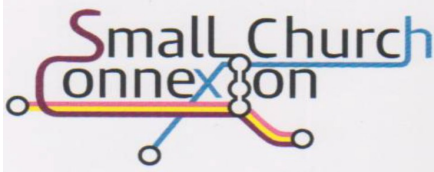


SMALL CHURCHES NEWSLETTER Autumn 2025



Welcome to the Autumn newsletter.

With four heatwaves during the Summer, the weather has kept to the forefront, but there has also been a remarkable fruitfulness in the trees and shrubs around us. We know that it has not been fruitful for all our small churches but hope to encourage you with news of where it is.

We report back from the Autumn Event and bring news of progress after change. We bring news of a book being published about how a small church can survive when a neighbouring church answers God's call to work together.

—oo0oo—

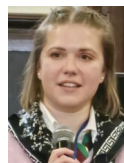
Reaching your community for Christ

The Autumn Event on 4th October explored how we can connect with our communities through word, meaningful action and online outreach. The whole day was filmed by Fuelcast: watch this space for news!



After a time of worship, our first speaker was Patrick Kangi from the London City Mission. He told us of his own conversion and used graphic illustrations of the power of the Gospel. Patrick challenged us to share the Gospel and offered many different LCM leaflets, and access to LCM podcasts.

Hannah Fleming-Hill, digital missionary with the Baptist Union, spoke after the coffee break and encouraged us to recognize the importance of digital communications in today's world. People are coming to faith from seeing services on line. We may be quite a small group meeting to worship but the service uploaded to YouTube can reach so many more. Then there is the vast field of social media. A video message can entertain, educate and inspire—not just advertising service times but sharing much more about the church's life. Hannah outlined how to form a strategy, dependent on the goal, the audience, our organization and our resources. Look on <https://fhdigital.co.uk/small-churches/> to see the slides that supported Hannah's presentation.



Two of the SCC team ministers began the afternoon with how they evangelise where they are. Martin Allen is part-time minister at Finchley Baptist Church and part-time black cab driver. He spoke of how we can attract others to Jesus by our way of life. The book of Esther doesn't name God, but He is clearly there. Simple ideas like using a John3:16 coffee mug during an online office meeting, can advertise our faith. Or having a prayer break with a fellow Christian instead of a tea break! Our integrity can be a powerful attraction.



Stephen Maclean has been minister at Cricklewood BC for 12 years and has seen Sunday worship change from a gathering of 10-12 people to over 40 people. He is involved in the Safer Neighbourhood Ward Team meeting regularly with the local police; and the church has posters on 4 community notice boards. He emails news to local residents and helps organize the annual summer football camp. He began links with local school and council events by way of loaning the church's bouncy castle. Stephen encouraged us to link with those who use our buildings and local groups.



All four speakers then came on the platform to answer questions which varied from practical ways to witness at work, to witnessing to those closest to us who see the bad moments too. Everyone expressed their thanks to all the speakers for an inspiring day.

Fourteen churches across London were represented and the feedback was very positive with most finding the day very helpful. We were unfortunate in choosing the day when Storm Amy brought the summer weather to an end, but grateful that we had only the tail end of it. So a chilly journey was rewarded with "a wonderful day of fellowship and teaching", to quote one visitor. We had a variety of suggestions for events next year; please let us know if there is something that you would value.



HONOR OAK BAPTIST CHURCH...

Looking back, looking forward

Reflecting on the past year since God's calling of Rev. Elaine Youngman as minister of Honor Oak Baptist Church, we continue to praise and thank God for His faithfulness and for guiding us in discipleship together. During the Spring, several members participated in The Prayer Course, and the whole congregation addressed the seven marks of a Healthy Church.

Once a month we've been holding our Sunday service in a meeting room on ground level which has made the service accessible to those unable to manage the steps up into the main sanctuary.



*Photo -
Tom,
Deacon at
HOBC
leading a
monthly
Praise and
Prayer
service*

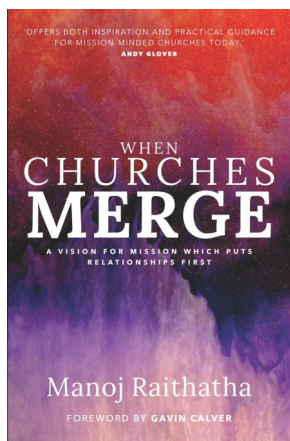
Throughout August, our services took on a more informal style combining worship, discussion, outdoor prayer and enjoying brunch together. The deacons are regularly encouraged to 'step into the pulpit' and by doing so are growing in faith. Our attendance numbers remain small, but it is wonderful to be part of the greater Kingdom of God. We look forward as a church to pursuing God's will together in the coming year.

Jane Chopping

—oo0oo—

When Churches Merge

Written with small churches in mind, *When Churches Merge* is a compelling vision for connecting churches and reviving relationship-centred mission. Sharing the author's own experience of merging two Baptist churches, one small and another medium-size, into one across two sites, this book shows how earnest prayer, covenantal thinking and sacrificial giving can breathe new life into declining congregations and enrich those that are already growing.



In encouraging churches to discern God's plan for them, 'When Churches Merge' offers an alternative approach to more traditional growth models, emphasizing the importance of putting relationships first. Blending honest reflections and biblical teaching with pastoral wisdom, and insights into legal, financial and organizational practicalities, it equips churches large and small to imagine new possibilities together.

As the world continues to experience a renewed interest in faith, 'When Churches Merge' offers a dynamic, viable and mission-minded response to what God is doing. Out on 21st November, it is now available to pre-order from the usual places such as Eden and Amazon.

Manoj Raithatha

—oo0oo—

Small Church Hubs

For the latest news and pictures of Small Church Hubs in London see the BU website on Baptist.org.uk/Articles/726121/Three_new_Small.aspx which focuses on the new hub including Cricklewood.

—oo0oo—

London Baptists Database

Coming soon! A new London Baptist database to encourage churches small and big to help one another and to be interdependent and to grow the Church in London.

A new online form will be launched soon which any church member in London can fill in. This will encourage working with others and skills from preaching, leading services, training, music, children's work, social media, website etc. All skills are welcome!

Individuals will need to be endorsed by the church they are part of and once the forms are submitted the information will be kept on a secure database by the London Baptists and be divided by regions. The information will not be published and we are looking for someone to manage enquiries from churches. Do get in touch with Stephen Maclean if you could help with this!

A big thank you to Hannah Flemming Hill who works for the Baptist Union communications team in setting this up.

This is going to be launched very soon and the link will be in the London Baptist newsletter.

—oo0oo—

The next SCC newsletter will be in January. Send any feedback, items or news before the end of the year to: valeriewinchester@btinternet.com or contact the SCC team leader, Stephen Maclean, at smallchurches@londonbaptist.org.uk