

Broomhill Methodist Church – One Year On

It all began with a small idea — to make Broomhill Methodist Church more community-focused and open to new possibilities. A year later, that idea has grown into something far greater than we imagined.

Thanks to the generous support of TMCP, Methodist Insurance and Benefact trust the building works were able to move forward smoothly and with confidence. While improvements continue in other areas, the main redevelopment — a **climbing wall downstairs** and a **creative play space upstairs** — is now complete and thriving. These two spaces have transformed how the building is used, who it serves, and what “church” looks like within its walls.

Between them, more than 400 people come through the doors each week. Families, students, and local residents now see Broomhill as a vibrant part of the community — somewhere to play, connect, and belong. Many of those who visit have never been inside a church before. For some, it’s their first experience of faith in any form; for others, it’s where they begin to ask new questions about life, community, and spirituality.

What’s special about Broomhill is that **church happens in both places**. We host **“Climbing Church”** on Tuesday evenings — a relaxed, conversation-based gathering where climbers pause to talk, share stories, and pray together. In the play space upstairs, families encounter church through creativity, play, and genuine welcome — discovering that faith can be found in laughter, imagination, and community.

This project has allowed us to see that mission doesn’t have to begin with worship; it can begin with *relationship*. By meeting people where they are — on the climbing wall, in the café, or on the play mats — faith grows naturally through trust and belonging. Broomhill has become a place where discipleship and community life are interwoven, and where the gospel is lived out in action rather than simply spoken from the front.

Recently, we discovered something that summed this up beautifully. Staff mentioned that a couple of men had been turning up early on Wednesday mornings, quietly singing while the team set up for the day. Curious, I went for a climb on a Wednesday — and found two local people, standing beneath the climbing wall, singing *Amazing Grace* and praying for the work and the people who come through the doors, while they climbed. They’d simply felt moved to come and pray, to hold this new expression of church in God’s presence. After talking with them, I found that they lived locally, hadn’t been to church for some years but met together weekly to pray together, they had decided that every other week they would come and climb here, IN A CHURCH!

Moments like that remind us why we’re doing this. Broomhill isn’t just a project or a programme — it’s a living example of **how faith and community can meet**, how prayer and play can share the same space, and how God continues to work in unexpected ways.

This approach has also created a **sustainable model** for the future. The income generated from the climbing wall and play centre now helps cover the building’s running costs, ensuring that the space remains open and welcoming throughout the week. It means that mission here doesn’t rely solely on fundraising or reserves — it’s built into the rhythm of community life itself. Every climber, every family, and every visitor helps sustain the ministry that’s taking place here.

For others considering similar steps, our message is simple: **start small, listen to your community, and open your doors**. Use what you already have — your building, your creativity, your faith — and see where God leads. Begin with a conversation rather than a blueprint. The

transformation at Broomhill didn't happen overnight; it began with imagination, prayer, and the belief that buildings can still be tools for mission when they're used with purpose and hope.

As we look ahead, we're continuing to explore what Broomhill might become — a place where climbing, play, and worship intertwine, and where grace is found not just in words, but in the shared adventure of community. This is still the beginning of the story, but it's one that's already reminding us that God is very much at work in the everyday, the unexpected, and the ordinary.