

A Snapshot of the movement

Pioneering photographer Eadweard Muybridge shocked the world in 1878 by capturing time in motion. In doing so, he revealed what had always been assumed, but never seen: The asymmetrical, four-beat gait that enables a horse to momentarily 'fly' when all feet are off the ground. With his ingenious high-speed shutter and trigger invention, Muybridge was, for the first time, able to clearly frame moments in a snapshot of movement.

Love Black Country believes God is increasingly at work reimagining the immense, divine possibilities of 'togetherness' in our region and believe that also, this will bring transformative change.

For more than 30 years we have witnessed the Lord doing exceptional things in the Black Country. Like the story of Abram, called to a future beyond his earthly conception, we believe God is seeking people who dare to believe in Kingdom principles reaching every part of life, inside the church, community, economy, ecology and beyond.

Ultimately, none of this is about Love Black Country - not really - rather it's about His movement and how in our moments, His grace allows us to help expedite His intent. In this report, like Muybridge, we seek to expose more of His movement and how our efforts and moments play a part in this adventure.

**1. Gathering the Body | 2. Five years left for Next Gen
3. Championing a Movement | 4. Work in Boroughs**

More about Love Black Country on our website: www.loveblackcountry.org.uk/about

Gathering the Body



29
JAN
2023

Quarterly Gatherings

Gather, celebrate, imagine - the vision at the core of our gatherings as we share the dream of oneness. *We have become more active and visible in our attempts to gather believers in moments.*



14
MAY
2023

We have gathered in each borough this year, the climax of these; The Together Festival. Each help make dreams reality!



15
OCT
2023

TOGETHER festival23



Together Festival

They gathered in their thousands, they braved the downpours, they came as families, couples and singles. They crossed cultures, kindly embraced a raft of church worship expressions, music genres and both old and young defied age barriers to achieve one of the most credible, racial-harmonious, cringe-free Christian witnesses ever staged in the region. We believe the family focused 'Together' day was a partnership with Heaven. What a moment!

**3000
people**

**~250
Churches**

The prayer of Jesus 'that they may be one' had special meaning that day. Utterly amazing.



“ Bridgett's Story

20 of our congregation at St Paul's Church, Pendeford attended Together Festival 2023. Whilst most of us were retirement age, we had two families with young children come. We loved the extra worship sessions and we learned a new song that we have since used in one of our scripture groups. We tried the family zone games... We even stole the ideas for our own Family Fun Day that summer, a big hit for families whose children don't get opportunities to go away on holiday.

Denise's Story

It was a great joy to volunteer and the privilege to listen and have encouraging conversations with families from across the Black Country who attended. It was the powerful witness of seeing people from so many different churches enjoying fellowship together.

5 Years for the Next Generation

Will you give me 10 years for mission?
Will you throw your arms around the Next Generation?

Love Black Country was founded on a relational network of youth leaders. That foundation still remains, with many of those original people now running churches or serving Christian causes. Five years on from launching our ten-year mandate to bring a next generation into a vision of mutual support and mission, we are still labouring.

Following on from great work done by Deb Chamberlain as our NextGen Champion from 2019-2021, the legacy of her team of youth and kids/family workers from across the four boroughs continues to bear fruit.

Next Gen Workers' Gatherings

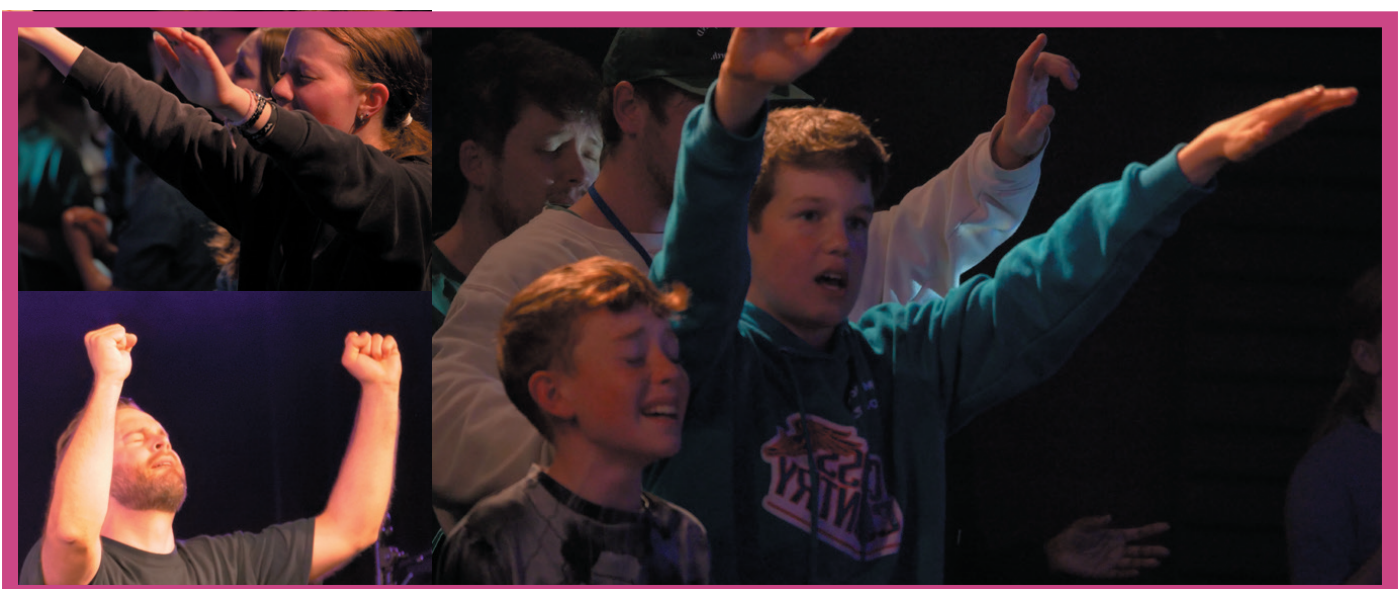
We have created gatherings in each term for youth, children/family workers' who have a passion to see God move through the emerging generations. Next year: more of the same.

Over 50
Youth workers, volunteers, prayers, leaders...

MOVEMENT
Youth Prayer Night

There is a growing passion to see young people come together to seek God and pray for their peers and to worship together. So we gathered them. The first was in April when over 200 attended, a second is planned for December.

200
Young people gathered to pray



Championing the movement

Church Leaders' Meets & Retreats



As The Net, we gathered church leaders in the 1990s and 2000s, but felt it right to devolve into the four boroughs to foster more local connections. In exploring new ways to create regional touch-points for leaders, we now have a Church Leaders' Team which has organised two retreats, including a two-day Together Gathering in November.

Business Network

We are assured God has a redemptive economic plan for our region. Our industrial heritage was forged with innovation and revolution and now we pray that same creativity will again dawn upon us. Every six weeks we meet to pray for new expressions of Christ at work within our business and third sector community.



SANCTUARY MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

growing mental health pandemic. We helped gather this diverse group to lead the charge. The team consists of passionate people working in mental health from across the region. Their strategy has begun by raising funds to part-sponsor and deliver a mental health conference for leaders and ministries.

Giants are in the land! We believe toppling them could come only through oneness. In responding to our provocation, a number of individuals identified the

Unity beyond our borders

Together is more than just us. We have sought to connect into the wider family of Christ, geographically for more than 20 years. Recently we've partnered with Gather Movement, a network of 'Unity Movements' from across the UK. Connections are also being forged with networks in Birmingham and Stoke. With these efforts we have participated in building bridges across the Midlands with the Mission Mercia initiative.

Do we need finance?

No-one wants to talk about money, but critical changes are here now. Love Black Country is increasingly active, running more events and gathering more people.

Bottom line: We need you to give. We need you to support the core costs of our work to fuel the movement.

Our large events like the Together Festival, have been cost neutral through sponsorship, support and incredible volunteers. **But our core costs of running the networks, communications and development** are reliant on generous givers, businesses and churches.

If you wish to invest in a movement that impacts the region, please consider a monthly gift.

www.loveblackcountry.org.uk/invest

Boroughs

Wolverhampton

Since early 2023, we've been re-establishing a diverse team in Wolverhampton, comprising church, youth, kids' leaders, creatives, business people, and prayers. The original 2014 team evolved over time, leading to a pause to foster a new 'Love Wolverhampton' expression. As 2024 approaches, we're excited to watch this unfold further.

Dudley

Established in 2007, Love Dudley Leaders' Breakfast unites church and charity leaders from all denominations. It help foster relationships, give support, and allows opportunity to stay informed about Dudley. In March 2023, 'The Faith Experiment' explored the intersection of science and faith. Love Dudley also partnered with Saltmine Theatre Company to host 'The Liberator' in early 2023.

Walsall

Love Walsall is aiming for spiritual, social, economic, and ecological transformation of the town through unity. By encouraging local churches to work together and listen to God, we envision a glorified Walsall. Our core activities include listening to God through our monthly Core Team meetings, youth engagement and uniting for traditional Christian festivals like the Easter passion play, gathering up to 1000 people in Walsall town centre.

Sandwell

In the last year, Love Sandwell facilitated monthly gatherings for church leaders and chaplains, fostering relationships and support. Responding to their needs, we introduced Sandwell Leaders' lunch for ministers, alongside an informal drop-ins for the wider Christian community. Venue locations varied across Sandwell, and ongoing research explores church needs for children and young people.

[Click to READ MORE detail about the boroughs](#)