

Wishing you a very Happy Christmas from Oldham South Street Pastors



“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” John. 1:1-5

Shortly after our Street Pastor team first began in the Hollins Road area in 2008 they had a conversation with a man in a pub. Five years later a different team met him again and he related to them how on that previous occasion he had set out with the intention of having a drink and going home and taking his own life. He said he didn't know what they said but something happened that night otherwise he would not have still been around to speak to them. Just recently a very similar situation has happened and we would not have been aware of it if the person concerned had not told us how a very brief encounter on the street had broken them out of what they described as a very dark tunnel on that particular evening. I do wonder how many other similar instances and encounters may have taken place over the years that we are not aware of.



Our Street Pastors supporting the newly formed Saddleworth team on their first patrol night at the Whit Friday Band Contests

During this last year Susan and Catherine have stepped down from our team. I want to thank them both for their commitment. Both Susan and Catherine were involved in some quite dramatic incidents over the years as well as the quieter conversations and opportunities to assist people. We are also able to congratulate Catherine on the arrival of a new baby daughter. Amanda and Carl have also stepped down at least temporarily; both also are very valued members of our team.

However we have been able to welcome Roy who has joined us after completing his training at the beginning of the year. On Roy's first night out with us as an observer we said we would just have one last visit the tram stop at South Chadderton before calling it a night. Shortly after we arrived there was a commotion and a man clearly in a drug induced frenzy was lunging wildly with a knife at a group of intoxicated youths who had surrounded him and were taunting him. All we could do was stand back, pray and call the police. Although they arrived very quickly, everyone had melted away and fortunately no one was hurt. On our way back we came across that same group of youths and were able to engage with them. It was quite an introduction for Roy.

A much lighter note was when we encountered a very dapper gentleman. He told us he was 87 and a little unsteady on his feet but was going to the Springbank to sing and entertain, accompanied by a long term friend of his who used to play for him years ago at Foo Foo Lamar's nightclub! He serenaded Hilary as we assisted him in getting a cab but declined his offer to join him at the club.

Although our team in Failsworth is not able to be on the streets as often as we would wish, the Chadderton guys have also been down on a couple of occasions. On a couple of nights in the Summer the team decided to go out later which was very rewarding and brought them into contact much more with the 'night-time economy' rather than the groups of youths we normally encounter. One of the saddest aspects of our work is the rough sleepers who we have particularly built up relationships with in Failsworth. Despite our best efforts it is very difficult to get them to engage with the Night Shelter project currently being hosted at Impact Church on Manchester Road. There are all sorts of complex reasons for this which a training session with Terry Durose of Manchester City Mission early in the year helped us gain an insight into.



For further information on Street Pastors, Prayer Pastors or how you can support the work of Street Pastors, please contact:

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