

NEW LIFE CHURCH, BLACKBOYS

New Life Church Blackboys was planted out as an autonomous Baptist Church in December 2012. This was certainly a 'stepping out the boat' experience for all those involved. A move of faith encouraged and facilitated greatly by generous Home Mission Support.

Blackboys is a small rural community in the heart of mid Sussex. The rather unusual name is thought to either derive from the once local charcoal industry or from Richard Blakeboy who lived here in the 1300's.

The village has a pub, a petrol station, a Church of England primary school, a shop/café owned and run by four church members, three of whom are on the leadership team, and of course the church. We don't have a church building as such. We meet in people's homes, in the Grove Café, at the school, and on Sundays we gather in the village hall. We find the lack of building not to be a hindrance, but rather liberating. Indeed, it reflects and reinforces who we are and how we do things, expressed by our motto 'We are Church.' Church can't be a building, a place you go to, if you haven't got one!

Building through blessing in Blackboys and beyond

In many ways though, what we do together during the week is not dissimilar to other church families. Having said that, we do place an emphasis on the scattered church, being a disciple where God has placed us. In addition, we are determined not to be driven by activities and programmes. However there is one particular initiative which I would like to share with you which is rather unusual.

As Christians we are used to prayer happening before, during and as a consequence of mission but perhaps not as a way of mission. Let me explain. I practise a form of contemplative prayer known as Centering Prayer. This takes place in my study/office from 9:15-10:15 each weekday and is open to anyone who wishes to join me. I use the Northumbria Community liturgy which leads into 25 minutes of silent contemplation.



Most days I am joined by at least one person, the most was nine - which was a bit of a squeeze! More excitingly though, as an outworking of this I was asked by the Head of the local school to set up a lunchtime Centering Prayer Club. The initial sign up was 20 children from years 1-5, including two reception children who were told they were too young. Now after a bit of settling down we have

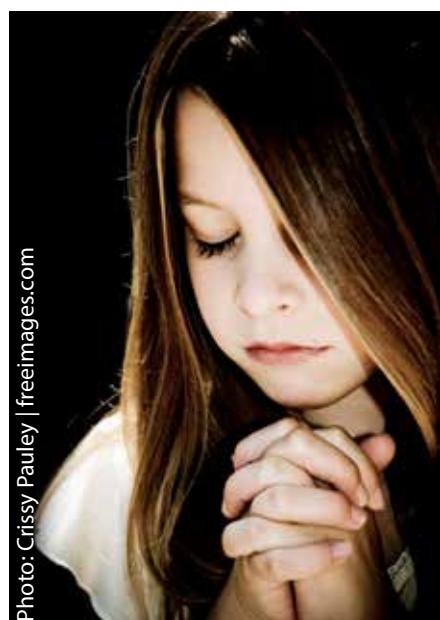


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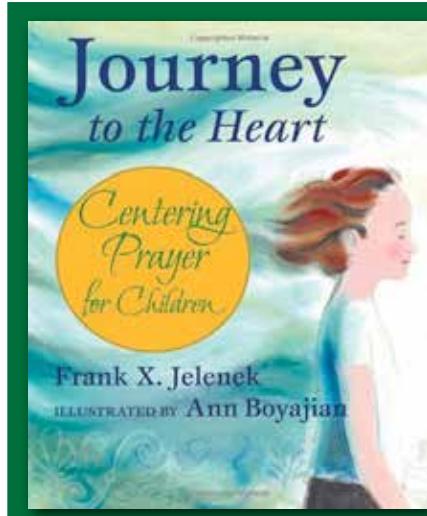
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a core group of 11 children, 3 boys and 8 girls, for half an hour each Wednesday during their lunchtime. As a basis for our time together we use a book called *Journey to the Heart: Centering Prayer for Children* by Frank X Jelenek. The children are a delight and their enthusiasm (a little too much sometimes) is wonderful. Please pray for them and for me as I am certainly out of my comfort zone on this.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me (guy_newlifechurch@btinternet.com) and thanks again for your support - because without Home Mission this would not be happening. You may find the following link to a recent e-bulletin from the Contemplative Outreach website, the home of Centering Prayer, helpful especially as it includes various video links. Have a look at: <http://eepurl.com/8Hjk9>

Guy Partridge
New Life Church, Blackboys



Centering prayer is a way of opening our whole being to God, beyond thoughts, words and emotions. This guide for children both instructs and inspires, making it easy for children to share in the spiritual nourishment of centering prayer, and is ideal for ages 3-10.

Publisher: Paraclete Press (2007)
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Please pray:

- » For other opportunities for the church to be a presence in the school
- » For members of New Life Church as they live out their lives as disciples, wherever God has placed them
- » Give thanks for the freedoms which being church without a building can bring
- » For the core group of children, that they will continue to grow in their relationship with God and share their love of him with their friends