

SCUNTHORPE BAPTIST CHURCH



Crosby is a high priority area for local authorities in North Lincolnshire due to its high levels of poverty, crime, social injustice, and diversity



Crosby is notorious in the area for prostitution, drugs and homelessness. It also has large Muslim communities.

As a church (Scunthorpe Baptist Church) we have been exploring a model that would be very similar to the missional community approach adopted by many churches across the UK. As a result of this we decided to employ Fiona Doherty as a Pioneer Community Planter in September 2013. Fiona has a real passion for incarnational living and the discipleship of everyone, including the most lost, hurting and broken coming to know Jesus. Fiona also has a real God-given call to the Crosby community, having grown up in Scunthorpe and knowing many of the key issues.

The decision to employ Fiona (who is part-time) was taken with an awareness that her funding would be entirely taken from church reserves.

In the 10 months that we have been working in the community of Crosby we have already seen some incredible and miraculous works, and are beginning to see real fruit from this intentional method of sharing the gospel, and the incarnational way in which Fiona and the team are demonstrating the Kingdom. Their vision is simple - to see the neighbourhood be a reflection of the fullness of the Kingdom of God. Fiona explains the works she and her team do in the following statement:

One of the most amazing examples of this was at Christmas, I had made invitations and knocked on every door on my street to invite people over for mince pies and hot chocolate, for those who didn't answer I posted the invitation. A few hours later I was in the community (but not on my road) and a lady I had never seen before came running over to me saying 'are you the girl from number 18?' She then proceeded to tell me that she, her girlfriend and their son were shocked to be invited to my house and wondered if they were welcome as they knew we were Christians! Through this I was massively reminded that whether you know your neighbours or not



I rented a house and knew that we would use this for the base of everything we do in the community. I never understood the power of truly living a life where you have open homes and opened lives. For us living in a way that meant my door was one to be knocked on meant we quickly made friends in the neighbourhood.

We try and live by three basic principles; incarnational, intentional, invitational.



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they know you and what you do; witness well - an early lesson we learnt. From that day we have got to know that family very well. We never hide from people who we are or what we believe, in fact we make it a priority to 'set our stall out' with people straight away.

Something that we are passionate about as a team is that we are discipling ourselves well and loving God with all that we have, because we believe that as a result of that we will serve and love others well. The family we connected with at Christmas has had a number of questions for us, and so we just kept referring them to Jesus and the Bible. After a few of these conversations they asked for their own Bibles, so we gave the whole family a bible and a highlighter and suggested they highlighted what they thought God was speaking to them about. After a few days they were coming back having read and highlighted the Bible and were telling us what they thought of it. We have had people who have never heard of who Jesus really is praying with us, taking a bible and then telling their family about it.

One of our favourite people is a prostitute we know, who has lived in this area all of her life. She has been working the streets for a few years now. She has children and is well known in the neighbourhood. Sometimes after her 'shift' she 'knocks on' for a coffee and brings a list of things she would like to pray for. We love that she finds safety in the walls of my home and sanctuary in bringing her concerns before God.



Some of the people we have met have been of different faiths, particularly Muslim. We have had amazing encounters with one guy who has had visions of Jesus and wants to know more. We have spent some time with him chatting and praying it through and he is really discovering more about Jesus, and has been open to receiving prayer for healing.

Paul, my fiancé, has started a pool night at our local pool and snooker hall. This has seen him build some great relationships with a group of men who are mainly Muslim, and from all over the world. One of the men, a Muslim who works in a local shop, used to follow Paul and I around whenever we went in to the store. One day he approached Paul and said, "Please can I talk to you, I have problems and there is something different about you!" Paul is finding it exciting to see them grow and learn more about Jesus over the pool table.

Those stories give a glimpse of the people we have met and what we do. We have loved getting to know all the local churches, organisations, prostitutes, homeless, drug users, drug dealers alike. The thing we love is they are all our friends and we love to tell them about a God who loves them enough to send Jesus to the cross for them.

The team do a fantastic job discipling people from the very first encounter they have with their neighbours. It rarely involves deep bible study to begin with, but instead starts with basic expressions of what our God is really like; compassionate, gracious, loving and generous. This work has already come at a cost to the team. They have had items taken from their homes, been woken in the early hours on a regular basis, and have had to give sacrificially to support those they meet in Crosby, but it is a real testament to their character that they do it all with love and grace, being an excellent witness to the community.

We really want to see this missional community flourish and continue to transform the local community, and in order to do so we need to find the funding. Our church reserves are extremely limited and we already have to consider what our future steps will be, so any support that can offered to Fiona and the team would be incredibly welcome.

Tom MacDonald
Assistant Pastor
Scunthorpe Baptist Church

Please pray:

- » For Fiona and her team as they engage with their neighbours, and share their faith
- » For the people they meet who are discovering how much God loves them and accepts them
- » For adequate funding to enable this exciting ministry to continue to flourish and transform the community

