

SCOTTISH BAPTIST COLLEGE



Alice McDermott completed her ministerial training at the Scottish Baptist College in 2014, and is now a minister in Watford

In the four months since I have arrived at St James Road Baptist Church (SJR), I have been encouraged. The church had come through a long vacancy and called me as their next pastor straight from college. And they had to wait! A faithful core of members who had remained steadfast and committed throughout the vacancy were exhausted but they managed a few months more. Once I had finished my studies at the Scottish Baptist College, we moved south. Having spent 20 and 30 years in the RAF respectively, I and my husband, Colin, were accustomed to moving.

As a newly accredited minister (NAM), the support of my Leadership Team and Regional Ministry Team are essential. I am surrounded by a strong team within SJR who are committed to working alongside me. The Regional Ministry Team (Central Baptist Association) were quick to support me as I began my ministry. We have good fellowship within Herts, with regular ministers' meetings, and within the wider Association with a ministers' conference. I also have the chance to join with other NAMs on reflection days as we seek to explore various topics.

A mentor in these early years is also essential, and I am fortunate to have Ruth Bottoms keeping a pastoral eye on me, offering advice and being a general sounding board as I grow in my role.

The transition from military pilot to pastor has been challenging, college was the easy bit! It takes time to harness and focus my enthusiasm while at the same time ensuring that I maintain a work/life balance and get some rest. In the early weeks it was hard to take time off! There is always

more work I could do than time available, especially as I see visiting and spending time with others as a priority. I believe that ministry is founded on being relational, showing love and care to others whilst teaching, growing and inspiring those around you... this is what I see when I look at Jesus' life. In amongst all this, I need to do my NAM studies!



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Advent was a particularly busy time with so many 'firsts'. But to see the church filled for our Carol Service and to see many families come together on Christmas morning gave me confidence that we are moving in the right direction.

These early months at SJR have been joyful with a sense of expectation. We are seeing growth and we are looking forward to welcoming into membership a new couple, dedicating a child and baptising one of our young people. There are signs that God is at work and we are excited about what the future holds. This could feel like huge pressure, but I know that in the power of the Spirit we will achieve what we are called to do as we seek vision and discern where to focus our energies in the coming months.

We have amazing opportunities to reach out through our toddler and pre-school families and my prayer is that God's plan is clearly revealed for SJR.

Alice McDermott
Minister, St James Road
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Please pray:

- » For the students and staff at the Scottish Baptist College in Glasgow
- » Give thanks for the support and training which Alice and other students have received from the Scottish Baptist College
- » For Alice and her husband Colin as she spends time getting to know people, and seeking God's priorities for her ministry at Watford
- » Give thanks for the encouraging signs of growth and the sense of expectation amongst the church over the past few months
- » For a clear sense of vision for the church as they discover new opportunities to reach out to the local community
- » Give thanks for the support which the regional associations provide for newly accredited ministers