

## Heaton Way United Reformed Church Romford, Essex (Thames North Synod)

### Our Calling

*"We are called to be Salt and Light, to be hospitable, to be servants, to be community and to share Jesus."*

This is the mission statement of this small church which has grown from being teeny tiny to small; from being 100% white working class to becoming multicultural; and from having no young people's ministry on a Sunday to having babies, toddlers and teenagers worshipping with us.

Here is a small community that has a range of abilities in its membership – both physical and cognitive.

In terms of our submission for the multicultural congregational story award, we wanted to express something that undergirds our mission statement and it is this:

The UK has a growing diversity of ethnic groups and cultures." The population grew by 4% during the 1990s: 73% of this growth was due to Black and Minority Ethnic group (BME), which grew by about 1.6 million, compared to growth of 600,000 in the white population. Only 37 districts (9%) had more than 15% of their population from ethnic minorities. 26 of these 37 districts were London Boroughs. London was home to 61% of Black Caribbeans, 78% of black Africans, 54% of Bangladeshis and 42% of Indians. Heaton Way is located the Borough of Havering (London). Havering is the least ethnically diverse area in London, and just one in ten residents are from a black or minority ethnic (BME) background.



- though we are small and all have various needs to be met, together we believe that God has called us to be God's family, in community together. For us this is expressed really well in the parable of the mustard seed.

Hence, the story of the *Heaton Way Tree* to embody our journey.

### The Story of the Heaton Way Tree



We decided to tell our story through worship on Mother's Day.

Our congregation has changed greatly over the last few years. At the beginning of worship it often looks the same as it did 10 years ago – a handful of white worshippers.



But soon everyone else arrives. We are still a small congregation but now we are wonderful mixture of ages, cultures and levels of ability.

We want to celebrate this fact!



As it was mothering Sunday we made as many words as we could from the letters of those words and reflected on what they say about us being the family of God together (eg. Doing, Strength, Nurse)



We then read the parable of the mustard seed and noted that though we are a small congregation, God can do amazing things in and through us. We all took a mustard seed and prayed. The rest of the seeds form the roots of our tree



We also know that God has put us together to help us to grow. To reflect this we drew round our hands, helping each other to do so



On our hands we wrote our names, where we were born and what being part of this family means to us. We then cut the drawings out and stuck them on the tree.



And, so here you have it: a symbolic expression of us as a church. Still very small but enjoying the adventure of growing as God's diverse family together.

**Members of Heaton Way United Reformed Church  
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