

GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

Spring/Summer 2021: FREE

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Celebrate

Celebrating work of the Norfolk Christian community – pages 5-8

Pandemic was ideal time to launch church

The young couple behind a new church in **Thetford** say a pandemic is the ideal time to plant a new congregation as this should be the time that churches are actually made for. **Keith Morris** reports.

Microbiologist Matt (aged 35) and primary school teacher Tor Bush (36) launched Thetford Vineyard Church in the middle of the pandemic last July. They have lived in Thetford since 2007 and the new church has been planted from West Suffolk Vineyard Church in Bury St Edmunds.

Monthly community meals began back in 2018, but it was over the summer that the couple were formally commissioned into their new role as church leaders.

The pandemic has meant that compassion projects and not church services have been at the heart of what the new church has been doing since then, including a GrowKids clothing project, schools project, helping neighbours and a church allotment.

Tor said: "It has been amazing – Thetford Vineyard church is going to look completely different because of being planted in a pandemic year. Right from the start we have had to decentralize and meet and work in groups of six. It has forced us to be creative and to think outside the box – the relationships people have made with each other and the journeys they have been going on with God have



Thetford Vineyard Church leaders Tor and Matt Bush.

been completely different from what they would have been.

"In the long term I believe it will really benefit the church and the town. The Kingdom will be spread further because of the forced scattering of our people. God turns everything to good in the end."

Matt, who is a microbiologist working at the John Innes Centre in Norwich, said: "We believe that God is calling us to a very different expression of church in the community. It would take all of our energy to do online church on a Sunday, so we decided very early we did not have the capacity to do that. Instead we have focused on community and serving side-by-side. We have also been meeting to worship, share stories and pray via Zoom and have found it very powerful.

The church is among half a dozen Vineyard churches planted across the UK since the pandemic started. Recently they did begin evening meetings in person in the Methodist church in Thetford.

"We want there to be a lot of grey areas where people do not know if this is a church thing or a community thing. We don't believe in separating the sacred and the secular. We simply believe in investing in our town, getting behind anything that is good and inviting the Kingdom to break into those areas," said Matt.

"More than half the GrowKids team are people who do not know Jesus but they want to see the same things we want to see (what we would call the Kingdom of God). At some point our intention is to also

introduce them to the King – we have done an Alpha Course during lockdown and have a prayer room. We do not need to get people into a building to invite them to meet Jesus – we take Jesus out with us.

"Pretty much everything we are doing at the moment is community focused – and that is our heart. We have done lots of projects to support schools and let them know that people are behind them – Tor is herself a primary school teacher and knows how difficult it has been for schools.

"For me it comes down to Jesus' command to love God and love our neighbour. If we just love God we have missed half of what God told us and it becomes very inward-looking and stagnant. At the same time,

■ Continued on page two.

Chris's ten years as coroner's chaplain

Rev Canon Chris Copsey recently marked ten years in the unusual role of supporting those attending Coroner's inquests. In a webinar organised by the Norwich Interfaith Group she talked about her work. **Eldred Willey** reports.

■ Chris was appointed ten years ago by the Coroner and licensed by the Bishop of Norwich as Chaplain to the Norfolk Coroner's Service making Norfolk a trail blazer, the first in the country. She is not aware of another such Chaplain.

Chris explained to those who joined the webinar something of the long history of Coroners, dating back to 1194.

In 2018-19 Norfolk had 3208 deaths referred to the Coroner, of which some 12% were considered necessary to investigate.

Since early 2020 Covid-19 has meant inquests held with few people attending the court. Normally meeting people has been a huge part of the role and hopefully will be in the future.

"Inquests are tough," said Chris. "They are full of people with lots of questions, raw

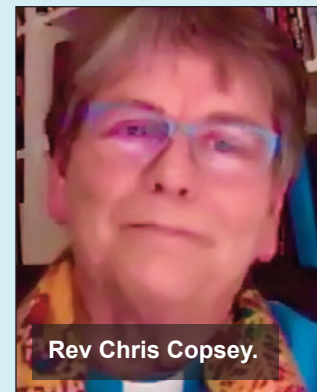
and difficult emotions and grief. Families, innocent witnesses and professional witnesses bring different challenges to support.

"Working with vulnerable people has been helpful. I sat for three or four hours with one witness who needed continual reassurance. Sitting alongside in court and an occasional touch on the shoulder was enough to bring down anxiety levels."

As Chaplain I support people of all faiths and none, provide a safe space with time and willingness to listen and face big issues, strong emotions and vulnerability. I signpost to other agencies who offer support.

An inquest, says Chris, is a place of law and grace – "law which brings authority and gives answers, grace which gives time and space for people to tell their story. I recognise the profound pain but also the courage and resilience of each person and situation."

Chris does not have a script, each inquest, however brief or long, comes in its own unique way. "I just have to find ways of allowing lament and articulating something of hope and consolation," she said.



Rev Chris Copsey.

GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

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Pandemic church

■ Continued from page one.

if all we do is love our neighbour then we are just another charity. We want to bring the two together. For us they are inseparable,” said Matt.

Tor said: “We have made fantastic links with the other local churches such as the Salvation Army and Methodists who have made us very welcome. When we do meet in person at the end of whatever comes next we will be meeting some people for the very first time.

“Lots of people have really struggled during this time, including us as we have been spinning so many plates. But we have a hope which many other people don’t – Jesus. We have to carry on and believe that through this we will see the Kingdom of God come and our communities changed,” said Tor.

The couple’s view of the current situation is neatly summed up in a vision which Matt had during lockdown.

“Mid-way through the pandemic I had a vision of a real storm that we are in. We have two choices. Either we take the lifeboat we are on to safer waters and just ride it out, or we sail the boat straight into the storm,” said Matt.

“We have a responsibility to people who are already in the boat, but if you look around us there are people in the water. People who are drowning in isolation, loneliness, poverty, abuse and who are drowning because they don’t know Jesus. If you see people in the water you have to go and help them.

“We believe that the church is made for such a time as this - there has never been a better time to plant a church or be a church”.

www.thetfordvineyard.church

The church – a beacon of light and hope

We are all hoping for a better, brighter future as Britain emerges from the pandemic, and **Rev Ron Skivington**, senior pastor at **Stalham Baptist Church**, reminds us that the church must provide the faith and hope that society needs.

■ Hopefully, by the time you read this, many of the lockdown restrictions we have had for so long will be lifting from our lives and, whether it is as individuals, families, or businesses, we want to look forward to a brighter future.

However, whilst some people will want to rush headlong into trying to return to “normal”, others will find it hard to even put a foot outside

the door. Many will still need time to grieve and mourn the death of loved ones or may still be anxious about their health, loss of income or job. Some will feel cheated about “stolen” opportunities and dreams that they had been looking forward to.

Forecasts predict that, by the autumn, the virus will be well under control and financial markets will be on the up, but there is still the possibility of new surges and restrictions as well as declining markets, so uncertainty could remain for some time.

We will all need time to reflect on how the world, our relationships, and ways of doing things have changed in this past year, and even, perhaps, how we ourselves may have changed. We have all been heartened by stories of communities working to support one another and saddened by pictures of marches and protests that have led to violence as grievances and anger have overflowed.

Are you someone for whom “God is good all the time”? Or is it that “God is good all the times it’s working out okay for me and mine...” and perhaps you doubt His goodness during those more negative times?

And what will the role of the church be in the coming months?

Quite simply, we will need to continue being the communities of faith and hope we were always meant to be. Our message has not altered, the power of Jesus’ name has not diminished, the scope of God’s love, mercy and grace has not shrunk, the call to serve Him wholeheartedly has not ended.

So, as society rebuilds, the nation needs those who have hope to come to pray, work and serve to see that hope realised in the here and now. By doing that we will model Jesus. When He walked on the earth people found life because He was a beacon of light in a dark world. May we be the same!

Churches urged to go wild

Ex-forest ranger **Charlie Houlder-Moat** wants to encourage churches across Norfolk to get outside and get wild, as part of her developing Wild Church Norfolk ministry, **Kevin Gotts** reports.

Charlie has an extensive background in outdoor education, having worked as an outdoor instructor and forest ranger, and is now a licensed lay minister passionate about growing Wild Church Norfolk, a mission movement that takes church outside its walls.

She said: “I have always been drawn to nature. Wild Church enables me to combine my passions of creating community and enabling exploration of both the natural world and spirituality.”

Charlie leads an active life – she is a lay minister and licensed to Rev Tim Yau and the Mission Enablers team in the Diocese of Norwich. They created the Wild Church Hub, East Anglia, to enable, equip and encourage others to set up something similar in their communities. Her paid employment is as Families Worker in Military Chaplaincy for the Methodist Forces Board. She is called to support this specific community and offer pastoral care in addition to supporting groups, activities and events.

“My specific calling is to equip those inside the church to move church outside their buildings to reach those outside the church. For me I suppose there is a three-fold vision to Wild Church. Firstly, the holistic nature to support the whole person – physical health, mental wellbeing and their spirituality.

Secondly, to create community around a



Charlie Houlder-Moat.

shared love of being outdoors. Finally, creating space for awe and wonder to be cultivated so people come to appreciate the natural world on a personal level and are stirred to do something about caring for our planet.

“If lockdown has taught us anything it is the importance of community, the importance of our outdoor spaces and the importance of bringing things online,” said Charlie. “For Wild Church Norfolk this has been especially important for those who cannot get outdoors to enjoy wild spaces for

themselves.

“The benefits of connecting with nature are well documented – from lowering stress and boosting your immune system to increasing creativity and elevating mood.”

Those who have taken part are enthusiastic: “Thank you so much for the Wild Church service, it was the first one I had seen. I found it uplifting and moving,” said one.

“I have a five-year-old son, who never sits still in church, and he loves to go round ‘helping’. On a personal level, I find the spiritual headspace offered more relaxing than a service indoors,” said another.

“I believe this is a great way to bring the young, environmentalists and nature lovers to the God of creation when they would not enter church for the formal services,” said another participant.

Charlie said: “There isn’t a prescribed model for Wild Church – all you need is a few people and some nature. The diversity of Wild Church is what makes it so exciting! I offer a ‘menu’ – there are opportunities to explore spirituality, time to sit with silence, guided meditation, noise and activity, care for creation plus wild walks for worship and wellbeing.”

The Wild Church Hub for East Anglia is in the process of collating information about where Wild Churches operate in the area to make this easier for enquirers to find. They are also in the process of creating video guides and resources to equip newcomers to set up their own.

During the first lockdown Charlie moved Wild Church Norfolk online: www.facebook.com/wildchurchnorfolk and to a YouTube channel: Wild Church Norfolk

If you would like more details, Charlie says she would love to hear from you at wildchurchnorfolk@gmail.com or on 07581 408847.

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Trail-blazing Norfolk architect receives royal accolade

Norfolk-based architect **David Thompson** was recently awarded an MBE by the Queen for his services to architecture and to the community. **Eldred Willey** reports.

■ For David, coming to Norwich was an answer to prayer. Working for BDP, a multi-discipline design practice in central London, he was feeling it was time to move on. But where?

After praying for 18 months while walking to work, David had a call out of the blue from a former colleague who had moved to Norwich. He was now working at Lambert Scott and Innes and asked David if he wanted to come and join him.

David had once caught Norwich on his radar when he and his wife Jackie went to Hethersett Park Farm Hotel to celebrate his fortieth



David Thompson.

birthday and remembers thinking: "I could live here."

Norfolk – and his partnership with Lambert Scott and Innes – provided opportunities to become more actively engaged with the wider community. In particular, he became

involved in ProHelp, an alliance of professional companies which offered up to £5,000 of free services as a leg up to good causes. This and other social responsibility commitments led to David becoming the Prince of Wales' Business Ambas-

sador in the East for two years.

From a professional point of view, a key connection was the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, of which he eventually became chair. He designed for them the now-famous Cley Visitors Centre – a ground-hugging, sedum-moss-covered creation, with double curvature on the roof for stability. The pioneering design had a ground source heat pump, a solar collector for hot water and a wind turbine.

David's spiritual life, meanwhile, had become 'a little bit moribund' as he puts it. It was sparked to life again by an encounter with Hereward Cooke, at that time vicar of St Stephen's. Hereward was coming under fire in the press for a bold partnership with the new Chapelfield shopping development, which involved blazing a trail through the churchyard to the Mall's front door. David felt drawn to stand with Hereward.

He found at St Stephen's a pocket-sized and elderly fellowship, packed

full of welcome, of prayer and of a sense of purpose. He and his wife stayed for over a decade.

It was certainly a providential move for an architect. After Madeline Light became vicar, the 'fateful crack' was discovered at the east end of St Stephen's, the result of a burst water main underneath. Madeline took to wondering how she could use the opportunity to re-imagine a city centre church and David's experience certainly came in handy.

David served as a churchwarden and saw St Stephen's become a city-centre community consisting of the passing public and local city workers, as well as a base for clubs and societies, mothers and toddlers' groups, the homeless and the congregation.

In true architect fashion, David is always moving on to the next project – finally working on his own property in Costessey and supporting the new young vicar in their village as he sets about revitalising the church and community. The journey continues.

Queen honours Norfolk vicar

A **Gorleston** vicar, who was awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) in the Queen's Birthday 2020 Honours list, told **Tony Rothe** about some of the work taking place in his community.

Rev Matthew Price, vicar of St Mary Magdalene church in Gorleston, was awarded the BEM for services to the local community during the first lockdown of the pandemic. Working in partnership with other local organisations, Matthew and his small team co-ordinated a group of over 100 local volunteers delivering, driving, collecting, phoning, praying, donating, door-knocking, cooking, cleaning, organising, packing and doing desk work such as databases and references.

Matthew grew up in Cambridgeshire, going on to study law at Chester and Cambridge, where he became a Christian. After qualifying as a solicitor, he specialised in Intellectual Property Law for a major London firm which led to four years of working on top level assignments, often involving deals worth over a million pounds.

In 2006, he and his wife joined the Baptist Missionary Society and moved to Kampala in Uganda with their three-month-old son, developing a legal aid ministry working in prisons for three years. He returned to the UK as International Director for the Lawyer's Christian Fellowship. They lived in Peterborough and were actively involved in an Anglican church which had been planted in a large and growing estate.

It was there he felt called to full-time ministry and he trained in Oxford, working in a church in an area of the city not dissimilar to the Magdalen Estate in Gorleston.

Matthew moved to Bradwell in 2016 with his wife Anna and children Barnabas, Charlotte and Rosanna. He transferred to St Mary Magdalene at the start of 2017, a church at the heart of the deprived

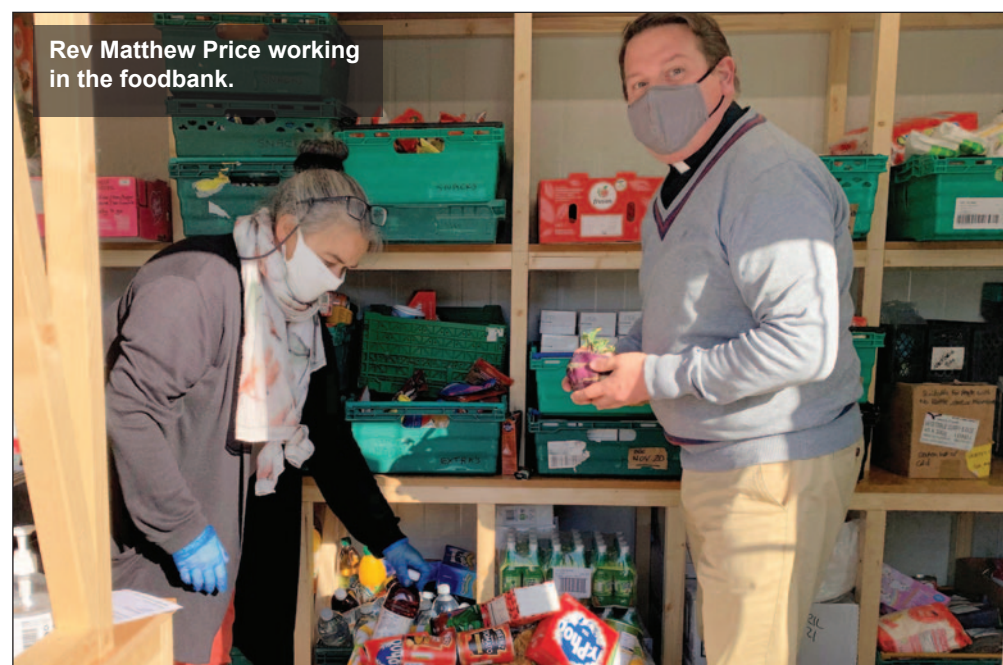
Magdalen estate in Gorleston. The congregation had dwindled to below 20 and a failure to draw any applicants to the post of vicar led the Diocese of Norwich to appoint Matthew to the post of 'Curate-in-Charge' in January 2018. He was subsequently inducted as vicar in October 2019.

Since his arrival congregations have grown, a thriving youth club and other youth work has been established, and Christmas and summer fun day events have been organised on the adjoining green which have attracted huge crowds. St Mary Magdalen also takes an active role in the local Foodbank and runs a weekly drop in, the Bridge, which provides a full hot meal. The church was visited last year by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby.

Matthew said: "At St Mary Magdalene, we are seeking to embody the priorities and concerns of Jesus Christ on the Magdalen estate and beyond. We want to see the transformation and flourishing of all aspects of life on the estate, not only the spiritual, but physical and emotional also. This means we are focusing on the individual and the local community rather than structures."

The growing church, which currently has about 60 active members of all ages is engaged with many activities within the community, including a flourishing youth outreach and children's work, coffee mornings, food for children in school holidays, a parenting course, support for local schools, hot lunch club, Men's Shed, Foodbank, telephone helpline/befriending, supported housing, door-to-door welfare checks, care home support, Christmas Day Lunch, and various community events.

Matthew said: "One of the most heartwarming things that has come out of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the way in which it has brought communities together. There has been so much to celebrate and much of what has happened would not have been possible without the amazing support and generosity of our community."



Rev Matthew Price working in the foodbank.

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Ambulance Service on the front line

Chaplaincy within the Ambulance Service is a challenging and demanding role to fulfil in normal circumstances but during the Covid-19 pandemic it has become more daunting writes **Lynda Logan**, Lead Chaplain to the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

■ At the start of the first national lockdown, chaplains were forced to stop visiting stations and instead, work from home. Maintaining a pastoral relationship with staff, without that much-needed physical presence, has been and continues to be far from easy. Even with the help of a telephone, social media and meetings via Zoom or Microsoft Teams, any pastoral support always leaves a sense of helplessness and a question of whether or not more could have been done.

Many frontline crew have contracted the virus: some have managed to fight it off; some have been left struggling with Long Covid and some have died. Writing so many condolence messages this past year has been a heart-rending task.

Staff have become stressed and worn out. The demand and constant surge is relentless with crew only getting 30 minutes down time during their 12-hour shifts. Each day, there is news of yet more staff members contracting the new variant and becoming extremely sick. They fear contracting the virus and passing it to their families. They feel that they are working and living on a war-time footing.

Chaplains' prayers are being increasingly sought, especially for crew and their families; for the new mother and child, who has been born into a family with Covid-19; for the relative who is not expected to live.

Members of the Ambulance Service, wherever they are nationally, speak of themselves as 'our green family'. They tend to close ranks in times of crisis and pull together as a family. They are resilient – they have to be. They play down what they experience on a daily basis – more than most people would ever experience just once in their lifetime: their sense of humour is unique.

This past year their 'green line' has grown thinner by the day, nevertheless, their professionalism and compassion endure towards patients – whether members of their own green family or the general public – despite their own human fears and frailties. They have and continue to shed many tears over the heart-breaking situations in which they have found and continue to find themselves. Please pray for all those on the front-line.

Hospital chaplain answers Covid-19 call

A Norwich hospital chaplain has responded to the call for former NHS staff to return to help during the Covid-19 pandemic, 20 years after he was last part of the hospital chaplaincy team.

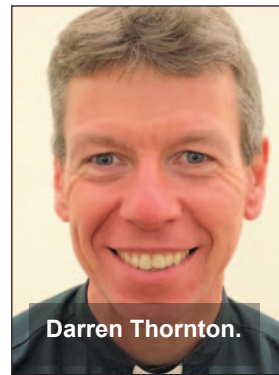
■ During the first call of the pandemic last year for former NHS staff to return, Canon Captain Darren Thornton offered to help the Chaplaincy team at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital some 20 years after he was a chaplain at the old Norfolk and Norwich site in the city centre.

Now a chaplain at the University of East Anglia and Rector of St Giles on the Hill, Darren returned to a depleted hospital chaplaincy team during what has been a busy time, providing

comfort and support for all patients and staff throughout the challenging Covid-19 period.

The move has helped develop a partnership between the Hospital and the University and shown how different chaplaincy departments can come and work together in times of crisis and need, said Darren.

Adrian Woodbridge, Lead Chaplain at the NNUH, said: "It has been great to have Darren working with the team and it has meant we are able to sustain a continuity of service while we



Darren Thornton.

have had a depleted team. Working together with Darren and UEA has also led to a greater understanding of each other's roles and organisations, I hope this opens the door for further partnership in the future so that out of adversity will come new ways of working."

Darren is not new to the Trust. He was part of the chaplaincy 20 years ago at the old N&N Hospital and was part of the team that planned for the Chapel and Chaplaincy service which is now provided.

Darren said: "It's good to be back helping this great hospital chaplaincy team and meeting so many wonderful and dedicated hospital staff. I'm loving being at the N&N but keep looking across to the University from the ward corridors and wonder when we may return. It's also been great to see so many UEA Medical students on placements and at work and make that connection with my role at the UEA."

Barn is spiritual art focus

A barn in rural South Norfolk is a thriving focus for the arts and creative Christian spirituality, as well as a recording studio and a craft centre, all run by an ordained couple.

Kevin Gotts reports.

The Barn is a former old carriage house at Rockland St Mary Rectory, seven miles south east of Norwich, and is the home of the former Burning Bush project. The Barn is a ministry run by Rev Canon Nick Garrard and his wife Rev Helen Garrard.

At present the Barn fulfils several roles. It is a recording studio for services, an assembly line for children's craft packs, and home to Art Café, as Nick explains: "The Art Café is a Wednesday morning online gathering where we contemplate a work of art or an artist and talk about all that intrigues and inspires us. We have conversations with artists, including the award-winning young Dutch artist Egbert Moddermann who recently joined us from Groenningen to share some of his paintings on Biblical themes."

Nick's role combines being Rector of six rural parishes (Rockland Benefice, part of the Bramerton Group) with Bishop's Officer for Christian Spirituality through the Creative Arts. The arts ministry is based in The Barn, was developed and resourced by his predecessor, Rev Wendy Shaw and a committed core group, many of whom are still involved today.

"I have been a parish minister for 32 years and continue to feel privileged to share my faith, accompanying and supporting people through the whole cycle of life, with its hopes, its joys and sorrows," says Nick.

"My journey with the arts began as a teenager, around the same time as I first felt called by God to serve in ordained ministry. I



enjoyed art and art history but gave them up to focus on more 'serious' subjects. My interest in art has never diminished and keeps coming back in different ways. It's been thrilling to take up lino printing again in the Barn. I still can't quite believe that we have a proper studio!"

"Over the past 20 years I became aware that God was calling me to explore combining pastoral work with education and the arts. Life is a constant learning experience. I enjoy supporting schools, teaching pastoral care and spirituality to students training for ordained and licensed ministries and studying art history with the Open University. Another

great privilege of my role is to be alongside people exploring life, the world and spirituality through the arts, whether as viewers, listeners or creators."

Helen, who shares this ministry is the full-time Lead Chaplain with the Norfolk Community Health and Care Trust and is very involved in the life of Rockland Benefice. Both are also training together as spiritual directors. A director is a companion, who meets regularly with those exploring their life journey.

"As the world emerges from its current restrictions, people may feel the need to reflect on where they find themselves and move forward. We trust The Barn will offer a creative space to explore their big questions. We look forward to times when people can return to the Barn for art events, quiet days, worship, coffee and cake," said Nick. "We are launching groups with different interests soon, seeking to encourage creativity in many ways."

Art Café attendees are very positive about the project:

"Art Café has been a window into and onto a world which I had always thought beyond my comprehension. I am now beginning to appreciate it more thoroughly," said one.

"I have much enjoyed the Art Café, with its lively and informed group. I have learned a lot, too. Many thanks to Nick Garrard, for his inspired leadership," said a second.

"Despite lockdown I feel free. Looking at a work of art; a chance for an exchange of views – those of the participants and those of the artist. We look at the same thing but see it differently," said a third.

Nick extends an invitation to join them or receive the monthly Barn Owl round up of arts and spirituality events.

Contact him on 01508 538014, email: nickgarr39@aol.com

Celebrate

Norwich & Norfolk

With the annual June Celebrate Norwich & Norfolk showcase at the Forum in Norwich cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions, it was decided to host a virtual and in-print exhibition to highlight the work of many Christian organisations and churches across the region both over the last year and into the future.

The online exhibition can be found on the website www.celebratenorfolk.co.uk and in the following pages.

After the Storm will be a chance to reflect

“After the Storm?” is a series of events set to take place at **St Stephen’s Church**, Norwich, in September to give people the chance to reflect on the global Covid-19 pandemic which has enveloped us all.

The project’s aim is to give people an opportunity to reflect on the pandemic before Covid-19 becomes just another disease we live with. St Stephen’s will host an art exhibition and musical concerts as a way of giving people space and permission to reflect.

Guest speakers, including medics and a psychotherapist, will be invited, alongside Christian reflection on selected art works. It will be free of charge and open to all.

St Stephen’s Vicar, Rev Canon Madeline Light, said: “The Covid-19 pandemic has affected everyone in some way. Storms often leave damage to lives and property, but are followed by a period of calm and then the enormous energy needed to rebuild.



“To help each other rebuild we need to take a moment to remember the effect of the damage, personally, in our families and friendships, our community and country. “After the Storm?” invites you to take time to reflect and consider what you have lost and how you can move forward into calm.

“It will be amazing to have talented artists work with St Stephen’s,” said Madeline. “We anticipate a month of reflection and conversation. This will, we hope, give a small window of opportunity to process what we

have been through, and what we might yet go through as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.”

Well-respected Norfolk artists Frances Martin, Richard Cleland, Gwyneth Fitzmaurice, Liz Monahan, Mandy Rogers, LS Walker and Helen Wells will provide visual images to help people reflect on the last 18 months. The exhibition will run alongside the church café during normal opening times.

An interactive space will include materials for use by the public to express for themselves how they perceive the pandemic and how they reflect on lockdown times.

A concert at St Peter Mancroft of organ music written by people experiencing or observing the storminess of life, called After The Storm, will take place on September 25, at 7pm with organist John Overton.

“After the Storm?” expressed in music, readings and prayers with the Norwich Community Gospel Choir – will be on Saturday September 18, 7.30pm.

Any donations will go towards the work of St Stephen’s which includes supporting the homeless and restoring the organ which is part of Norwich’s musical heritage.

Norwich FGB would love to see you visit

The “Happiest People on Earth” is one description of a worldwide fellowship of believers started around 70 years ago, and with local groups in around 150 nations, they have been enjoying times together in Norwich for over 40 years. But you may ask, “What do you do?” **Norwich FGB** president **Barrie Lawrence** provides the answer.

■ Let’s start with who we are – formerly known as the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship International, we have been called the FGB for around 20 years. We are Christians who are keen to share our faith, in a variety of

ways. Traditionally, we meet at breakfasts and dinners where a main speaker shares their life story. We never preach! We just want to hear how they became a Christian, and of the difference it has made. As we believe very much that the Lord Jesus has not changed, and is still doing the things He did in Gospel times, we hear about people being healed, having miraculous provision, etc. And we pray for people at our meetings expecting, and seeing, miracles.

Our members are from every line of business – plumbers, clerks, farm workers, builders, teachers, journalists, doctors, drivers... even the odd dentist! Ladies can join our ‘Women of FGB’ and work alongside us and are welcome at our meetings. Those from all denominations and none are included. We leave our denominational badge at home, and come together as family. We are not a church, but a group of like-minded believers.

We meet in a variety of ways, some of them

to share our personal story, and some to encourage one another, and frankly, to have a lot of fun. Not everyone wants to go out on the streets giving out our Voice magazine, but some do. Not everyone wants to attend a Gospel Song evening in a pub, with pub grub, but some do.

We have had an Indian Evening in an Indian restaurant with a converted Sikh speaking, an Elvis evening when we took over a nightclub, and a ‘Taste of Israel’ evening, with Israeli food and music and a Messianic Jewish speaker. In fact, we want different ideas, (please give us suggestions), so that everyone feels comfortable in doing what they feel gifted and able to do.

We love to welcome visitors, and especially if they then decide to join and help us with the work. Interested? Phone me, Barrie Lawrence, on 07786 381344 or email at fgbnorwich@gmail.com Norwich

Find out more at. www.norwichfgb.co.uk

Community chaplaincy offers support for ex-offenders

Community Chaplaincy Norfolk (CCN) is a Christian charity which provides **Volunteer Mentors** for **ex-offenders of all faiths and none**, supporting them to rebuild their lives after prison, as its team explains.

How does it work?

■ Based on a model established by national organisation The Community Chaplaincy Association, CCN employs a manager: to recruit, train and support volunteer mentors; to assess potential clients; to liaise with the prison authorities, probation, and other relevant agencies; and to allocate clients to mentors, all based at St Stephen’s Church café in Norwich city centre.

“This has been one of the best things I’ve found to help with rehabilitation...I don’t think I would have made it on my own if I’m honest.” CCN Client.

The Client Journey

■ Our work is not time limited. Once a person has been accepted as a CCN client, a mentor will meet them several times in prison, to build up a relationship and identify the kind of support they need to achieve their goals.

On the day of discharge, we try to meet each client at the gate and accompany them to accommodation, probation, or other appointments. This is followed by regular meetings with their mentor to discuss progress and work through any challenges.

“It’s just helping that person to walk life’s journey, really.” CCN Mentor.

Volunteer Mentors

■ Our mentors come from a diverse background of life experiences and beliefs. They range in age and there is a good gender mix. All mentors undertake an initial training which is followed by additional training and group support sessions. All mentors are also supported by regular one-to-one sessions with the CCN manager. If you might like to become a Mentor for CCN, please look at our website and get in touch – details below.

The Wider Community

■ Norfolk has a rich diversity of services available to help clients with applying for benefits, support agencies for addictions, and opportunities for voluntary positions, positive activities, training, education, or work. Mentors signpost clients to these agencies and explore options with them. We co-ordinate a quarterly forum for organisations working with people with convictions. If you are interested in the forum or to discuss partnership working, please get in touch.

A Christian ethos – open to all

■ CCN is not part of the prison system and, while it is a Christian charity, it is not attached to any one denomination. We welcome clients and mentors of all faiths and none.

■ Website: www.norfolkchaplaincy.org.uk

■ Email: info@norfolkchaplaincy.org.uk



What is the greatest thing you have ever received from God?

If I ask you what the greatest thing you have received from God is, what would you say, asks Robert Hodd from the Good News Stand, which regularly appears at Celebrate Norfolk and the Royal Norfolk Show.

■ Perhaps family, recovery from illness, a car? Can't think of anything? The greatest thing that God has given anyone is grace (something valuable we don't deserve).

It's awkward to confront anyone about a fault they have as we don't want to cause upset so just keep quiet even if they are going to cause themselves grief. It takes love to gently point out their danger. But God doesn't shy away from explaining to us our biggest problem – that in ourselves we cannot have a relationship with him because only perfection can be in his presence. Who of us would claim to be perfect? We have blown it.

Also there are consequences for wrong-doing: punishment, in this case, eternal. God is straight with us about that because he loves us and has the answer. A substitute; the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son. Become human like us but perfect, not like us. He took all the punishment everyone deserves. He died. But because he was perfect, he took up his life after three days never to see death again. He took that punishment for everyone who wants God's forgiveness, who is serious about really knowing God.

Religion fails, being good fails. But by accepting that Jesus is our substitute and committing to let God be in control, we have a great eternal life guaranteed and lots of advantages now. Such good news.

The Good News Stand is a group of people who know God's grace and want others to receive it for themselves. Nothing pressured and no names taken. We love being at Celebrate and the Royal Norfolk Show to share leaflets and just to chat over a cuppa. If you are interested, have questions or want to share how you received God's grace, just email us – it would be great to hear from you. good.news.stand.norfolk@gmail.com

■ You can also read more about this in the Bible: Romans 3 verse 23, Romans 6 v23, John 3 v16, Romans 10 v9

Offering a regular chance for prayer in Norwich

Norwich Healing Rooms is a place where anyone can go to for prayer, no matter what the need, whether physical, emotional or spiritual.

Norwich Healing Rooms opened in September 2013 and currently operates from St Edmunds Church, Fishergate and St Stephen's in Norwich city centre.

It is part of The International Association of Healing Rooms, with over 2,000 centres worldwide. The ministry has a close connection with Norfolk Healing Rooms, headed up by Ray Scorey, and has shared training with them.

Norwich Healing Rooms is open

every Thursday from 7.30 – 9.30 pm at St Edmunds Church Fishergate and every second Saturday of the month at St Stephens Church, Norwich from 12 – 2 pm. It is completely free of charge.

Charles and Vivien Strafford are Directors of Norwich Healing Rooms. They explain: "Our team is dedicated to seeing the same healings which took place in the Bible take place today, because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."

"The impact on the people that come to visit us is very powerful. We are the hands and feet of Jesus and our commission is to tell others about the Good News of the gospel, pray for the sick in all areas of a person's life and see them healed in body mind and spirit. We are totally scriptural in all we do, led by the Holy Spirit."

Here are some personal stories from local people:

■ Man with severe back pain who had to use a bridge in his shoe, and who had suffered from this condition for many years. As prayer was ministered his leg grew. He was able to bend over without pain. He has thrown away the shoe support and is back running, which he had not been able to do for a long time.

■ Lady with bad headaches and eye problems for many months. After prayer she felt different. She has told us that she no longer has headaches and the problem with her eyes has gone.

■ Lady with depression and other issues. After prayer she was immediately set free and released to go forward into the ministry that she was being called to.

Healing Rooms were originally founded by John G Lake, who was known as 'God's Apostle to Africa'. He was born in Canada in 1870, and his family soon relocated to the United States, where he grew up. His healing and preaching ministry spanned the years 1898 until his death in 1935.

In 1908, he went to Africa, where his anointed miracle ministry resulted in what has been described as "the most extensive and powerful missionary movement in all Africa." On his return to America, he established a ministry in Spokane, Washington which resulted in no less than 100,000 reported miracles of healing within the space of five or six years.

You can read more about Norwich Healing Rooms at: www.norwichhealingrooms.co.uk

GCF is an independent Norwich church

Grace Christian Fellowship (GCF) is an independent, Holy Spirit-filled, Bible-based church meeting in Norwich, writes Serena Jones.

■ GCF is a lively church, which is seeking to preach and practice the full gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are a small church, and very much a family. We believe in loving and supporting our church members. All our church services include preaching or teaching from the Bible, together with lively praise and worship. The Word is important, so that we know how to live our lives in a way that is pleasing to God, overcome difficulties, and know our Lord Jesus Christ in a deeper way.

At every service we take up a collection. We also take a charity collection once a month, which is used to support our work in India, or various local charities. On the first Sunday of the month, we take communion together, to celebrate the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, until he returns. Maranatha!

In the past we have organised various outreach activities, such as a monthly Sunday service at Philadelphia House Retirement Home, a fortnightly craft workshop at Silver Road Community Centre and street evangelism in the Magdalen Street area. We are currently looking for an outreach activity in the area of our new church building – Saints Event Venue on Yarmouth Road, where we meet every Sunday morning at 11am.

During lockdown we provided weekly online services, Zoom Coffee Mornings and a monthly Zoom Bible Study. As another lockdown project,



we produced and printed our own Cookery Book with favourite recipes from various church members.

Grace Christian Fellowship also supports the Hope School and Children's Home in Andhra Pradesh, India. The school and children's home are run by Rev Nicky Smith and her husband Pastor Samuel Zion.

In 2007, GCF raised the money for Nicky and Samuel to buy a piece of land and build the school and children's home, where they now live with their

two children David and Angela. Pastor Samuel also oversees a

number of small rural churches in Andhra Pradesh and once a month they travel to local villages to feed the poor.

Members of GCF have travelled to the India campus and have helped work with the children, teach in the school, or have taken part in evangelism in rural villages, where the gospel has never before been heard. GCF also supports the school with various donations and gifts, and some church members sponsor a child at college after leaving the school on the campus.

Prior to moving to India and getting married in 2007, Nicky Smith was the minister of Grace Christian Fellowship for over ten years.

Visit: www.gcfnorwich.co.uk



Reaching your East Asian Neighbours

A three part course focusing on culture and worldview.

For more information:

omf.org/uk/worldview

tim.jenkins@omfmail.com



David's global missions role

As the UK Development Director for World Outreach, Norwich-based former Baptist pastor, David Adams oversees and implements any opportunity to share the story of World Outreach and the Good News of Jesus around the world.



David Adams.

David's involvement with World Outreach (WO) began in the early 1990s. His introduction to the organisation came when ministering in India.

"My contact there was an Indian man whom I had met at Bible College in Dallas, Texas in 1978. God's ways are amazing," said David. "Since the 90s I have done many mission trips with WO. I count it a true privilege to be part of a mission with such a big heart for the unreached peoples of the world."

David retired from pastoral work as a UK Baptist

minister in Norwich in 2014. He then felt the clear leading of God for his next steps. To help build, in the UK, an understanding of the continuing need to 'make disciples of all nations'. "And why not through WO!" he thought.

World Outreach is a mission's agency – a ministry organisation that exists to help Christian missionary endeavour. They do this through: Raising Leaders; Evangelism & Church Planting; All Nations Mobilisation; Children's Ministry and Humanitarian Aid.

World Outreach has been around since 1932 and its workers are in many differ-

ent locations all over the globe. They are compelled by the love and message of Jesus to go and reach unreached people groups, distinguishable by their language, culture, or beliefs.

There are 3 billion people living in 6,000 different unreached people groups with little or no opportunity to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. World Outreach's goal is not evangelism alone. Through discipleship and leadership training, they want them to disciple their own people and plant their own churches. Then go to reach other peoples with the Gospel.

Although things have been somewhat restricted in the past year, David Adams has maintained contact with many churches, groups and individuals in the UK through virtual coffee stops on Zoom. He also holds Zoom meetings and online roadshows in many universities with Global Connections and UCCF.

You can contact David at: david.adams@world-outreach.com or visit www.world-outreach.com

Homeless ex-offenders charity comes of age

A Norwich charity which offers supported accommodation to homeless men, many of whom are ex-offenders, has come of age and is marking its 21st anniversary.

■ Val Dodsworth founded the House of Genesis as a small registered Christian charity based in Thorpe St Andrew and on the east side of Norwich. It offers supported accommodation to homeless adult men, most of whom are ex-offenders.

She first became involved in prisoner rehabilitation at Langley House Trust, a charity led by ex-Japanese prisoner of war John Dodd. She then attended Middlesex Polytechnic and gained 20 years' experience in the Probation Service, beginning in Corby in Northants, then after her marriage in Lowestoft, Ipswich, and Norwich.

Val later became a chaplain in Norwich prison, and after she had bought a six-bedroom house on the outskirts of Norwich the

vision of the charity started to take shape. In 2015, she was made an MBE for her services to the homeless in Norwich.

Speaking of recent developments, Val said: "Our manager Alan Barker is now in his second year and is working together with other agencies in the homelessness field in Norwich. He has brought a greater degree of professionalism to the charity, coming as he does from a long career in residential work. The staff team of Support Workers has also changed, and we expect to be adding to it this year.

"We have added new properties in the last year, bringing the total up to 18 beds in five houses. We have needed to designate one en-suite room for isolation so that every new resident spends his first two weeks there before being allocated to one of the houses.

"We thank God that we have so far been entirely Covid-free."

You can read more about the charity on its website www.thehouseofgenesis.org

Free online training offer to reach East Asians

■ **OMF (UK) is offering a free online training course to churches and individuals interested in reaching East Asians with the gospel, across the street or across the world.**

OMF is passionate about sharing the good news of Jesus in all its fulness with the people of East Asia wherever they live.

Tim Jenkins, OMF rep for the East of England, said: "Global migration means there are people from all over the world right on our doorsteps. For example, at least 130,000 people from Hong Kong are expected to migrate to the UK from there this year alone.

"This movement of people presents a fantastic opportunity to share the gospel. We believe



that to make the most of this we need to understand our neighbours' cultures. This allows us to build bridges to deepen friendships and communicate the gospel more effectively."

OMF have developed a three-part course to enable you to do just that. The course can be run as a one-day seminar or as a series of modules across a number of weeks.

Course content

Understanding Your East Asian Friends - Pt 1

An introductory session unpacking the opportunities to reach East Asians living in the UK, as well as establishing tools for understanding differences in culture.

Understanding Your East Asian Friends - Pt 2

Digging deeper into some of the themes of part 1. Exploring the ideas of guilt and shame in many East Asian cultures, and how the religions and worldviews shape everyday life and experience.

Helping Your East Asian Friends Understand The Bible

Drawing on the principles covered in parts 1 and 2 this session explores how differences in culture and worldview shape how people might understand the Bible, as well as how they expect to learn and explore new ideas.

OMF offers the training free of charge, it consists of three sessions of about an hour, and is currently held on Zoom. Find out more at: omf.org/uk/worldview

If you're interested in attending this training, contact Tim at tim.jenkins@omfmail.com for more details.

To find out more about the migration from Hong Kong and being a church ready to welcome migrants, visit: ukhk.org/church

Who are you in relation to Jesus Christ?

Do you want to know Him more deeply? How can we help?

Grace Communion International offers a range of resources to help you answer these questions ... and more

- www.because.uk.com – a weekly blog and free magazine answering some of life's questions
- www.sepuk.org – adventure camp open to all youth aged 12-17, Christian or not
- www.wordoflife.gracecom.church – daily devotional available online or emailed to your inbox
- www.narrativelectionary.org – a four-year cycle of readings for use in worship or preaching
- www.resources.gci.org/we-believe – a Q&A curriculum teaching core beliefs of the Christian faith
- www.resources.gci.org/pathway – journey with Jesus on the discipleship pathway
- www.gci.org/articles – articles on wide array of topics from Jesus, gospel to practical living
- www.resources.gci.org – equipping churches for a disciple-making journey with Jesus
- www.resources.gci.org/leaders – helping church leaders with ministry
- www.ambasciol.org – diploma in Christian ministry course
- www.gcs.edu – low-cost graduate-level distance-education accredited courses



GRACE COMMUNION
INTERNATIONAL

Norfolk Healing Rooms has faith for our times

Norfolk Healing Rooms, which offers free ministry for the sick in body, mind and spirit, is continuing its service through Zoom and offering free taster prophetic evenings.

■ Norfolk Healing Rooms, led by Revs Ray and Ruth Scorey, looks to Isaiah 53:4-5, which states that the Lord died not only to save us from our sins but to heal our diseases.

"We've seen a number of wonderful physical healings over the years; from eyesight restored, prostate cancer diminished, broken bones united and long-term back ache completely gone, not to mention emotional and spiritual healings," said Ruth.

Ray and Ruth are also Regional Directors for the South-East of England, in association with Healing Rooms England and Wales (HREW Charity Registration Number 1125094) and the International Association of Healing Rooms (IAHR).

All team members, from a variety of denominations, are spirit-filled Christians, thoroughly trained and regularly kept up to date with healing techniques.

In normal times, the Norfolk HR team convenes in various locations in North Norfolk, using private homes, as well as providing mobile ministry by way of a converted van in North Walsham Vicarage Street car park, at East Runton Car-Boot Sale and once a year at Celebrate Norwich and Celebrate King's Lynn. Since Covid-19 the team are able to offer online Zoom ministry.

"Zoom is brilliant for confidentiality," said Ruth. "We use Zoom features like the waiting room and breakout rooms (which are more private than meeting in a building), and the Zoom main meeting room becomes our private reception area."

Healing Rooms were inspired by John G Lake in the early 20th century, when Spokane was declared the healthiest city in the world after over 100,000 documented healings were recorded during a five-year period.

Cal Pierce re-dug the wells of healing in Spokane in 1999 and since then International Association of Healing Rooms (IAHR) has become an international and growing organisation, with over 3,000 centres in over eighty countries. They have a vision to see at least one HR in every town and city across the world. The first IAHR Healing Room in the UK opened in Halifax, West Yorkshire at the end of January 2003. There are now over 70 Healing Rooms in the UK. Norfolk HR began in 2007.

Website: norfolk.healingrooms.org.uk

Email: norfolk@healingrooms.org.uk

Tel: 07900 341 287



Rev Ruth and Ray Scorey.



Norwich Community Gospel Choir during rehearsals.

Choir back on song

Norwich Community Gospel Choir director, Megan Rawling, describes how the choir has kept going during the various lockdowns and how it plans to emerge even stronger.

A great gospel choir, it turns out, is like an ice cream van. I was given this insight in the summer of 2018 when the Norwich Community Gospel Choir (NCGC) was still just a figment of my imagination, and nearly three years later it has proved true time and again.

I've known it for ages, of course, but nothing quite beats the moment when one of your singers sees it too. It might sound something like this: "there's such a sense of belonging here", or "I just love

this lot – it's like family," or one of my favourites so far, "you seem so joyful - does that come from Jesus?" In these moments I keep my internal dance of joy, well, internal but they are what get me out of bed in the morning.

We sing together, yes, and we make the most beautiful sound we can, but it's the relationships we build, the love and welcome we get to show each other and the questions of faith we can grapple with together that are really where the party's at.

The fact is, like an ice cream van, we go around our fine city making music - but it's not the music we're selling.

Over the course of the pandemic, we've done all we can for NCGC to remain an anchor point for our members, giving them something to work towards and something beautiful to create.

Our year has been marked by digital

rehearsals, online Kodaly Music teaching sessions, Coffee for Six and our very own Virtual Choir films, and I'm so proud of everyone.

But as we've all learned throughout the course of 2020, nothing beats being together.

So now at last, we breathe a sigh of relief and begin to look to the future. All being well, we'll be back for outdoor rehearsals from May 18, and from then on we'll run sessions both digitally and in person until we can resume large-group rehearsals inside.

Anyone is welcome. We don't audition or use sheet music, and our concession prices are available to anyone who feels they need them.

For further details about the work of NCGC, please visit www.ncgc.org.uk, or drop a line to our myself, Megan Rawling, at hello@ncgc.org.uk.

Providing a pathway for the vulnerable

Pathway offers food, friendship and advice to vulnerable people in Great Yarmouth. Pathway manager, Jennifer King, reports.

■ Pathway works within the Anglican Parish of Great Yarmouth and operates from the Minster Mission on Admiralty Road. We serve a hot meal three days a week, throughout the year to vulnerable members of our community.

Our mission is to provide a safe and welcoming space for people to meet, develop friendship groups and to have the opportunity



to receive advice and practical help. We work in partnership with other service providers across Gorleston and Great Yarmouth and offer signposting and support to our customers.

We currently have over 300 names on our database and serve in excess of 100 customers each day. We are in the process of establishing ourselves as a food bank, in addition to our current provision.

Pathway is a small, independent charity with a great team of volunteers. We rely on both food and financial donations to be able to provide our services and are always very resourceful in using everything we receive. Our aim is to provide a consistent, dependable, friendly service in a world where our customers often face uncertainty, instability and hostility. We are passionate about serving our local community and we look forward to the positive opportunities that lie ahead for Pathway Great Yarmouth.

For more information, ring 07715 959830 or jenk.pathwaygy@gmail.com

Web:

gtyarmouthminster.org/community/5

Church has role to play in post-pandemic change

Society seems to be changing at a hectic pace, especially as we start to emerge from the pandemic restrictions, and Norfolk church leader **Ian Savory** believes that the local church has an important role to play in influencing that change.

■ Ian, senior leader at Lighthouse Community church in Sheringham, believes that whilst there has been a big decline in some British churches, there has been much encouraging growth in others.

"There can often be a lack of realisation of what is dead, and what needs to be left behind," he explained. "We are often not honest enough about how consumerism affects the church – It's natural to want to go to a church that has the best music, rousing songs, eloquent sermons, or even the finest coffee! But if we strive for these things, we are missing the point."



Does Ian think churches are changing then? He points out that major disasters, such as flooding and plagues, have always had a big impact on the community, but the local church always rises to the occasion. Not just through on-line services, which in themselves have en-

abled churches to reach many more people than those who would normally come through the doors, but by serving the needy in their local communities.

"There have been several articles in the local and national press about how the pandemic has brought churches back to life. Churches are genuinely loving and caring, and over one third of people believe the church is making a real difference."

Ian also feels that people underestimate the amount churches do. "Several years ago, Norwich City Council looked at social action in Norwich and concluded that if the work churches did in the city was removed it would leave a massive hole, and I believe it is the same in many other places."

Ian spoke of a book he had been reading by Rodney Stark called "The Rise of Christianity", which pointed out that when plagues came most people laid low, but it was the churches who stayed and cared for the dying. This laid foundations for the growth of the church, and is one reason why Christianity grew so quickly.

When asked how the church in Britain needs to change, Ian said that the pandemic will force

churches to move on and realise what's not working. The church hasn't been confident enough, and needs to rebuild following the model in Ephesians 4 – recognising the gifts of those that God has placed in His church, such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and making sure those people are used.

"We must hold on to Christ and what He stands for – no compromises," Ian said. "Churches need to ask if what they are doing is bearing fruit, and if not, it must change, and cut away all the dead wood, and fruitless activities. The Gospel needs to bear fruit, see lives changed and churches grow in numbers and influence."

He said that churches cannot afford to prop up what's not working but need to direct their resources to the front line. Workplace chaplains, for example, such as police chaplains can have as much influence as church leaders.

Ian said he was generally optimistic about the future of the church. "It is, after all, the body of Christ, and there is a huge amount of power in the local church. But we must hold tight to Christ, but loosely to all the things we do."

Norfolk link to Ethiopia hospice

Ethiopia has one hospice for a population of 112 million. Half of its funding comes from a charity led by **Sue Mumford**, a nurse who lives in north Norfolk. **Eldred Willey** reports.

Sue is a Community Specialist Palliative Care Nurse. She helps people cope with the end of life, by controlling pain and symptoms, and offering psychological and spiritual support.

"Dying is a really distressing time for patients and their families," she said.

Her husband Jamie is a GP at Aylsham with a special interest in palliative care, so they make an ideal team.

Sue is part of the extended Gurney family, the distinguished Norfolk banking family. Her cousin is Lady Pippa Dannatt, Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk, who is a keen supporter of the work of Hospice Ethiopia.

Sue traces the beginnings of her mission to meeting Dame Cicely Saunders during her training at Barts in London. Following a year nursing in Switzerland she returned to England where she cared for patients with lung cancer on a respiratory ward at Papworth Hospital, and started asking herself how to provide the best care for them.

It was at this time that she met Jamie, at that time a glaciologist. They decided to move together to Oxford, where he re-trained in medicine.

Their first opportunity to see medical care beyond the abundance of the UK came when Jamie chose to do his elective in India. "It was a real eye-opener," said Sue. "Only three of the patients in the hospital where we were working had pain killers."

After her husband settled down as a GP in Aylsham, she volunteered at Priscilla Bacon Lodge in Norwich, which provides end-of-life care to patients with life-limiting illness. However, staff soon spotted that she was



trained, and persuaded her to do the return-to-nursing course. She subsequently gained a Degree in Nursing at the UEA. Part of her course enabled her to become a nurse prescriber which proved invaluable in her later work.

Meanwhile Dr Katie Carpenter from Priscilla Bacon Lodge was developing a twinning arrangement with Hospice Ethiopia, which had been founded in 2003 by a nurse called Tsigereda. The idea was that the two hospices would share staff and

expertise. It soon became apparent, however, that what was most needed were funds (as they receive virtually no funding from within Ethiopia) and as the nurses had been well trained in palliative care at Hospice Africa Uganda in Kampala.

In 2012 Sue was part of a group which went out to Ethiopia to visit the twin, and she started to recognise the enormous need.

"Poor people in Ethiopia get free admission to hospital," she said, "but treatment costs money. So it is beyond them."

Hospice Ethiopia provides care for people in their own homes. It gives out medicines, catheter bags, stoma bags and dressings free of charge. It may also provide food and other essential items for patients.

One memorable patient Sue met was a woman who had breast cancer, and who was being cared for by her teenage daughters after her husband left her. She visited the patient every couple of weeks, got the pain under control and made sure there was food in the house. Towards the end of her stay in Ethiopia, the woman, who previously had refused to be photographed, asked if she could have her picture taken.

"In some ways palliative care is harder in Ethiopia," said Sue. "Often there is no point in sending people to hospital because none of the treatments such as radiotherapy will be available or will cost too much. But in some ways, it is easier. In the UK, people might use their final weeks trying six or seven treatments, none of which is particularly effective. Sometimes it's best not to have a myriad of options, but just to have the time to sort out one's affairs and enjoy precious time with friends and family."

In both countries the essential mission is the same: maximising the quality of life, calming the situation down, finding some areas of pleasure, and coming to terms with what is happening.

All money donated goes to the hospice in Ethiopia and £15 will feed a patient for a month. Visit: www.hospiceethiopia.org.uk

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The Matthew Project has been helping people live fuller lives, free from drug and alcohol misuse for more than 35 years. The charity has a Christian ethos, and is based in Norfolk. We provide support to young people, veterans, professionals, people in recovery, and the family and carers affected by substance misuse

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www.matthewproject.org

Bertie's spirit shines in pandemic challenges

Lockdown, personal loss and suffering have not thwarted the spirits of Norwich lady **Bertie Emes-Ellis** who simply lives to give. **Sandie Shirley** reports.

■ Her smile is wide; her eyes gleam and there is an endless stream of hope and love pouring from her heart.

Although Bertie has special needs and resides in supported living accommodation in Norwich, the challenges throughout her 31 years have been borne with inner strength and resource. It has given rise to joy on the outside and a child-like faith within.

In the last two years, she has put her life on hold to comfort and encourage young and old, including three close friends who have died during or before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Her mother Sallie Wright, who launched a children's charity in Norwich over 20 years ago, takes up the story: "I have watched as Bertie has interacted with people as a beautiful willing vessel of God's love. She has laid down her life caring for dying friends while feeling the full impact of lockdown for five months last year, unable to see family or interact with outside activities though she still attended on-line church meetings.

"Bertie was born with Down's Syndrome and though she has learning difficulties she is receptive, communicative and her spirit is not disabled, and we should not limit those like her because of what we see or think.

"Living in a nice bungalow in the community, she is known to be bright and happy: dancing and twirling; singing loud songs; saying loud prayers and spreading faith. She comes alongside the elderly and vulnerable and raises staff morale while sharing simple thoughtful gifts.

"Her compassion has been evident as two housemates lived out their last days. She prayed, cared, and shared her simple faith to bring hope while living out gospel values, truths and principles while using Bible stories and DVDs.

"She was a source of joy and happiness in the Lord to these friends and staff. She wholeheartedly shared her faith throughout and the



Sallie and her daughter Bertie.

families and staff who cared for one of her late friends said Bertie made a difference to their lives during this time and throughout the pandemic lockdown," said Sallie.

"Bertie's compassion and love have been there since childhood. Growing up in church she would always display kindness and acceptance; there were no judgments or reservations. When the drug addicts and homeless people came and sat in the back pews Bertie readily embraced them with huge hugs which had a big impact on them.

"Bertie (short for Roberta after her maternal grandmother) is a triplet with five siblings including a brother with special needs too. Growing up in a home of love over trial and faith over fear has been an empowering building block for her life despite personal challenges.

"I knew there would be difficulties especially with education needs. But after her birth I read: 'Angel Unaware.' The book tells the compelling story of Roy Rogers (known for his entertaining role as the 'Lone Ranger' in the fifties) and his wife Dale whose daughter, Robin Elizabeth Rogers was born with serious health issues as well as Down's Syndrome.

"The Christian couple share their timeless message of hope and faith for parents like me who care for special children with various special needs. The book has sold over 500,000 copies since it was first published in 1953. It has provided enlightenment, wisdom and a growing sensitivity to the challenges, dreams and milestones that have been part of Bertie's path and for those like her," said Sallie.

LETTON HALL Now taking bookings!



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Holiday, activity & retreat centres are ready to re-open

Christian conference, activity, holiday and retreat centres across Norfolk and North Suffolk are re-opening after a year of lockdown restrictions and are set to welcome guests once again.

The Horstead Centre activity centre, near Coltishall will be opening from April, offering a new range of bespoke Activity Days and Experiences for small groups and families as well as for larger groups and schools.

Centre Manager, Will Mills, said: "We have over 20 activities to choose from all based in our beautiful, enclosed grounds on the River Bure. For residential stays, we are offering sole occupancy of our house and grounds, and our experienced team have a thorough Covid-secure plan in place.

"We are open all year round and are ready to help visitors design and enjoy whatever experience they have in mind this year. Please get in touch to discuss how a visit to Horstead can be something for you to look forward to in 2021."

www.horsteadcentre.org.uk

■ After a year of lockdown, young people are struggling with anxiety, loneliness and depression like never before according to the Christian Conference Trust (CCT). Getting them out of the house, away from screens and back together in person has never been so important.

The CCT runs the Belsey Bridge Christian conference centre on the Norfolk/Suffolk border and this summer they are offering all-inclusive youth group breaks for only £56 per person, per night.

Head of Sales & Marketing, Mark Rowe, said: "Your youth group will love waking up in comfortable bedrooms to enjoy a cooked breakfast, acres of open space to let off steam, a hearty lunch, a meeting hall with quality

video and sound equipment and an evening meal of restaurant-quality food.

"There will be no making sandwiches, no washing up, no making beds and no putting up tents at Belsey Bridge – leaving you free to spend quality time with your young people as they develop relationships face-to-face, away from their everyday routine."

Spaces are limited, so call CCT today on 0300 111 4444 or visit www.belseybridge.org.uk to benefit from this reopening offer.

■ Quiet Waters Christian Retreat House on the Norfolk/Suffolk border is now taking provisional bookings from May 17.

Phil Perry from Quiet Waters, said: "We are very much looking forward to welcoming our guests through the door and returning to the daily rhythm of life here. We are still very aware of our Covid responsibilities and most of the systems we put in place to open last summer will still be running, which we will continue to keep under review.

"If you are longing to get away and spend time with God please get in touch to book your stay, or for more information. We look forward to hearing from you soon."

The team at Quiet Waters has spent the last few months modernising a new apartment ready for it to be available for self-catering retreats from May.

"This is a new direction for us and we hope it will appeal to people seeking a longer stay. Perhaps those returning from the mission field or ministers on sabbatical," said Phil.

www.quietwaters.org.uk

■ Christian Conference Centre Letton Hall, located near Shipdam in mid-Norfolk, is re-opening the hall at the end of June. Assistant Centre Manager, Tim Blanche, said: "We have been truly amazed over the last year with the way in which the Trust has been provided for. It is great to now be opening again so that people can gather together and enjoy fellowship together and time with God as a group. Something that we have all missed!"

Letton Hall has some availability throughout the summer and autumn months for church groups, youth group and even breaks for families. www.lettonhall.org






Bespoke, Fun-filled Experiences

The Horstead Centre has created a new range of exciting Activity Days and Experiences for families and groups to reconnect with nature and with each other.

Activities Days could be focused on:

- Wellbeing and creativity,
- Adventure and exploration
- Forest skills and camp cookery

We tailor an experience to suit your needs with any selection of our favourite activities, including: canoeing, bushcraft, environmental art, camp cookery, archery, crate stack, jacobs ladder, stand up paddle boards, rock climbing, zip-line.

A COVID Secure approach from a centre with 50 years experience.
We have limited availability for these Experiences.
Please contact us for rates and availability. Full Activity Days which include up to 4 Activities cost from £28.50 +VAT per person.

For more information contact: **William Mills, 01603 737215**, william.mills@horsteadcentre.org.uk or visit: www.horsteadcentre.org.uk
Horstead Centre, Old Rectory, Rectory Road, Horstead, Norwich NR12 7EP
Registered Charity 303986




Follow our adventures on:  



01986 893201
mail@quietwaters.org.uk
www.quietwaters.org.uk

We are getting ready to reopen!

The team here at Quiet Waters Christian Retreat are looking forward to welcoming you back to stay with us from 17th May.

If you are longing to get away and spend time with God we'd love to hear from you - just give us a call or send an email to book your stay.

From 12th April we are also now offering a self-catering apartment for longer stays.

Come, find peace and simply be.



"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." Mark 6 v31

James' gives town youth a voice

For young people in King's Lynn already facing stiff challenges, the pandemic has been the last straw. Church Army officer **James Hawksworth** has found a way to respond where the need is most acute. **Eldred Willey** reports.

Over three years ago, James Hawksworth arrived in Norfolk, tasked with developing a Centre of Mission – a community hub that would encourage people to engage with the Christian faith.

James, who is a Captain in the Church Army, was very keen to learn about the area and the people. He spent the first six months getting to know the churches and their members. He learned about existing projects, visited local schools and community groups, as well as wandering around the town talking to people.

The one thing that kept coming up

was the need for something that would support secondary-school-age young people. James went back to three secondary schools – Springwood High School, King Edward VII Academy and King's Lynn Academy – and is now in the process of developing strong links with them and with the young people there. He also has met with the YMCA West Norfolk team.

James says he been blown away by how the schools have responded to his presence. He has been given freedom to take young people out of class to work with them one-to-one.

He has met with 11 and 12-year olds who have developed eating disorders due to bullying. One of them in particular was losing weight very fast and suffering immensely.

"Our young people can feel very lost and misunderstood at times," said James. "Anxiety and other mental health problems are on the rise in many young lives." His position within the schools has begun to allow many young people to open up and find some meaning in their lives.

"Even the teachers are noticing the changes," he said.

"Lockdown has had a massive effect on schools. We know that many young people, especially those with more difficult backgrounds, have had to live in hostile environments, locked down with those that are less capable of giving the right kind of support."

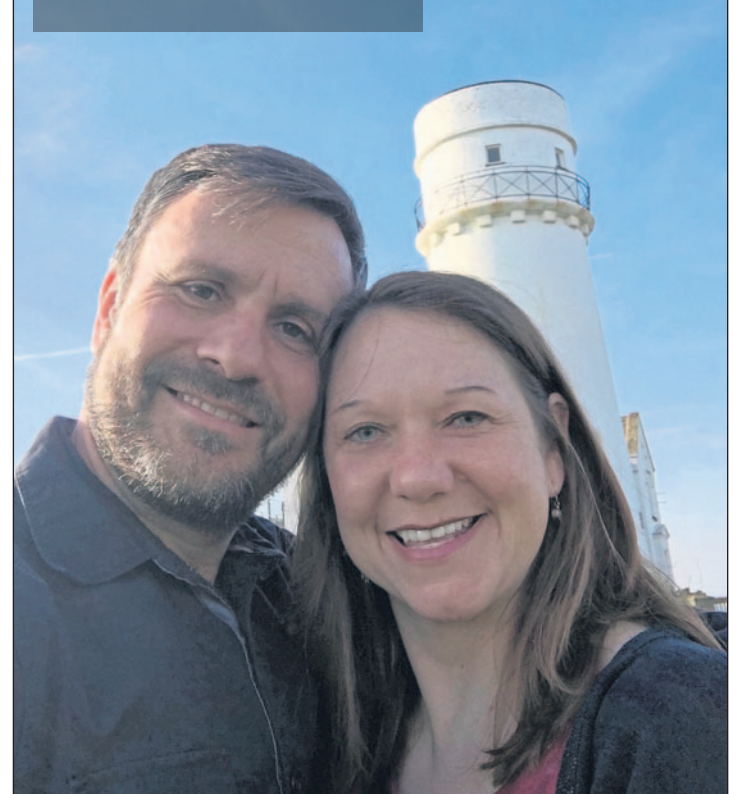
As schools have reopened, it has become clear that many young people have struggled to find care and support. Since being back at school James has been working with young people who have been bereaved or have developed a poorer mental state because of lockdown.

"Encouraging young people to have a voice and to speak positively into their own lives and into their friends' lives is so important, especially at the moment," said James.

He is seeking to develop partnerships with the local churches, including St Faith's Church in Gaywood and find volunteers to work with him within schools.

If you would like to find out more about James' work or support him in prayer or financially please contact him on james.hawksworth@diocese-ofnorwich.org

James and Laura Hawksworth.



YMCA

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