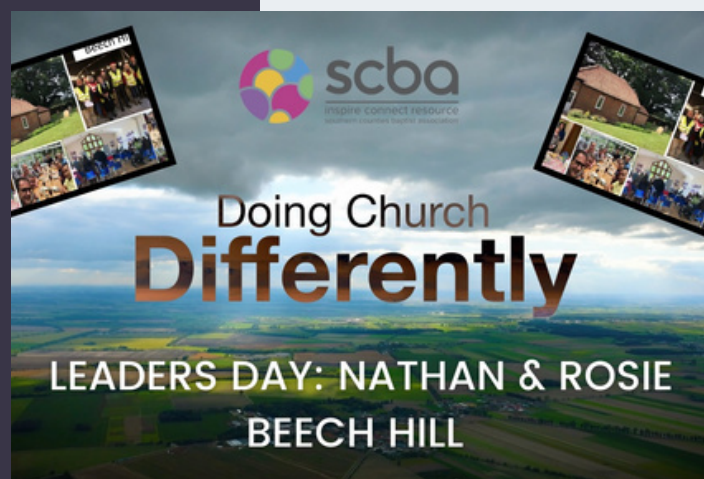


# Doing Church Differently: Beech Hill

## Summary

Beech Hill Baptist Chapel, once facing closure with just three members, was given new life when a small team from Shinfield Community Church stepped out in faith to relaunch it. With the support of the Baptist family (SCBA, local cluster, and neighbouring churches), a team of seven began by building friendships in the village, running Alpha (online and in person), and holding community events.

Through coffee mornings, school prayer spaces, toddler groups, joint services with Anglicans, carol singing, and even hosting a wake, the church discovered new ways of loving and serving their village. The focus shifted away from “success by numbers” to “measuring by lives touched and transformed by Christ.”



## Key Lessons Include:

- **Be flexible:** Plans rarely unfold as expected
- **Love the place you're in:** Earning trust and respect is vital.
- **Use what you have:** Don't wait for the perfect resources, offer your gifts now.
- **Partnership matters:** Working with Anglicans, schools, and villagers opened new doors.
- **Lay leadership grows the church:** Ordinary people discovered new callings.
- **Fruit takes different shapes:** It may not look like a typical Sunday service, but lives are changed.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What do we count as “success” in our church : attendance, or lives changed?
- How well do we “love the village/town” God has placed us in? What would our neighbours say about us?
- Where have our plans been disrupted and how might God be inviting us to adapt rather than cling to them?
- What gifts and resources do we already have that we could offer more boldly?
- In what ways could we partner with other churches, schools, or community groups to share Christ's love?
- How are we equipping lay people to step into leadership and ministry?
- What might “church” look like if we measured fruit by relationships, service, and discipleship rather than Sunday morning numbers?

# Bible Study

**Theme:** Doing Church Differently: Loving the Village

**Opening Question:**

- When you think about your community, what do you love most about it?
- Where do you see need?

**Read Together:**

- Jeremiah 29:4–7: Seek the peace and prosperity of the city...
- Acts 2:42–47: The early church devoted to fellowship, prayer, and meeting needs.
- James 2:14–18: Faith expressed through deeds.

**Discussion:**

- What does Jeremiah 29 teach us about God’s call to love and serve the places where we live?
- How does Acts 2 challenge our picture of church? What rhythms and practices stand out?
- In light of James 2, what might it look like for our faith to be visible in our village/town?
- Beech Hill’s story shows that sometimes fruit looks like conversations, trust, or community friendships. Where might we already be seeing “small harvests” that we’ve overlooked?
- How might God be calling us to “use what we have” rather than wishing for more resources?

**Prayer Response:**

- Pray for your community by name: schools, pubs, families, local leaders.
- Ask God to show you where your church is already bearing fruit.
- Pray for courage to step out in faith, even with limited resources.

**Practical Next Step (for the group):**

- Identify one small way you could “love your village/town” this month. (E.g., host a coffee morning, write encouragement cards to neighbours, volunteer at a school, invite someone to a meal.)
- Commit to pray for one person or one household in your community each week.