Collier provided helpful Bible teaching and there was a range of activities with something for all ages. These weekends provided good opportunities to grow in our faith and to strengthen bonds of fellowship in the church.



Friday Fellowship: In 2020 we started a popular meal, which is now called Friday Fellowship, resurrecting a pattern from earlier days of the church. At this monthly lunchtime meal there is a devotional talk and hymn singing for senior citizens in the fellowship and other friends. There is no charge for those attending.



Preaching Seminars: Ten preaching seminars were held on Saturday mornings between 2015 and 2018. Led by retired pastor and experienced preacher Mike Stringer, these seminars have encouraged the discipline of message preparation and delivery, as well as being a supportive environment for the men who preach within the fellowship.

International Students: One of our members continues to meet regularly with international students at the Globe Café in Leicester city centre.

This is joint evangelism with other churches and workers from Friends International: Students then visit Leicester city churches to 'meet the locals', share food and attend a service. From July 2021 to July 2022, for example, we have had six 'Student Sundays' at Little Hill with a total of 120 international students joining us.



They represented 18 countries (China, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, South Korea, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Turkey, Vietnam and Zimbabwe). A highlight was our Christmas Carol Service where 40 students attended and we sang "Silent Night" in nine languages (English, Chinese, Japanese, Malayalam, Indonesian, Urdu, Spanish, Romanian & Telugu). Meals in church members' homes are always a treat, and the students enjoy this very much.



Overseas Mission: By God's grace, we have been able to give a substantial proportion of our church income for the continued support of our partners in India, Malawi and France.

Little Hill Church continues to support the Blythwood Shoebox Project with collection and despatch taking place at the church and now at a member's house. Blythwood is a Scottish-based charity providing Christian care for body and soul to many in Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. Each year 2000 to 3000 boxes containing Christmas gifts and practical necessities are collected and sent for distribution to the needy in Eastern Europe.

John Eardley (on behalf of the Elders 2022)

Tolu's Story I am grateful for the last 40 years of my life. God has been truly



faithful. I grew up in Lagos, Nigeria in a religious home that believed strongly in going to church but we never prayed together as a family. Fast forward to 1998 when I got admission to study at the University and I attended a church programme where I gave my life to Jesus Christ. That didn't last very long because I was not equipped with the right tools to grow in the Lord.

Shortly after, I met my husband who wasn't saved and we carried on with life and dated until we got married in 2008 and settled in the UK.

We had our first child in 2010 and the marriage became very turbulent amidst a deep feeling of emptiness and dissatisfaction. I felt a heavy burden to pray and that drew me closer to God from 2012. I started to lead prayer at home and most importantly, prayed earnestly to God to save my husband, especially for the sake our children so they grow up in the knowledge and love of God. God heard my cry and since November 2015 he saved my husband who hasn't looked back since then. He has a deep love for God, wants to know him more and most importantly, he teaches and guides the children in the way of the Lord. God also blessed us with a second child in August 2016 after a few years of waiting. God has given me peace and the assurance that he answers prayers, he cares for us and will never leave or forsake us as long as we trust him and lean not on our own understanding. He is a faithful God.

Tolu Sunmboye

Kenny's Story



I have been a nominal Christian for many years and I remember that I first heard the gospel when I was 12 years old. While I had some understanding of the truth of the gospel, my life did not show fruit in keeping with someone that had truly been saved. I kept on living in sin and kept running from fully committing my life to Christ.

On the Lord's appointment day in November 2015 while I was at church to 'tick the box' for attendance, I became acutely aware of my sins and realised how wretched I was. The gospel became real to me!

After many years of hearing the gospel and running away from the Lord Jesus Christ, I finally surrendered to Him in true repentance and faith. He saved me by His grace and drew me to Himself not because I was worthy but because of His abundant grace and infinite mercy. In spite of all the daily challenges in this life, I now walk and live by faith knowing that all that matters in this life is to walk humbly fully surrendered to my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Soli Deo Gloria! **Kenny Sunmboye**

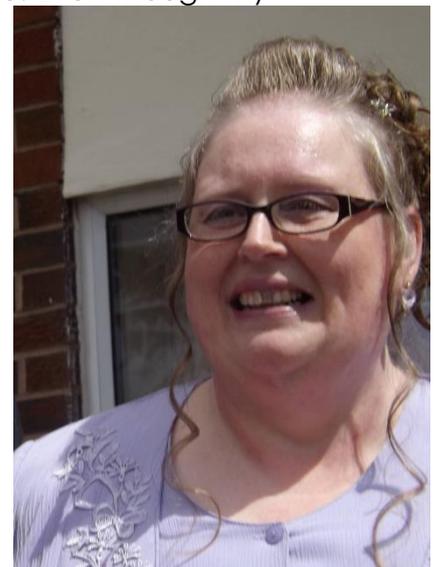
Sharon's Story

God has always been a part of my life. Even though my family weren't religious they didn't stop me from going to Sunday School with my friends and being part of the girls' Steadfasters Group at the Chapel. As I grew up, I turned away from God and got into some difficulties with poor mental health, homelessness and drugs until my early thirties when I began to search for God again.

I didn't have a 'road to Damascus' moment, just a gradual awareness of him moving in my life and knowing His great love and grace. Since this happened things have still been hard at times, but I know that I am a child of God, that He loves me and that with him all things are possible.

I am grateful every day for his presence in my life. When I look back, I can see that he was with me, especially through the hard times and this gives me great reassurance that he will continue to be with me as my life goes on, until I meet him one day in Glory.

Sharon Hall





James' Story: 'What is this world all about?'

This was the question that pervaded my thoughts as I went to sleep. I was only about seven or eight at the time. I had grown up in a Christian home, gone to church each Sunday, done Bible clubs, said grace before each main meal and had Bible stories read before bed, but I still didn't 'know' God.

Deep down I knew that there had to be something outside of this world, the only thing that I had ever known. This frightened me. I was so small compared with the emptiness of space.

Mum used to read me Bible accounts simplified for children and real-life stories with a Biblical connection by an author, Jim Cromarty. These were often challenging and one I remember was about the second death. Not the first death but the death we face if we remain in our sin. I knew I deserved to be separated from God because of my sin in a place called Hell. I remember asking Mum what I needed to do (I already knew that Jesus had gone to the cross to pay for my sins so I wouldn't have to face punishment in Hell). She said for us to pray and bring this before God. That night I prayed for forgiveness and put a very simple trust in Jesus. The next day, no major change in appearance or knowledge, **but** a peace and assurance that I was forgiven, with God's presence as my Heavenly Father.

Years followed and on a church camp the preacher asked me, 'Are you a Christian?' 'I am,' I replied, the words falling out of my mouth. It was then that again I realised my simple confession of faith as a child needed to be lived out as a life of faith.

Many years have passed and God is still with me through some dark days and joyful ones. I am still not perfect but a sinner saved by the grace of God. Little Hill Church, the people, continue to be my spiritual family, helping me serve, love and worship God in a greater way. **James Eardley**





Little Hill Church

proclaiming Jesus Christ