

The background is a dark teal color with various geometric patterns. There are large, overlapping circles in shades of blue, orange, and purple. Some circles are solid, while others are outlines. There are also starburst or radial patterns in teal and white. The overall style is modern and abstract.

FORGE

Connected

SPHERE UPDATE

2020



WELCOME

from Phil Norris

Hi everyone,

I wonder if you have yet grasped what Forge is all about? This first magazine will give you some insight, but let me try to give some background.

Forge is the new name given to a relational network of churches in the south and south-east of the UK. We have been close for some time and have met as leaders for several years. It was the changing emphasis within Salt & Light UK (the wider network to which we belong) that greater focus and identity has come upon these smaller relational networks, like ours. We believe it is for growth and development, and that God is behind this focus.

Currently, we are eleven churches connected for mutual support and encouragement and to help each other resource the missional activity that God wants to do in this nation and others. We are one small part of God's plans and purposes, but we do want to play our part. It has been really exciting to see the growing momentum and expectation of all that God might do through us. We realise that most of our efforts are rightly in our local patches, and we want to strengthen that in various ways, but we also recognise the resource of Forge together is greater than anything any one of our churches has on its own. We remain convinced being part of something bigger than ourselves is vital

for the health of any local church. So, where it is strategic and appropriate, we want to work together. We seek to outwork this togetherness through strengthening one another's churches, developing leaders together, and sharing certain mission emphases.

As leaders, we meet regularly, varying our location so that we can get a feel for the different churches and their specific vision. In addition, we seek to visit each other's churches, enabling the sharing of different perspectives and looking to strengthen what is happening on the ground. Our youth leaders and youth are beginning to connect, and they have some exciting plans afoot. We have begun a first leadership development group together, have had two leadership days and have participated at Big Church Day Out twice. Plans are developing for a Forge intern programme, and we are looking at how we open up opportunities for shared mission and support overseas. We would love to support one another in church planting and to see if there are new places God opens for us to get involved.

So, exciting times. Do enjoy the magazine, check out the website and look at the Facebook page. We trust you find it inspiring and stimulating, and a support to what is going on locally.

Regards,
Phil Norris

Forge in Lockdown

As the nation and much of the world entered lockdown in late March so did the churches in our Forge Sphere. Much of what you will read in this publication was compiled before lockdown, and whilst the mission of the church hasn't changed during this time, the methods as to how we share the good news, how we meet together for teaching, worship and communion has changed. The churches across the sphere responded quickly. Most churches adapted to live online church gatherings on a Sunday morning while others have had video compilation services broadcast on Facebook and YouTube. There have been countless Zoom small group gatherings, Alpha groups, Discovery Bible Studies, the Sanctuary Course and likely other gatherings. Throughout the time, leaders from the Forge churches have been able to Zoom once per week to share stories, encouragement and prayer together. There are many stories of how the ministry of the church has increased during this unique time, and how the reach of the church has also expanded.

CONTENTS

3	Hope Community Church	8	Hub Community Church	13	Community Church Tadley
4	Westbourne Grove Church	9	LifeSpring Community Church	14	Forge Youth
5	Romney Marsh Community Church	10	South Kent Community Church	16	Finance & Development
6	Community Church Harlesden	11	Fareham Community Church	17	Internship Year
7	Gateway Church	12	Christ Community Church	18	Church Planting
				19	Forge Events

HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH



Basingstoke, Hampshire

report from Gary Bastin

Give us a brief history of your church

In the late 1960s, there was a fresh move of God in Basingstoke which greatly affected the Baptist Church which was being led at that time by Barney Coombs. From this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Basingstoke Community Church was born! After years of growth, numerically and spirituality, that one church grew into several churches, allowing for further growth and development. In 2017, following a review, major changes resulted in us becoming Hope Community Church!

How would you describe your church?

We're a lively and growing church in the centre of Basingstoke of all ages, nationalities and backgrounds. We are all 'work-in-progress' and are committed to each other and to following Jesus. In February 2001, God told us that we were to be a 'City of Refuge' and a 'Reprocessing Factory'. These are two foundations that we have built on over the years. They also serve as our vision and seek to guide all we do. As a 'City of Refuge', we aim to be a safe place where anyone can come and, without judgment, experience God's love, and meet Jesus. As a 'Reprocessing Factory', we make room for God to deal decisively with our past and transform us for a better future, living free and serving Him! Recently, God has called us to become His 'Hope Carriers'. Our desire is that everyone in our church fully embraces this new life and are ready to share it with others.

What is your church involved with presently?

For many years, we have been serving our community with a highly successful parent and toddler group, called Bouncing Beans, and an English Café for people who need help with learning English. We also run two local favourites: The annual Blazing Light Party (our positive alternative to Halloween) and the Live Nativity at Christmas, with real animals! A few years ago, we started 'The Dwelling Place', a social action project, which provides supported housing accommodation for people who would be at risk of homelessness. Some of our people are currently looking to get involved with the TLG charity in schools.



As a church we would love to:

Be the 'go to' place where the presence and power of God changes lives for good! A community who welcomes anyone and everyone! We long to grow as a relevant, vibrant, diverse, fun, cross-generational, multi-ethnic family saturated in a heavenly mix of love and grace. We want to be creative, enthusiastic, passionate, Jesus followers who can't help but ooze the goodness of God in all we say and do!

WESTBOURNE GROVE CHURCH



Notting Hill, London

report from Chris Thackery



Give a brief history of your church

The congregation is Baptist, and started back to 1823. It moved to its current location in 1853. The minister at the time was a close friend of Charles Spurgeon, who preached at the church on a number of occasions. Later, Hudson Taylor was a member of the church after retiring from his pioneering missionary work in China. We became joined to the Salt & Light family in the mid-1990's, and between 1997 and 2004 the church was completely rebuilt and modernised. We are now open 7 days a week serving the local community.

How would you describe your church?

The congregation is small but diverse, and we work like a family:- relational and informal. God has given us a heart to reach out and include the marginalised, including homeless and vulnerable people, and those suffering with mental health problems. We're trying really hard to be an authentic Kingdom community, proclaiming and demonstrating the good news in as many creative ways as we can, including a weekly drop-in for homeless people, art exhibitions, storytelling, advocacy, and a film club. In addition to the work of the congregation, we use the building to serve the local community – we have a number of 12-Step groups meeting here, and also local community groups doing a wide range of activities. We have also become a popular venue for wealthier local families to host their children's parties, and the income from these helps to finance our work with the vulnerable.



What is your church involved with presently?

As well as the other ministries mentioned above, we run a monthly "Lobby Lunch" where a team of around a dozen volunteers provides a free meal to around 50-60 people usually drawn from "the lost, the last and the least". Some of the volunteers are not Christians, so it's an opportunity to reach out to them as well as our guests. We're reaching out to people who are learning to speak English, many of whom can be very isolated, being away from home and family, and struggling to communicate in an alien culture. We run an English Café, where we give people opportunity to develop their conversational English skills, and a Simple English Bible study to practice English in the context of exploring the Bible together.

As a church we would love to:

We would love to find more effective ways of sharing the Good News about Jesus with the many people who come into our building: we're longing to see more new birth. We would also love to grow in numbers as a community, so that we have more resources to make the most of all the opportunities we have.



ROMNEY MARSH COMMUNITY CHURCH



New Romney, Kent

report from Nick Barratt

Give a brief history of your church

'In the year 1825 it pleased the Lord... to send a missionary to Romney Marsh... and in the year 1832 a church was formed...of about 15 members.' The above is an extract from the first church minutes c.1832 and recalls how the Baptists of Dymchurch felt called by God to spread the gospel across Romney Marsh! The church was founded as a Baptist Church and continued the long line of non-conformists who had dissented and suffered for their faith. In 1832, a local farmer donated land on which to build the new Baptist Chapel in North Street and by 1886 the congregation had grown enough to warrant an extension. Over the twentieth century, the church ebbed and flowed in strength and numbers and by 1962, there were only 27 worshippers. We need to be grateful to God for the many faithful men and women who at times pioneered and at times persevered to keep things going. By the summer of 1986, a clear vision was given in terms of structural and strategic advance. One of the changes was a name change from New Romney Baptist Church to the more encompassing Romney Marsh Christian Fellowship. As the church grew, it became clear The Old Chapel would no longer suffice and during this time, we met in various local school halls. In January 2000, the building opposite the chapel (originally the old garage, later small industrial units) was purchased and renamed 'The Centre'. Since then, rooms have been modernised and refurbished with a new worship centre, offices and modern facilities installed. The work is ongoing! Around the year 2000, God began to join us with Salt & Light and again we changed our name to Romney Marsh Community Church. Since 2011, we have seen our relationship with other Salt & Light churches in the south east of England being strengthened.

How would you describe your church?

We are a church in a rural/coastal setting on Romney Marsh which is a clearly defined geographical area. The church is made up of people from Lydd, Dungeness, Lydd on Sea, Greatstone, Littlestone, New Romney, St. Mary's Bay, Dymchurch and places beyond Romney Marsh all seeking to follow Jesus and to be salt and light in our homes, communities and workplaces. We have people of all ages from babies to people in their nineties. The Centre where we meet is in constant use throughout the week. We have a number of discipleship groups which meet for prayer and to go deeper into the passage that was preached on the previous Sunday. We run a toddler group, foodbank, four evening young people's groups and regular midweek outreach sessions.

What is your church involved with presently?

During Lent 2020, we have had 'Forty Days of prayer' when as a church we sought to meet every day for prayer. In May, June and July, two of our leaders Nick and Helen have been having a three month sabbatical for rest, recharging and re-envisioning.

As a church we would love to:

See more families and people in their twenties and thirties coming to faith in Jesus Christ. Nick had a picture of a bridge across a dyke, representing how the church has made the bridge to enable people to cross over into the Kingdom of God. The bridge represents all the activities we do as a church reaching out into the community. We are praying that we will be able invite and help people over the bridge.

Romney Marsh Community Church

North Street New Romney TN28 8DW



COMMUNITY CHURCH HARLESDEN



Harlesden, London

report from Joy Johnston



Give a brief history of your church

We have been on an adventure together in Harlesden since 2006 – following Jesus and exploring what it means to be church in the 21st century. We started out as a group of eight 20-somethings, cheered and spurred on by Basingstoke Community Churches. Many others have been part of the journey since then and we currently number around 30 adults and 16 children, with two more on the way. Over the past 14 years, we have experimented with different rhythms, structures and patterns.

How would you describe your church?

Most of us live within one mile of each other in Harlesden and we have a strong focus on being in community together. We try to support and challenge each other in all areas: we worship, live, learn, work, pray, create music, mourn, grow things, and party together. In terms of our formal gatherings, we currently meet at a local children's centre on Sunday afternoons and have small groups through the week. We have funded various partners and posts to facilitate community projects but the responsibility for the devotional life of the church has been shared between volunteer leaders. We have a strong focus on team, with many people playing an active leadership role. We celebrate the diversity that each new person brings to the church as we continue to grow and have a particular focus on supporting each other in our vocations. You can find out more about our activities and values at www.cchonline.org.

What is your church involved with presently?

As a community, we have launched several businesses and charities over the years. One of these is Refugee Support Network (www.refugeesupportnetwork.org) which is now a leading UK refugee education charity. Excitingly, RSN, with support from Community Church Harlesden (CCH), has just bought an old bank on the high street in Harlesden. Once refurbished, this four-storey building will provide office and meeting space for RSN, CCH and Jigsaw Consult, an international development consultancy run by CCH members, as well as other charities and social enterprises. It will also be a space we can use for existing and new CCH community activities, such as our youth club (Sparklers), money advice service (Let's Talk Money) and English conversation class with discovery bible study (Chatty Mondays). This is an exciting time for us and we would value your prayers!

As a church we would love to:

Be a Christian community that brings the peace and hope of Jesus Christ to Harlesden, London, and the wider world.

GATEWAY CHURCH

 Marchwood, Hampshire

report from Tim Lockwood

Give a brief history of your church

Gateway Church was until very recently called New Forest Community Church. The church was birthed over 20 years ago as a result of a church plant from Southampton Community Church. From a small group of spirit filled believers, the church grew into a larger group that eventually settled in Marchwood, on the edge of Southampton water and the New Forest. The church decided to change its name recently due to a desire to have a name that more closely matched its calling. Gateway came out of that review as the church wants to be a gateway for people to come into a relationship with God through Christ and live a life of purpose and calling.



What is your church involved with presently?

Gateway is a CAP centre and we run this debt service for anyone in the community that needs financial help. We also have a community Pause group which allows people who might feel isolated in the community to come together and pause from the stresses of life by doing arts and crafts activities.

How would you describe your church?

Gateway is a modern evangelical charismatic church with a heart for the community to find God through Christ. At present Gateway had adopted the café style church format which is based around tables and lots of coffee and tea. The service will start with praise and worship before having a break for people to get served hot drinks before the word aspect of the service. The environment that people come into when arriving at church is important to us and we have a number of banners and lights which help people see our heart and God's heart for them from the moment they walk in to the time they leave. Our mission is to be a church full of people being saved, healed, empowered and released to reach the community with the love, acceptance and purpose God has for everyone.

As a church we would love to:

Impact our community with God's love, acceptance and purpose for individual lives. We want to do this by building a modern relevant church which is both attractive and relevant for first time visitors. We would like to develop our community programmes so that we can show Gods love in practical ways that help change lives.

HUB COMMUNITY CHURCH



Basingstoke, Hampshire

report from Andy Wright



Give a brief history of your church

Hub Community Church (The Hub) began in January 2018 following a review of Basingstoke Community Churches that recommended some of the churches come together to form 'Hubs'. North, South and East churches joined and became a new church. Having navigated through the first 2 years of The Hub, with the inevitable changes this brings, we're thankful for all that God has done and are expectant for the future. Some highlights have been having Rhoda Lawes join the team from Northampton as our full-time Youth and Children's Pastor, a very full and successful Alpha Course that has produced some great ongoing fruit, and a growing sense of faith for a 'New Missional Home' to bless and serve the communities of Basingstoke, working alongside the other churches in the town.



How would you describe your church?

The Hub is focussed on seeing growth and impact for the Kingdom of God. We want to see followers of Jesus multiplied, for many people to be saved in our town, and to partner with many others around the world to see the Gospel go to the ends of the earth. We want to be a place of welcome, to express the heart of God in our communities and point to Jesus in everything we do. We currently find ourselves in a season of prayer. We believe God has spoken to us about intimacy in prayer and we long for a move of God that brings renewal and new life to the church. There are times when God brings us back to our knees recognising our overwhelming reliance on Him. That's where we are now and we're excited for what God will do!



What is your church involved with presently?

We are going to run another Alpha Course starting in April this year. The course we ran last year resulted in a number of people continuing to explore faith by meeting and studying the Bible together. Some have joined the church and are growing in their faith. We're praying for more impact from this upcoming course! Our desire is to make disciples, and so from September to December last year we ran a course called 'Catalyst' to train disciples to make disciples. We looked at how to grow in intimacy with God, share both our story and the Gospel and help not-yet or new believers to study the Bible. We also engage in many community projects, run by churches across the town, to reach those in need with God's love.



As a church we would love to:

Grow in intimacy with God, multiply followers of Jesus and make an impact for the Kingdom of God in Basingstoke and beyond.

LIFESPING COMMUNITY CHURCH



Overton, Hampshire

report from Earl Robinson

Give a brief history of your church

We have just changed our name from 'The Community Church' (West) to LifeSpring Community Church. This is really exciting as it will give us a greater sense of self-identity and identity to the communities where we live and work. The church has been based in various halls/schools in the villages to the west of Basingstoke since the early 80's. It has met as one group, and at times has been split into two groups meeting in different villages. Near the end of 2012 it was determined the best way forward was to gather together in Overton and to make that the base. Mid-way through 2013 the church started meeting in the newly refurbished St. Luke's Hall where it is based today.

How would you describe your church?

People that visit describe us as friendly, welcoming, real, caring and like family. These are all descriptions that are encouraging to hear. The church is made up of people from across many villages, hamlets and towns along one main road. This means that it's important the people are involved in their local community and are being 'little fires' in their village since we are so spread out. We have outreach events and gatherings that take place in both Overton and Oakley, but attempt not to lose the focus no matter where one is located, each one is vital to the life of God in that location. We have a good number who have been committed people within Basingstoke Community Churches. There is a depth of faith and much experience in life that many of our people can bring especially to those newer to faith or newer to the area. We are endeavouring to look outward more and more, realising this is vital as we move forward as LifeSpring Community Church.

What is your church involved with presently?

We have outreach gatherings targeted at young families, people on the fringe of faith, a toddler/baby group and an older folks group. These are all well supported by the church, in running, organising and backing them with prayer/resource. Recently, a couple who are on the leadership team (Jhon and Lannah Agreda) opened Café Pueblo, it's right on the High St. in Overton. It's a real community hub, a place of life, meeting, great food and it will afford us so many opportunities to reach out further in the future.



 **LifeSpring**
COMMUNITY CHURCH

As a church we would love to:

Be growing in Christ and making Him known in our communities.

SOUTH KENT COMMUNITY CHURCH



Folkestone, Kent

report from James Coombs



Give a brief history of your church

The church has been in this area in one form or another since the 1960s and, in the mid-1980s, following some wonderful moves of the Holy Spirit, God joined together a flourishing village mission and a small town Elim church to become the Community Church. Since then the vision has expanded continually and at one point there were three congregations in three towns. The vision continues to primarily focus around the towns of Folkestone and Hythe but also includes the surrounding areas and the villages in between – hence the name South Kent Community Church. The Folkestone and Hythe's congregations joined to work as one twenty years ago which was birthed in a prophetic word and God has used it to produce a lively, pro-active committed church community in the locality.

How would you describe your church?

We are an area community church of around 250 adults and children and is truly multigenerational which is wonderful in all kinds of ways. We are a vibrant, relevant, thriving church that reaches into our communities meeting today's various social needs and presenting the truth of the risen Jesus who has the power to change lives for good. The purchase of our first building (named The Cornerstone Centre) which we now use for Sunday morning gatherings, as an office base and hub for our community projects has been a game changer – no longer hidden away in a school or college for a few hours on a Sunday morning. People come and find us! (The big traditional church building with iconic clock tower does help). The Gate (a former pub converted into a home by a couple in SKCC) has been made available as a multi-purpose space and has evolved into a bit of a community hub in Hythe where a range of community and church events happen.

What is your church involved with presently?

Drop-In has been running since 2008 and occurs twice a week serving the poor, needy, socially excluded and homeless in our community with food, drink and other necessities. CAP Debt Centre (Christians Against Poverty) running since 2007 continues to make a huge impact for those in debt and we see first time responses to the gospel. Safe Place is a new venture, started in March in the form of coffee mornings and born out of a concern for mental health issues. It seeks to provide an environment that encourages wellbeing.



As a church we would love to:

Live out our vision (to demonstrate God's kingdom in community), to grow and to be known in our communities by those who love Jesus and love others.

FAREHAM COMMUNITY CHURCH



Fareham, Hampshire

Give a brief history of your church

The church formed in 1981 as a result of a move of the Holy Spirit in a small evangelical church. In 1997, after touring many meeting places in Fareham, and a very specific prophetic word, the church purchased an old carpet shop in Fareham town centre where it has "lived" ever since. Originally part of the Cornerstone family of churches, FCC's growing connection with Salt & Light started in 2005 after the death of the then pastor. In 2012, FCC helped establish a café as a community hub and last year this café (now called Café Imbizo) was taken over fully by the church and has become a key part of its ministry in the town. This year, a new (and younger) leadership team has been established and we look forward to what God will do as He continues to grow and develop us moving forward!

How would you describe your church?

Currently, we are a church family of around 130 people, diverse in age, culture and background, with a heart to offer the welcome of God to everyone and love them enough to want to see them grow with us. We seek to ground our faith in small groups where we encourage and challenge each other to grow. FCC has nine life groups and we expect new groups to form due to the numbers wanting them! Worship is a key part of who we are. Our lead worshippers serve in flexible teams on Sunday mornings and together at our monthly unplanned, acoustic worship evening which is open to anyone who wants to spend time in the presence of God. Finally, as a family, community is a focus. Through the building God has given to us, we seek to help and encourage others move on in their lives, whether through AA, NA, Mind or other support groups. In the café, we seek to reach out to the community, by being a friendly place where "everyone knows your name"! This includes running a suspended coffee scheme for the homeless. Our website says that "We are a family community whose purpose is to represent Jesus to those around us, allowing him to work through us by grace to touch those who we meet every day." We're not perfect but are on a journey to do this better!

What is your church involved with presently?

- The Ark Toddler Group - a free weekly group catering for between 40 to 70 children and their carers.
- A building project to take down the wall between our church entrance foyer and Imbizo to increase the space for a larger welcoming ministry and community space.
- An internship project - creating a hub for interns from across Forge sphere to grow in who they are in God and to develop our youth and community outreach work.

report from Richard Wadsworth



As a church we would love to:

Grow more disciple-making disciples!

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH



Kings Cross, London

report from Ephrem Sahlu

Give a brief history of your church

Christ Community was planted out of a London-based ethnic community (Ethiopian) church with a clear vision from the Lord to reach out to people of all nations. This was in response to the vision received from God and to the need to effectively reach out with the gospel, to advance God's kingdom among the multiple nationalities resident in London and in obedience to the great commission. It was of missional intent to all nations. The transition into a multinational church occurred at the end of 2017, with a seed of mostly second-generation immigrant, young adults.

How would you describe your church?

Striving to be a church after God's own heart. Christ community is a local church established on three core values. These are the things that matter most to us at Christ Community, values that we believe Christ emphasised and placed great importance on in scripture. They define who we are as a community of Christ's disciples influencing every decision we make and action we take underpinning our identity and character as a local church community. These are to be relational, missional and prophetic. Relational – to be focused on actively fostering and growing interpersonal relationships based on Christlike love for one another based on Christ's new commandment to His disciples in John 13:34 to love one another as He loved us. Missional – to be unwavering in our focus and commitment to the Great Commission Christ entrusted His disciples with in Matthew 28:19 – 20 to go and make disciples of all nations. Prophetic – committed to remaining open and sensitive to God's voice to us today. We will cultivate and foster a permanent listening posture seeking Christ's mind on everything in His church in acknowledgment of His headship over us, His body (Ephesians 1:22,23).



What is your church involved with presently?

We are believing God and confident in Him with our objective of seeing 3 to 5 missional communities (embryonic stages of church plants) planted across London in the next 3 to 5 years. In line with and in preparation for that, our 2020 theme and focus is "Building community". This was kickstarted by a churchwide weekend retreat at the start of the year. However, being painfully aware that this is not a human but a divine enterprise (Matthew 16:18) we are currently focusing on foundation – to ensure we are built, "...on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone," (Ephesians 2:20). Hence our determination to get stuck into the four practises the early church devoted herself to – apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers (Acts 2:42). Our five home fellowships strategically located in North, South, West, East and Central London meeting weekly for fellowship, prayer and Bible study have been the focal points of growth and transformation.

As a church we would love to:

See lives transformed by Christ confidently sharing and powerfully impacting their environment – people of all nationalities – with their faith. This is our vision and what we long to see realised in our midst – missional communities made of multiple nationalities witnessing to the love and saving power of Christ.



COMMUNITY CHURCH TADLEY



Tadley, Hampshire

report from Greg Whittick

Give a brief history of your church

Community Church Tadley was planted out from Basingstoke Community Churches in the 1980s in Tadley, a small town to the north of Basingstoke. Over the years, we've met on Sundays in a couple of schools, but now meet in the local Community Centre. This gives us great contact and involvement with the Community Association and events going on in the community around us. We have steadily grown over that time, and are now the largest church in Tadley. We appointed a new Eldership a couple of years ago, replacing some who had faithfully served over many years, and in recent years have been on a journey to become more missional in our approach, showing love and God's nature outside the church in the way we do inside it.

What is your church involved with presently?

We are involved in a number of community initiatives, ranging from a Lunch Club for about 50 local elderly people that we have run since 2008 on behalf of Age Concern, and together with the other local churches we run a Foodbank satellite from the Basingstoke Foodbank, a community Arts Festival, and other one-off events. We also support a number of our members in initiatives like the Winter Night Shelter in Basingstoke, running parenting courses, welcoming new residents to a new development in the area, and serving in various ways in the town and surrounding villages.

How would you describe your church?

We're normally described by the other churches around us as "vibrant". Tadley is a small town surrounded by villages in the middle of the Reading-Newbury-Basingstoke triangle. We work with the other churches in the town to deliver initiatives and ministries that none of the churches could do on their own, and we are very favourably perceived by the local town council.

We see the church very much as a community of God's people and have long had a sense of community and family within the body. We seek to be involved with the community around us and to reach out in multiple ways to that community. We run a youth group which is open to all, and our people do a wonderful job of caring for one another and those around them.



As a church we would love to:

Impact our communities with God's love.

FORGE

YOUTH

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How did the youth work in Forge come about?

As Forge has grown in identity and unity, it was natural for the youth workers across the region to link up, combine our passions and talents and develop what we are able to offer the young people of Forge. By becoming friends and meeting regularly, we've built up a clear vision for youth work that is greater than any individual church, drawing together the diversity in Forge and seeking to develop and combine our skills to encourage the young people to build positive relationships with one another and to grow and thrive in their relationship with God.

Hub and Hope older youth weekend away



THE FORGE YOUTH TEAM



from left to right: Barney Ridgwell (South Kent Community Church), Rhoda Lawes (Hub Community Church), Martin Doyle (Fareham Community Church), Simon Biggs (Hope Community Church).



ABOUT THE TEAM

Rhoda Lawes

Rhoda is the Children's & Youth Pastor of Hub Community Church Basingstoke. She has a passion for youth work and has a great deal of experience working with young people. Before moving to Basingstoke, Rhoda was a freelance Youth and Schools worker in Northampton, delivering schools work sessions, running youth clubs, training, residentials and more. She loves the enthusiasm and energy of young people and is passionate about them encountering Jesus and seeing their lives radically changed as they discover their identity in Him! When not working with young people, Rhoda enjoys travelling, playing five-a-side football and watching films!

Simon Biggs

Biggsy is the Youth Pastor for Hope Community Church Basingstoke. He has a degree in architecture and spent 5 years as a property developer before he took on the role part time. The rest of his time is spent playing in the mud as a ground-worker. He likes to get things moving and is always thinking practically and taking a lead. He loves challenging young people to think/dream bigger and then to go make it happen with God! Biggsy has a large collection of board games, a sweet tooth and loves fantasy football.

What are a couple of things that you hope to do?

One of the things we're really excited about delivering is a young leaders training weekend! We are passionate about investing in and training young people from across Forge who God is calling into leadership. We also hope to build on our first Youth Day and run more one day events, hosted by various Forge churches. We hope to encourage real connection between the youth of the churches and hope that these events, as well as a Christian camp in the summer of 2021, will just be the beginning!



Soul Survivor 2019

What are you excited about as youth leaders moving forward?

Sometimes God moves in ways that are hard to see, but we think it's obvious that God has big plans for Forge Youth, why else would there be so many employed youth workers across the network!? We're committed to working together to encourage, embolden and equip our young men and women so that they can take their place as a faith-filled generation of game-changing young men and women who are hungry to shape the church and see God's kingdom come.



Soul Survivor 2019

What have you done already as youth and as youth leaders?

We're still a fairly new team so the first step was to get to know one another and work out how best we can use our skills for the wider benefit of our network. We've already begun to run joint youth events, staying together as a larger group at Soul Survivor in 2019, which we're planning to do again at another camp in 2021. We've also just had our first Forge Youth Day! This was a day-long event focussed on the theme of Unity, hosted in Fareham for youth from all of our churches. The day included teaching exploring unity in scripture, in worship and in prayer, as well as time to worship and minister to our wider church family. We believe that God's heart is for his church to work together, in their own locations but also across nations. We hope events like these will inspire, build and equip the next generation of spirit-filled and vision carrying young people.

Barney Ridgwell

Barney is the Youth and Children's Worker for South Kent Community Church. After finishing a BA degree and post grad in Dance at the University of Chichester, he got stuck into church life, being heavily involved in the children's ministry, where he found his love for young people. Barney has a background in freelance teaching, jewellery design and a love for nature, music, food with friends and most things espresso based. Barney is married with two young children and he loves being a daddy. Barney's creative flair leads him to find ways to engage young people with worship, studying the Bible and helps him to make events go from looking quite good to really good.

Martin Doyle

Martin leads the youth programme at Fareham Community Church, ably supported by his wife Gaby. They have been married for almost six years and have a passion to see young people impacted by God. Martin loves to provide adventures, training and encounters for the young people he works with and to see them grow in being disciples of Jesus. Martin was a student at Moorlands College with whom he maintains good connections. It was here that his love of theological and biblical training grew and a desire for this to be a part of a young person's formation. Martin also has a deep heart for evangelism and seeing the gospel impact the lives of those who don't yet know Jesus. Martin is part of the Forge youth team, in which he is described as the residential ginger!



FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT

report from Mark Nash

The Team

We have a small team who have kindly taken on the responsibility of the Sphere finances. This is made up of:

Chris Thackery - Westbourne Grove Church - chris@westbournegrovechurch.org
Joyce Rawlings - South Kent Community Church - skcc@btconnect.com
Dan Wake - Basingstoke Community Churches - danw@bccnet.org.uk
Mark Nash - Basingstoke Community Churches - markn@bccnet.org.uk

Do feel free to contact the team if you have any questions at all about Sphere finances, ideally in the first instance at markn@bccnet.org.uk.

Income

Forge's income is provided through the kind contributions of the member churches and we are constantly grateful for their faithfulness in this.

Currently, we suggest a guideline of 3% of the giving income of the church.

Expenditure

The two largest costs for Forge are our contributions towards our affiliation to Salt & Light and to Basingstoke Community Churches, which recognises the time "over and above" that Phil Norris and Dan Wake contribute to the leading and administering of the sphere and sphere events.

On top of this, we are able to make funds available for:

- Youth
- Developing Leaders
- Strengthening Churches
- Doing Mission Together

These are the key areas where we want to develop and grow the Sphere. We have operated a few events which encourage our development in these areas and we are hopeful and intentional that each area will continue to grow as the Sphere continues to become more established.

The Chest!

Part of our vision for the Forge finances is to build up a "chest". This is a fund to which we contribute any excess we generate each year which can be used to fund initiatives that are extra to our budgeted expenditure. An example of this is that it could be used to finance a church plant should we feel God is leading us along that path. We commit to add to this by a minimum of £1,000 per year, though up to now we are pleased that it has been able to grow at a greater rate than this.

2020-21 Investment

The impact of COVID-19 has meant the cancellation of our leaders' day and the Big Church Day Out this year. This means that our budgeted expenditure will decrease. Alongside this, we are conscious that we do not know how the longer-term effects of the virus could affect income as we all face unique and challenging circumstances. However, the life of the Sphere goes on and it is encouraging to be working towards supporting projects such as offering internships within the Sphere. We have benefitted from God's grace since Forge Sphere was formed and are grateful that we can continue to offer support at this difficult time.

Stronger together!



INTERNSHIP YEAR

One of the things impacted by COVID-19 was our planned internship programme which we hoped to pilot from September 2020. We are now aiming for September 2021, but we still thought it worthwhile to give you a flavour of what was being planned, with the hope that as COVID-19 abates we can resume next year. Of course, this is all subject to change in these challenging times.



Who it's for:

The discipleship year will be aimed at anyone aged 18-24.

Training:

In addition to the valuable experiences they will have, there will also be an emphasis on training during the year. This will be broken into three types; Theology and Bible, Spiritual formation and Ministry specific training. The aim is to equip them theologically to be able to handle God's word responsibly and have a good biblical understanding undergirding what they do.

Cost:

This is to be confirmed but we anticipate a year's training to cost in the region of £4000 per student. This includes food and accommodation and a contribution towards the student's living expenses. We are looking at various ways to raise this money in partnership with each student.

What it's about:

The forge discipleship year will be based at Fareham Community Church, which will be the 'hub' for the year. Martin & Gabi Doyle will be programme leaders. Interns will have the opportunity to get involved in a wide variety of ministries and support existing work in schools, the local community and wider church projects in Fareham. Once well-established, they will be given room to start something creative with the support of the team at FCC. Alongside this, they will have placement opportunities. This will involve spending some time in our varied Forge churches to widen their experience.

Where:

It will be based in Fareham but will have opportunities across the south in the Forge churches.

Why:

The discipleship year is fundamentally about growing young leaders! It will seek to build an environment where they are able to be challenged, trained and equipped for a lifetime of ministry; in church or secular professions. It is an opportunity to learn more about themselves and the person God has made them to be.

Applications:

Plans will need firming up post-covid, but it is anticipated that further details and applications will be available later this year, ready for a start in September 2021.

Aiming to
start
September
2021

CHURCH PLANTING

Why do we want to plant new churches? Great question. There are many reasons. Here are three.

Firstly, to play our part in turning this nation back towards God. Secondly, because we believe the nation needs many more live churches to reach the masses who are not connected to Christ's body. And thirdly, we believe there is still room geographically for new churches.

'Church' is God's way of transforming the world. The whole narrative of scripture points towards God forming a people through whom the world would be blessed. That people take expression as the Church, indwelt by the very presence of the living God, empowered for mission, demonstrating the character of God and what life in God looks like. We want people to 'see'...and part of their seeing is to do with the visible expression of the Church community where they are. So the nation needs many churches, empowered, vibrant and alive with God.

So, how do we get there? We pray, we plan and we take risks. As leaders together and for some more locally, prayer has gone on asking for God's direction. We believe God has spoken about coastal towns, and about life coming to stumps that look dead (see Isaiah). We continue to invest in our own evangelistic effectiveness, as this will be vital in any new church, and we have sought to gain input from those who have 'planted' more recently.

We are trying to plan. We want to invite you into this process. If you believe God is speaking to you about a new place, we want to know. If you are moving and would be willing to be part of a church plant, we want to know. If you are feeling called to reach a particular people group, we want to know. We cannot make everything happen, but we want to join and connect people to see what God might do.

Ephrem, the leader of Christ Community Church Kings Cross, together with his leaders, have a vision to plant 4-5 new missional communities across London over the next 4-5 years. Their vision is that in time these will develop into churches. They see these as Forge plants and as the wider Forge network, we want to partner with them. If you are moving to London or feel called to London, do get in touch. It just might be you can be part of one of these new communities, or you could strengthen our other existing London-based churches. We are also aware of new housing developments planned around Fareham, Basingstoke and Kent, so again, if you are moving, do get in touch and maybe you can be a catalyst in seeing us plant into some of these new developments. Maybe there is a place we have not thought of but is in your heart. Let us know. Who knows what might happen?

We don't feel like experts in this, but again do want to play our part in reaching this nation. May God open our eyes to see his strategy and where we fit, and may we all see how different people can connect to initiate new missional churches and fulfill His plans for us.

- Phil Norris

The logo for FORGE EVENTS is centered in a light grey circle. The word "FORGE" is written in a large, purple, outlined font. The letter "O" is replaced by a circular graphic divided into four colored segments: blue, orange, green, and purple. Below "FORGE", the word "EVENTS" is written in a smaller, solid purple, sans-serif font.

FORGE
EVENTS

COMING IN 2021

A teal-colored circle containing the text "Forge Leaders' Day" in white, sans-serif font.

Forge
Leaders'
Day

A blue-colored circle containing the text "Training" in white, sans-serif font.

Training

A red-colored circle containing the text "Youth Events" in white, sans-serif font.

Youth
Events

A purple-colored circle containing the text "Forge @ Big Church Day Out" in white, sans-serif font.

Forge @
Big Church
Day Out

Here's how you can get in touch and stay up to date with Forge:



www.forgesphere.org



facebook.com/forgesphere



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