

## **Joel Ward**

After 11 years' service as Youth Pastor, Joel will be leaving us on 31 January 2021 to take up the role of Pastor of Bentley Baptist Church in Doncaster.

When Joel first arrived in 2009, he was a young man with a passion for spreading the gospel among the youth of UV and Torbay. During Joel's time with us he achieved many things, including starting up School Pastors, co-ordinating and being a coach for Transforming Lives for Good, as well as many other events for the youth at Upton Vale. We remember the weekends for the youth called "In their Shoes", where the young people stepped into the shoes of people they supported through Compassion. They had a weekend sleeping in cardboard boxes, and another one where they had to walk in bare feet to get their water from Andrew and Jenny's house just like the children they were supporting.

He and his helpers ran Youth Alpha alongside the UV Alpha courses, as well as youth small groups, drama groups, and the Forge and Breathing Space which were gatherings that focussed on young people but were open to everyone in the Church. Along with Libby, the Worship Leader, he hosted the Upper Room which were lovely times of worship and prayer.

Joel was ordained as a Baptist Minister in 2017 and it was a blessing to see Ellie, one of the young people, preaching at his ordination service. It is also so encouraging to see many of the young men and women who have been part of the youth at UV becoming involved in, and part of, churches all over the country.

There is so much more we could say about Joel, but as he moves on to pastor the church at Bentley, we pray that he, his wife Kirsty and their four young children will be really blessed as they serve God in Doncaster. God bless you Joel.