



Wilson Carlile Centre  
50 Cavendish Street  
Sheffield S3 7RZ

0300 123 2113  
info@churcharmy.org  
churcharmy.org

**KINDER KALSI-Lead Evangelist**  
**GINA KALSI -Pioneer Evangelist.**  
**ATTERCLIFFE & DARNALL CENTRE OF MISSION**

Jan 2021

**Happy New Year**

As we look back over the past few months, it seems incredible to think that in September we were actually able to meet with people and gather albeit in masks and at a distance! What a difference a couple of months and COVID can make! In fact, there is some nostalgia and frustration, as we remember back and recognise that we are once again in a time of being focussed online - we continue our online meditations and have started an Evening Prayer service at 5pm on a Wednesday. We still meet with a lovely group for Lets Talk - where we talk about faith and everyday life, and until recently, we were able to continue our wood walks - which have been a real blessing with space to wander and ponder. Our fire services have happened in the garden at the church, or in our back garden and shared via social media, when in lockdown. Street Pastors has been suspended again, as the pubs and clubs are closed, and there is very little activity at night in the city centre.



**Our Community Outreach**

As restrictions eased, we felt we wanted to offer opportunities for people to talk, and to remember. We went out into the community with a gazebo, some wooden hearts and circles and pens - and invited people to share their experience of this time, and to write the names of anyone they wanted to remember who had died. Lots of people were appreciative of the opportunity, and while not many people took us up on the writing part, we had some good conversations with people -including a couple who expressed how difficult it had been to be in a flat during lockdown. We then used the hearts in times of remembering at our monthly fire service and at a joint church service with the local church. They are now planted in the garden of the church. When it was possible - and non-essential shops were open - we visited the local shops with a little blessing card - introducing ourselves and saying that we had been praying for them during the



Our Prayer for 2021

To be able to create deeper connections with people in Attercliffe and Darnall to help grow the Christian community.

**Bible verse Isaiah 61 1-4**

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor

**Online Presence**  
 AttercliffeCofM  
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lockdown and inviting them to contact us if they wanted prayer. These visits led to some fruitful conversations and some connections that will be helpful when we are finally able to visit again! Including a really helpful conversation with a pharmacist who was able to highlight health provision across the area.

## Partnership Outreach

We have been able, during this time, to connect with many of the community organisations and community leaders for the area. We have been involved in community engagement regarding the development of a COVID testing site locally, communicating with the community regarding current advice and restrictions and have been part of the stakeholders group for the area. This has led to us being involved in the production of a new newsletter for the area - Community Connector - with a page for us to encourage people to engage with the Christmas activities we had planned. This was delivered to every household in the Darnall area - so a great project to be involved with.



We continue to deliver for Foodbank, though we have reduced the days that we deliver when restrictions were eased. The need for food from the foodbank has increased significantly in the past few months. We have had some conversations with people as we deliver and their stories reflect the situation across the nation - people on furlough or who have lost their jobs, families struggling to make ends meet, people shielding and have been at home since March. We have been able to help out at Darnall Forum (another community group) and pack food parcels and activity packs during the school holidays. We continue to seek ways that we can support people in our local community - Kinder is applying to be part of the community hub in the local school - and we were very blessed and humbled to receive a hamper at Christmas in recognition of the work we are doing.



**Food** - seems to be a theme for us - not a surprise if you know us! We have also started getting involved in growing food. There is a local community allotment and so we have started going along to volunteer each week - and we love it! Neither of us can believe how much we enjoy the morning spent on the allotment - we even went when it was freezing cold and raining! There is something wonderful in joining with others to dig, plant and work on the land - getting our hands dirty, working on nature's time - things can't be rushed; and the food produced seems so much more delicious.



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There is usually a lantern festival in Darnall for bonfire night - to try and reduce the issues around fireworks and anti-social behaviour at this time. Due to restrictions, this couldn't happen and so along with Darnall Wellbeing - a community group - and with funding from the local council, we organised a window decorating competition to try and offer an additional activity for people during the dark nights and a second lockdown. We asked people to decorate



windows with the theme -light in the darkness - and to post their entries on social media. We made up around 80 packs with resources for people to use and distributed them via local organisations and the local cafe. One person shared packs with their neighbours and encouraged the children either side to take part. A lady took part, and said that she enjoyed having the opportunity to do some craft, which she hadn't done for a long time.

## Our community



Our core community has developed friendship and relationship with one another during this time. And we are delighted to have David join us - David is an ordinand who is coming to work with us as he trains for ordination. He and his wife, Helen, have joined us



for our online activities as well as getting involved with the other activities planned. We have other Christians joining us on our Wood Walks, and they have been encouraging and it is great to know that they are praying for us. Some of our Core Group caught covid and are continuing to recover from this awful virus - we give thanks for their recovery so far, and pray for complete recovery.

## Christmas



We used the **theme of angels** for our advent and Christmas activities this year. As a community, we made 12 angel shapes that were put in the local woods and park. Each angel had a question for people to ponder as they walked, and a QR code that linked to the Christmas story and our details. These were really well received - we had some great conversations as we put them out and a number of people commented on them - both in person and via social media. There was also a large angel that Kinder placed in different places - which again, had the QR code. We did try to encourage people to decorate their windows with the theme of angels, and celebrating people who are their angels, but this didn't seem to work very well in this area.





You are not alone,  
You are loved.  
Take this angel home as a  
reminder that God loves  
you this Christmas  
A gift from the  
St Albans Christian Community  
#WhicheverAngelYou  
#ShareIt #ShareItWithMe

Thanks to the amazing knitting people who sent Kinder knitted angels, we had over 500 angels to hide around the area during Christmas week. Some of these angels were knitted in memory of Annie ..... who sadly died



earlier this year - it was very moving to hide these angels, remembering Annie and thinking that these would be a blessing to someone, just as she had been a blessing to us. The angels were tagged and then early one morning, Kinder, David, Gina and a journalism student, went out placing around the



community, praying for them as we went - that they would be a blessing to the people who found them. We received a lovely email, letting us know that one was received by a lady, who felt blessed by it especially at a difficult time.



We decided to take a risk, and try **carol singing on the estate** where we live - so we dropped a note through every house, saying that we would stand in the centre and sing - and they could stand on the doorsteps and join us, if they wanted. 4 of us went, armed with a speaker and song sheets, and wrapped up warm, and socially distanced! A young family



came and danced along to the music - it was wonderful to see small children dancing and clapping along, one couple did stand at their doorstep and listen; and then a family (including their dogs) came and joined in with the singing. When we had finished we all said how wonderful it felt to be able to sing with others - albeit at a distance. This was one of the highlights of Christmas for us.

Gina was asked by a teacher from the local school, to create a short video about Christmas and how Christmas is celebrated in church for her early years class. We made the video and was delighted to receive an email to say that she had shared it with the rest of the school!

On Christmas Eve we had carol singing in the church garden - which didn't bring anyone new to join us, but was again, a lovely opportunity to socially distant sing carols. For Midnight and Christmas Day services, we joined with the local church. Christmas Day morning was a small gathering, but was full of joy and celebration - and to make up for not being able to sing, we used musical instruments to make a



“joyful” noise! The local minister, Lisa, created “indoor snowballs” (pompoms) and we each went home with a pack including some of these - so we later had a “snowball” fight with Josh and Genesis! So if anyone wants any ideas on what to do - make pompoms and use them for indoor snowball fights (but don't blame us if any ornaments get broken!!)



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## **Rhythm and prayer**

As we enter this new year, and another lockdown, we are re-focussing on our rhythms of prayer and inevitably focussing on on-line. We are planning regular prayer walks in the area alongside litter picking (the area has lots of litter and we feel that litter picking is a physical act of showing God's concern and love for the area). We continue to ask what God is calling us to develop in the community, and how we can serve the people here.

## **We Give Thanks For:**

- The unexpected blessings - people we meet and the conversations
- The people joining us in the activities and prayer - and for David and Helen joining the Core team
- Christmas - the opportunity to sing outside, and to gather as a family
- The opportunities to work with other community groups and the connections we are making
- For the wonderful community volunteers - at Foodbank, Darnall Forum and Darnall Wellbeing - who support the community.

## **Resourcing Church Army**

We do this by issuing a prayer letter 3 times a year and doing fundraisers when we can, mostly around Bhangra dancing and food. As we can't gather at the moment, we decided to fundraise by cooking curry and delivering it to people in Sheffield. Kinder cooked curry for 18 deliveries, and went out and delivered the food and raised £300. We are grateful to the people who supported this, and to our regular givers who continue to support our ministry - thank you.



## **What Next**

As our core group continues to develop, we are starting to gather for prayer each week via zoom and are going to try sharing a meal and discussing a book together (via zoom!). Kinder is hoping to become a member of a school community group and hopefully this will enable us to find new ways of supporting our local community. And we continue to seek ways to support and connect with the schools in the area.

We continue to seek what God is doing, and what God might be calling us to in this area. There is a large Roma community in the area, and we are wondering how we might connect and get to know this community better.

## Please pray for...

- Easter - that we find creative ways to connect with the community as we approach Easter
- Building of relationships - that we might start to get to know local people and have opportunities to get to know them. And specifically how we connect with the Roma community
- The people who live in Attercliffe & Darnall - especially in this financially uncertain time - many of them will be affected by this
- The community groups that we work with and for unity
- The churches in this area, as they try to stay connected and ways to be church together
- Kinder's 3 words for 2021 - Wrestle, Silence, Steadfast - that these will help him in his discipleship
- Pray for our children Josh and Genesisia

## Financial Support

Thank you so much for your continued prayer and financial support. Each year we commit to raising £5,000 for Church Army, so your support really does make a difference.

If you don't currently financially support the work we are involved in, but would like to, please visit [churcharmy.org/donate](http://churcharmy.org/donate) Or directly to... Acc. 80255491 Sort Code. 20-49-81 **Reference No. 1182 2006KKA**

Please use this reference number so that your contribution is directed to my work.

**Or To donate £5, text KINDER to 70970 To donate £10, text KINDER to 70191**

We don't take your support for granted, so thank you so much for standing with us. We want to pray for you so please let us know how we can, by emailing us.

Thank you Kinder & Gina



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