


# GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

Summer 2024: FREE

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# Celebrating 30 years of women as priests

This year marks 30 years of the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Church of England. Among those first women was the Bishop's Chaplain, Rev Canon Sally Theakston. **Helen Baldry** reports.

**S**peaking at a commemorative service on April 30, 30 years from the ordination of 20 women at Norwich Cathedral, Canon Sally said: "I am grateful for the women and men who worked to make this possible. We owe a debt of gratitude to women who served faithfully as Lay workers, Deaconesses and Deacons and whose priestly calling was never formally recognised."

Sally studied environmental science at UEA and upon graduating she worked for a Christian organisation in London. She said, "Ministry as a priest is a vocational calling. From my time at UEA, when I was deeply involved in the Student Union and Chaplaincy, I felt a real calling but at that time there were no women priests. It was quite difficult because some of my male friends were involved in discerning what their calling might be, and whether it might be to priesthood, but there weren't those options for women."

Sally's calling to priesthood didn't go away. She went forward to selection and training as a Deaconess, receiving exactly the same training at theological college as her male counterparts, in the hope that at some stage the church would recognise her calling. It was a five-year wait until it became a reality for her on Tuesday May 21, 1994 in Southwark Cathedral.

Thirty years on, Sally says that women priests are generally hugely well accepted and, although she sometimes encountered hostility, she was more often met with surprise. She said, "In my early days as a curate in Hackney in East London it was all very new. Sometimes people were surprised to see a young woman turn up on the doorstep to



Rev Canon Sally Theakston, right, and, below other women priests at the 30th anniversary service at Norwich Cathedral. Pictures by Bill Smith.



talk about their father's funeral. However, it was hardly an issue."

When she returned to Norfolk in 2002 Sally was one of few women who held responsibility for a parish but this has changed dramatically over the decades.

Sally is something of a pioneer; before she came to Norfolk she spent six years in the Royal Navy and was the first Anglican woman to serve as Chaplain in the armed forces, a role that took her all over the world, including the Falklands, South Georgia and the West Indies.

Travel to remote places is something Sally enjoys in her leisure time. But she

does have a soft spot for Norfolk, particularly Gaywood, King's Lynn, which is where she first ministered in Norfolk as Rector at St Faith's Church and where she met her husband, Michael.

Currently Sally serves as the Bishop's Chaplain, which is a varied role supporting the Bishop of Norwich in his ministry. Sally considers it has been a privilege to serve God and his people through the work entrusted to her. She said, "It is a great joy, that alongside our male colleagues, we have been able to respond fully to God's call on our lives."

# Cathedral parishioner is new Norwich Lord Mayor

St John's Catholic Cathedral parishioner and shop supervisor Vivien Thomas has been welcomed in as Lord Mayor of Norwich for the civic year 2024-25.

■ Along with the new Sheriff of Norwich, Sirajul Islam, Vivien was sworn in at a formal ceremony at City Hall on Tuesday May 21 attended by the Dean of the Cathedral, the Cathedral Manager and a shop volunteer.

First elected in 2010, Lord Mayor Cllr Vivien Thomas says she became involved in politics to make a difference to the lives of people in the city. During the ceremony, she said what a "privilege" it had been to serve them as a councillor and that it will be an "honour" to represent them as Lord Mayor.

Vivien moved to Norwich 17 years ago with her husband Vaughan (a fellow Norwich City Labour cllr and previous Mayor of Norwich in 2019) and their family and soon made St John's their parish. Vivien has been a volunteer in the shop for many years and in 2023 took on the role of Shop Supervisor.

She has worked in schools and with young people in the city and understands the struggles faced in this area. At the ceremony she talked about the importance of closing the gap for those facing "stark inequalities" including people struggling with housing, poverty, and social isolation.

Vivien and Sirajul have chosen The Benjamin Foundation as the civic charity for this year. Supporting children, young people and families, the charity supports over 3,000 individuals across Norfolk and Suffolk.



# Celebrate

Celebrating work of the Norfolk Christian community – pages 10-11





**GOOD NEWS**

FOR NORWICH &amp; NORFOLK

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■ Editor and designer: Keith Morris  
 ■ Writers: Helen Baldry, Tony Rothe, Peter Bending, Anna Heydon  
 ■ Advertising: Helen Baldry 07925 371732  
 ■ Distribution: Alan Lusher 07743 926884

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■ Editorial: 07712 787762 or e-mail stories to [keith.morris@networknorfolk.co.uk](mailto:keith.morris@networknorfolk.co.uk) or send copy to Pear Tree Farmhouse, Wymondham Road, Wreningham, Norwich NR16 1AT.

■ Website: [www.networknorfolk.co.uk](http://www.networknorfolk.co.uk)

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# Life of Norfolk Police Chaplain celebrated

Over 200 people gathered to celebrate the life of Norfolk Police Chaplain and Methodist lay preacher, **Richard Whall** on Friday June 14 and hear tributes from the Chief Constable of Norfolk, former YMCA Norfolk CEO, fellow Police chaplains and family members. **Keith Morris** reports.



Pictured above, Norfolk Police Chaplain Richard Whall.

**R**ichard died in the early hours of Saturday May 11, having been diagnosed with lung cancer a few days earlier. He had been lead Norfolk Police Chaplain for 22 years and before that a career as a chartered accountant.

Speaking at a celebration service at Soul Church in Norwich, former CEO of YMCA Norfolk and Sheriff of Norwich, John Drake, paid tribute, saying: "Richard understood that servant leadership was Christ's command, not Christ's request. He was a dedicated husband to Gill for over 50 years. A proud father and grandfather.

"Richard took his professional relationships seriously and retained confidences – the seal of silence. Richard was a man whom you could trust with your secrets, your fears, your pain, with your joy and anger and doubts and even your failings. He took those cares, confidences and burdens to another and that other was the Lord Jesus."

Chief Constable Paul Sanford, paid his own tribute, saying: "Richard was a friend to everyone in the Constabulary. He led a team of wonderful chaplains who took the decision to give, to support those who I lead in dealing with the most challenging of circumstances.

"Richard did that in a most special way. He had a quiet presence. He never imposed himself or his faith on any of my colleagues but they knew that that presence was there. And each and every one of those officers have at times needed that support.

"Richard has been a personal friend to me in some of the most difficult of times

and I know he has done the same for many of my colleagues. He did this in the strictest of confidence. When times are dark you sometimes need that friendly ear with whom you can share that problem and find your way through a crisis.

"Richard was a volunteer, but he was an integral member of the team and on behalf of the whole Constabulary, we mourn his loss, but we are so grateful for his service to the community."

Fellow Police chaplain, Ian Savory, said: "Richard was a great lead chaplain. He built a family of chaplains. He knew who his people were, who the officers were. He knew what our mission was and Richard's legacy is the huge amounts of officers that have been cared for. He led us and he loved us. Richard Whall, servant of God, well done."

Soul Church pastor, Steve Mawston, said: "I first worked with Richard at the YMCA in the 1990s. He knew how to treat people. He was humble, he was kind and he really loved his family. I think the world would be a much better place if there were more people like Richard Whall.

"Richard was faithful to his family and in his home. He was faithful for 22 year as a volunteer Police chaplain. Richard saw people for who they were, not the role they played. As a minister I spoke to him a few days before he died and I asked him 'Are you ready to die?'. He said he was because he knew that death was not the end. He knew exactly where he was going, because Richard knew Jesus."



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# Volunteer call for inspiring work

St John's Cathedral parishioners in Norwich, Andy and Mary Clark, have spent the last 18 years working with development charities in Africa. Andy is now chair of Network for a Better World (N4BW) and is looking for volunteers who might like to get involved. **Joshua Clovis** reports.

**A**ndy and Mary's journey began in 2006 when they left Norwich for Kakamega, Kenya, answering a calling to serve as lay missionaries, where they worked in an orphanage and school as a nurse and teacher, having been recruited by an organisation called Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM).

Later they were transferred to Makeni, near Lusaka, in Zambia, where, for 18 months, Andy worked in a school for orphans and vulnerable children and Mary worked as a nurse in a community-based HIV/AIDS project.

In Southern Malawi, the N4BW has been active for 12 years, particularly in the Sitima Parish in the Zomba Diocese, run by the Montfort Missionary Order.

This area was chosen for its limited NGO presence and the profound material poverty of the local population, though, Andy says, these people are "rich in spirit." The Clarks' first task in Sitima was to oversee the construction of a volunteer house, a project funded through private donations, which has since housed volunteers for durations ranging from two weeks to over a year.

Throughout the last year, N4BW's initiatives have ranged from constructing school buildings and training teachers, to organizing community-wide educational conferences. Their work extends beyond education into community assistance, like distributing essentials post-Cyclone Freddy, supporting vulnerable populations, and enhancing local infrastructure with fuel-efficient stoves and literacy programmes.

Additional efforts include the creation of subject-specific resource boxes to enhance learning, the promotion of kitchen gardens in schools, and the refurbishment of several school buildings. In the community sector, N4BW has built houses for elderly women affected by Malawi's severe weather conditions and provided ongoing support to families to develop kitchen gardens. They've also launched craft workshops and organized sports leagues to enrich community life.

The Clarks' experience in Africa is a testament to the joy and fulfilment that comes from immersing oneself in a culture vastly different yet full of life and celebration. Andy said: "To work in local communities gives an opportunity to observe and at times to be part of an African culture which is very different but very joyful despite the hardships which many face every day.

"Celebrations are frequent and are vibrant, joyful occasions with much singing and dancing. Masses are



Pictured are Andy and Mary Clark with two Sitima community workers.

celebrated in an especially lively manner and with real joy. It is a privilege to attend and brings home the various ways in which the universal church celebrates but the Mass remains a central focus in our lives."

N4BW's mission resonates deeply with the ideals of solidarity espoused by Pope John Paul II, emphasizing a committed effort towards the common good. This call to action is not just for those in distant lands but also for individuals in the UK who can support through volunteering, donations, or prayers.

As Andy now chairs N4BW, he invites more volunteers to join in their mission. He says: "When we talk about projects in far-flung places such as Africa, they might seem very removed from us here in England and Wales. But you are building the Church around the world, by supporting our global family. Your prayers are needed to encourage the people who take part in the sort of activities that have been described here, as well as local communities; some of you may be in a position to support N4BW as a volunteer in this country or travel to Sitima, as will four new volunteers this year, and to experience the joy of answering God's call."

For those moved by the Clarks' story or inspired by the prospect of helping communities thrive, N4BW offers a pathway to participate in a life-changing journey. It's about bringing joy, aid, and education to those who need it most and experiencing the profound satisfaction of answering God's call.

Visit the N4BW website at: [n4bw.org.uk](http://n4bw.org.uk) or contact them at [enquiries@n4bw.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@n4bw.org.uk).

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## Good summer read from prolific author

Prolific Christian author **Barrie Lawrence** has been at it again, spinning more tales of life in his favourite part of the world – Norfolk of course.

■ **Tales from a Country Boy – A Treasury of Norfolk**, follows on from his well-read book, *Big Blue Sky - A Celebration of Norfolk*.

Barrie is bred and born a Norfolk boy, well travelled now but still preferring his home county.

He regales readers with his mardles of Norfolk characters such as Tater, Digger, Mucker and its very own Dr Doolittle.

Quirky tales of the bird whisperer, the wart buyer, barneypigs, pollywiggles, pi-shamires and Black Shuck are interspersed with bite-sized nuggets of local history, natural history, anecdotes and well-known Norfolk attractions. The distinct Norfolk dialect also gets a whole chapter on its rural charm.

Norfolk fayre like Cromer crabs, Brancaster mussels and Stiffkey cockles are all covered, not to mention samphire, bloaters, kippers and dumplings.

Barrie says: "It is largely secular, though I seamlessly weave in references to the fact that I am a Christian. For example, I loved my patients and my work as a dentist, but my Christian faith takes priority over all else. Simple stories of a changed life, answered prayers, and a few miracles – everyday stuff really."

If you want some light feel-good summer reading – this would do nicely.

■ Available at Waterstones, Jarrolds (Norwich), Amazon.co.uk and other local bookshops. RRP £11.95. Or email Barrie for a copy in post (UK only) at £12 to incl p&p at [barrielawrence@btinternet.com](mailto:barrielawrence@btinternet.com)  
**Review by Keith Morris**



# Norfolk church choir grant boost

An imaginative partnership with a London church will bring an exciting development in the choral work of St Nicholas church in North Walsham. **Ian Boughton** reports.

**T**he partner church is St Giles-in-the-Fields in Covent Garden, which has a long history of grant-giving, and will support the Norfolk choir with £5,000 a year for three years.

The project was devised between Rev David Warner of St Nicholas and Rev Captain Tom Sander of St Giles and will allow the North Walsham choir to be boosted by four 'lay clerks' – experienced singers who will join what is already a respected choir, to take part in services while 'shadowing', mentoring and helping to further develop younger choristers.

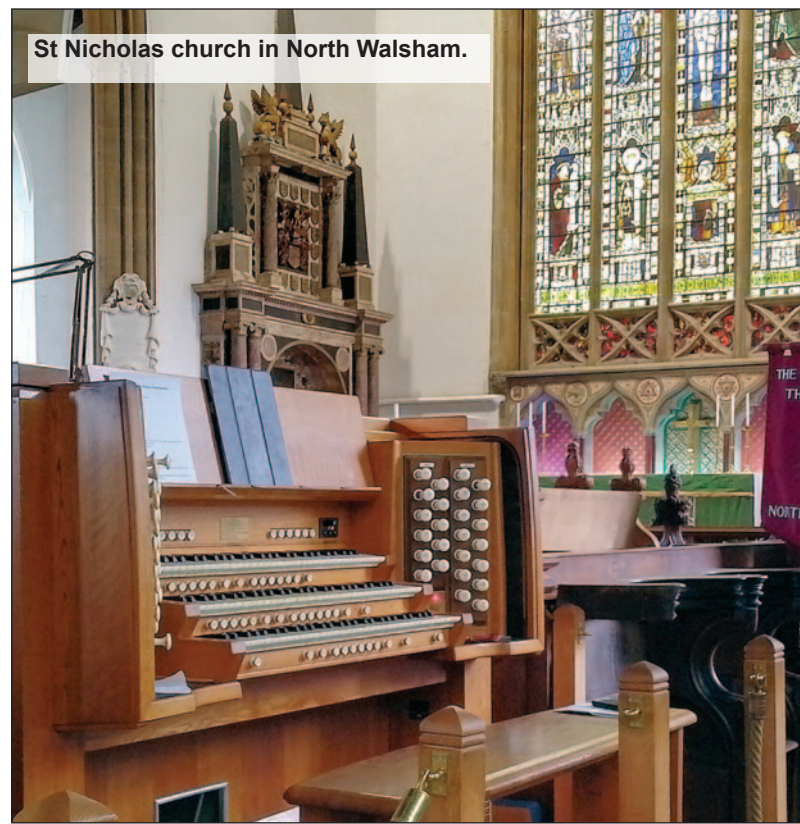
"This could be quite significant," says David. "There aren't many churches this side of Norwich with a choral tradition like St Nicholas, but after Covid, we had not developed it as much as we had hoped."

"I had invited Tom to preach here, and he made the suggestion of a St Giles grant to support our choir – we came up with the idea of a supported person for each part of the choir, all bringing their gifts to build up the choir as a whole."

"The grant is not to be used on instruments, but 'on music and people'. That is because churches are faced with endless calls on our money, and wicked vicars like me always want to spend our money on fixing things!," said David

"Everyone identifies with the power of music, but it's an expensive commitment - church organs alone are bottomless pits for money. So, although expertise needs to be rewarded, I would not have been able to justify spending £5,000 a year on the choir."

"But now someone has shown faith in us, and in time other grant-giving organisations might be inspired by our progress to help us develop



even further."

At St Giles, Tom, also padre to the Household Cavalry, says the project is part of his campaign to support creative grass-roots work in parishes outside London.

"We are a church which is not short of money, but we are not interested in just feathering our own nest – we know there are wonderful clergy out there who can use support, and so our aim is to support projects which help the next generation, while promoting the Book of Common Prayer, which is a major interest for us."

"This is not always about starting new projects – St Nicholas already has a very good choir who clearly enjoy what they do, and enhancing what they already do will be a very good thing."

St Nicholas will be advertising to find the lay clerks, who will be experienced singers, and if they are to 'shadow' young

singers, will need to become mentors as well.

"We are looking first for singers, not teachers, so the primary requirement is for people who can perform competently," said David. "Experience in mentoring our younger singers will come later. At first, we are looking for our existing singers to be inspired. We will be asking a lot of these people... but I think they will find they get a lot in return."

"Church singers and musicians do not come from heaven fully formed – they need to be nurtured, and encouraged."

For the church, the project will develop into outreach, says David: "I hope that a bigger and more versatile group of singers will bring the St Nicholas choral tradition to a wider audience, not just at the great festivals of the year, but in singing all kinds of stuff in all kinds of places, so it will become known that our music is something to be heard."

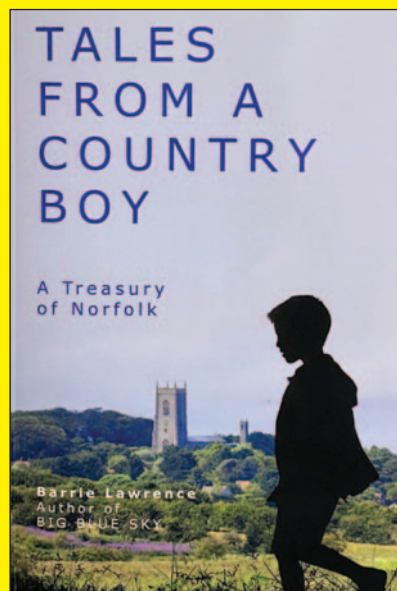
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# Dancing in the rain at Manifest

Manifest music festival was held on Saturday June 15 at The Walks Park in King's Lynn. The day was characterised by frequent downpours but that didn't dampen the spirits of the performers or the crowd. Peter Bending reports.

The free event – held for the first-time last year as the successor to Celebrate King's Lynn – focuses on open air worship and sharing the gospel. Organised by The King's Glory Church, the stage was set, accompanied by food stalls, games and inflatables for the children, and a fun fair.

The King's Glory Church Choir opened with prayer and worship as visitors began to gather in the park.

Next up was singer-songwriter Philippa Hanna. Philippa comes from a strong music business background having toured with the likes of Lionel Richie, Leona Lewis, and Wet Wet Wet.

She now uses her gift of music and storytelling to share her story and the gospel. Philippa openly shares her teenage battle with anxiety and depression which eventually forced her out of full-time education. "That was the darkest time imaginable," says Philippa, "I thought I'd never live a normal life."

Speaking below ominous skies she said: "One day, I walked into a church and heard someone singing about casting your anxiety on the Lord. And that is how I met Jesus. I needed to cast my anxiety on someone, and Jesus was there with his arms wide open.

"It doesn't matter whatever happened in my past, Jesus looks at us and sees something beautiful and something brand new. We don't always feel like we deserve that kind of love but thankfully God pursues us."

With just an acoustic guitar and some percussion, Philippa performed her honest and uplifting songs about life and faith to an audience dancing in the rain.

Then came a break from music and the rain. Two men, who looked like bouncers from a night club, began setting up gym equipment on the stage. The men in black were introduced as Ian McDowell and Joe Lampshire from Tough Talk.

Tough Talk is a Christian charity with the sole purpose of sharing the gospel. They are a small group of men, some with unsavoury backgrounds, but with powerful testimonies of being saved. Since 1995, they have travelled around, to schools, prisons, festivals, and churches sharing their stories and the gospel.

Joe said his dad left home when he was young leading to a difficult adolescence for him and his brother. At the age of 16, he got a job in financial services in the city of London and at that time, Joe got involved in witchcraft.

"I found myself getting involved with stuff I should never have gotten involved in. Things were starting to get a hold of me it started getting very real and very dark."

After a dangerous and frightening experience with the occult, Joe started to look to Jesus for help.

"All I could remember after that scary experience was the Lord's Prayer. I remember calling on the name of Jesus, for



Performing at Manifest were top, the King's Glory Choir, far left, Philippa Hanna and, left, Faith Child.

the first time in my life. Before it didn't mean anything to me, before it was just something you said at school, but now in my darkness and my despair it meant something."

After this first encounter, Joe started a journey of faith, healing, and deliverance. In this time, he was drawn to the discipline and challenge of weightlifting. This led to the sport of powerlifting where Joe had a successful career.

"I became a British Champion, a European Champion, and a Commonwealth Champion. And all that glory goes to Christ. He took a nobody, someone who is broken, and he put me on the rock that is Christ," said Joe.

Joe then showed his strength, performing sets of squats with 170kg on the bar. They then invited volunteers to attempt a 60kg chest press to find the strongest man and woman at the festival.

"I used to pray, 'I want to lift weights and give God the glory'. 10 years later, I find myself lifting weights and giving God the glory," said Joe.

Crowd favourite Faith Child was up next. The MOBO award winner is one of the country's top contemporary Christian artists. With a BBC documentary crew in tow, he had travelled to Norfolk for the event.

"I enjoyed Manifest last year," said Faith.

Putting his life experiences into music, Faith has a remarkable story that dates back to his birth. The name 'Faith Child' relates to the story of how his mother was close to aborting him but heard God's audible voice telling her to keep the child and have faith in Him - making him a 'faith child'.

Faith, supported by a drummer and a guitarist, got the crowd dancing as the heavens opened. "It's okay, we're going to dance in the rain," he said as they began another song.

"You might be a 'mistake' like I was a 'mistake', but God never makes mistakes.

He has a plan for every single person in this park right now."

Making the most of the late afternoon sun, saxophonist Mike Aremu took to the stage to round off the day's line-up of tal-

ent. Complimented by singers from the TKG choir, Mike led songs of worship with amazing freedom on his instrument. The British weather didn't stop the joy, music, and powerful testimonies at Manifest 2024.

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## New era after 50 years marked at retreat centre

**Quiet Waters** Christian Retreat House in Bungay celebrated 50 years of serving the Christian community last year as a place of spiritual refreshment and restoration. They are now looking forward to a new era in the life of the house. **Peter Bending** reports.

■ Quiet Waters – originally known as Shalom – first opened its doors in 1973 as three Christian ladies followed God’s call, gave up their successful London lives and opened a Christian retreat house in the East of England. In the 1980s, the house was developed to offer additional accommodation and since then a variety of committed team members have taken the vision forward.

Quiet Waters Trustee Steve Harris said: “The anniversary celebration was a great success. Many friends of Quiet Waters were entertained and listened to stories and testimonies of the journey of this blessed retreat house. Prayers and thanksgiving were offered to God for our past as well as our future, and great fellowship was shared throughout the course of the day.”

Shortly after the anniversary celebrations, recently married couple Matt and Maddy joined the team. Matt had been studying theology in Bristol but has always had a love for the outdoors.

Maddy said: “We were married at the beginning of June, and living as ‘nomads’ for a short while, it became clear that God had been calling us here as He confirmed it through prayer and timely decisions. Welcomed by Joe and Pauline along with the trustees and chaplains, we have felt supported through the change and secure in our lovely team.

“It has not taken us long to settle in Bungay. We have found a local church, explored some new places on days off and we have lots of adventures planned. The river Waveney is both beautiful and practi-

cal in its location and has allowed Matt plenty of exploration time by kayak, while I explore the Bungay locality on the hunt for cottage pottery.

“Witnessing how God has met people at their points of need, even in our short time here, it fills us with confidence that God will continue to use this house and those who serve within it.”

This summer, Kim and Paul will be joining, making up a full team.

Another significant element in this new chapter is the Quiet Waters creative cabin. Set in the woodland area, the cabin is equipped with a wide range of art and craft materials available for guests to enjoy.

The cabin also hosts a variety of themed retreats and workshops. Led by creative Christians these have included: mosaics, creating a prayer bible, Christmas wreath making and felting.

“We are immensely grateful to the Creative Arts Retreat Movement – exploring creativity in a Christian context – for their generous support of this venture both financially and by supplying so much top-quality equipment. Starting a craft project using quality tools and materials is so much more inspiring,” said Steve.

A visitor to the recent journaling workshop said: “It was a very lovely day. I felt relaxed, welcomed and inspired. Everyone was friendly, happy and encouraging. I enjoyed a different aspect of journaling and have loads of ideas to take back to my group.”

Upcoming events at the creative cabin will include creative prayer, wood carving, pyrography and creative writing.

The cabin has just had a little extension, offering a covered area outside ahead of this August’s Mini Pottery Throw Down. Set over two days, guests will have the opportunity to throw a pot, mould clay, and decorate. As with all the workshops, materials and refreshments are provided.

After 50 years, the Quiet Water’s Christian Retreat House is showing no signs of slowing down in their quest to help others slowdown in the Norfolk countryside.

Find out more about the quest house and the creative workshops at [quietwaters.org.uk](http://quietwaters.org.uk)

# Did Billy Gra

Norwich mum **Jane Moore** went to the Billy Graham mission but did not become a Christian on the spot. However, she did come to a full faith several years later and helped others to follow Jesus as well.

■ In June 1984 I was single and had moved to Norwich in 1975 for a job. Although I was saved at a beach mission in my hometown when I was 10 years old and went to a Methodist church I had not joined a church since moving to Norwich.

My mother had died in 1983 and my neighbour Lily Sillett, who was widowed in 1982, became like my mother as she was the same age as my mum. We looked after each other! As a young girl Lily had been a member of the Salvation Army and she married Fred when she was 19. By the time Billy Graham came, neither of us has anything to do with church but I somehow heard about the mission, and we decided to go together.

Lily used to be a pub singer and we both loved to sing and I remember the stadium being full of people. I remember the huge choir and we both really enjoyed the singing. We listened to Billy preach and we heard the altar call, but neither of us felt compelled to move. We just went home feeling uplifted.

However... God had plans for us both!

I met and married in 1985 and had my first son in 1991 having been previously told it was unlikely I would ever have any children. At that point I was still not involved in church and my husband was not a Christian. My son nearly died at birth and the only person that could comfort me was a lady I worked with who went to a Baptist church. She used to come and pray in the hospital with her teenage son who had been healed of a brain tumour by the power of prayer.

My son was fine, but I knew in my heart I had to thank God for him. I knew every time I went into church and sang I felt better. My friend from work sent her pastor to see us and he was so gracious, we had to decide if we would promise to raise our son in “Christian parenthood” or just “parenthood” at his dedication.

To help us answer he came every week and took us through Mark’s Gospel, a chapter at a time, by which time I knew God was calling me and I was baptised by full immersion in June 1992. My husband followed eventually, having been slain by the Holy Spirit during a “discover your spiritual gifts” evening.

That was the beginning of an amazing journey to complete emotional and mental healing that took many years and involved many “supernatural” experiences, heartbreaks through deaths, divorce and remarrying my sweetheart from my teenage years.

Renowned American evangelist Dr Billy Graham graced the hallowed turf of Carrow Road in Norwich exactly 40 years ago in June. It was a life-changing experience for thousands in Norfolk and here, three of them tell their own stories.

■ From June 9 to 12, 1984, an estimated 63,000 people turned up in Norwich alone to hear Billy proclaim the Christian gospel.

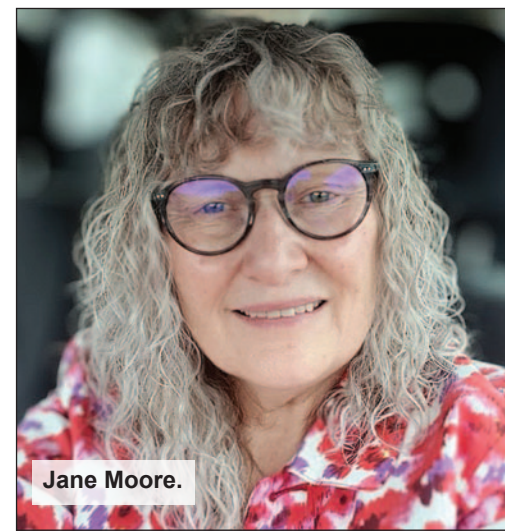
No less than 850 churches were involved, raising the £175,000 cost and providing 4,500 volunteers including 1,456 counsellors and a 1,745-strong choir plus administrators, youth leaders and stewards.

It was part of the major three-month 1984 Mission England crusade which saw over one million people hear the



My journey also led to running a charity in the Gambia, working in All Saints Centre, church holiday clubs, Sunday school and many other activities that enable me to share the love of God with others.

I have two sons and both of them faced challenges of many kinds but finally both are fully home with God and very verbal about their faith “gossiping the gospel” wherever



Jane Moore.

they are! I can see God’s hand not only in my life but in theirs and in Lily’s too.

Lily was involved in my life and my family until she died in 2008 aged 89. She came to church with me and through her faith and her prayers her youngest son Brian also came to faith and was healed of emotional traumas.

Nobody ever knows the value of the seeds they sow. Billy Graham had no idea when he came to Norwich that day how listening to him and praising God would impact not only my life but the lives of many other people whose lives have crossed my path.



# ham change your life?



well-known American preacher in six football stadiums across the country also including Roker Park, Anfield, Villa Park, Ashton Gate and Portman Road.

Tens of thousands of people responded to Billy's message, over the 12 weeks, including over 3,700 in Norwich.

Norwich hospital chaplain and Anglican priest **Rev Darren Thornton** invited Jesus into his life on the pitch at Carrow Road 40 years ago.

“If you want to ask Jesus into your heart and begin a relationship with him, I invite you to get up out of your seat and walk onto the pitch.” Said Billy Graham. I remember having this burning feeling in my heart and knew I had to walk from the terraces onto that hallowed ground.

I was a nervous teenager at that time and normally I would have been thinking, I'm going to get lost, I'm going to lose the rest of the group, but that didn't matter. I had such a conviction that I was to walk onto that pitch and received a prayer to invite Jesus into my life.

A minibus from Cromer Parish Church took the choristers to one of the evening meetings. There was about 15 of us. As a church chorister you sing hundreds of



Rev Darren Thornton.

inspiring words, singing the hymns and the psalms, singing the daily offices of

the church throughout the liturgical year.

After that mission and the commitment that I made, suddenly those words took on a new meaning. I found myself coming to church because I wanted to tell God how much I loved him and the amazing thing was, that during worship, God revealed to me, how much he loved me. My whole life was changed.

The Billy Graham mission was the start of my committed faith journey and led me to join the Church Army and later ordination as a Deacon and Priest in the Church of England. I'm also a Norwich City Football Club season ticket holder and at every home game, I honour all that Carrow Road means to me. I often look across to that spot in which I made a commitment to Jesus.

This summer, I celebrate 30 years of licensed ministry within the Diocese of Norwich.

Norwich mental health nurse **Mike Cary** made a momentous decision at Carrow Road back in 1984, one which he has never regretted, as he explains.

In 1984, at 34 years of age, I was living in a room at the YMCA in St Giles Street, Norwich. I had returned to my home town two years earlier, penniless and jobless and with no prospects of this changing. So ashamed was I of the mess I had made of my life that if I happened to spot a member of my family in the street I would quickly hide myself in the nearest shop or side-street.

I was grateful for the stability that living at the YMCA gave to what in recent years had become a very chaotic life. I was also starting to attend church, St Giles C of E, just down the street, on Sunday mornings sometimes, but I had little understanding of what being a Christian entailed.

And then along came Mission England which had its local administrative base at the YMCA – I remember a large room at the back of the building being stacked high with copies of Mission Praise, the book of hymns and choruses specially produced for Mission England. I think the staff encouraged me to attend the meetings at Carrow Road.

What I do remember very vividly is, when the week of the mission at Carrow Road arrived, I was undecided whether to attend one of these meetings or not, and that, seeking some guidance, I went to Norwich Cathedral and then went into one of the side chapels and up to the lectern which had a large Bible open on it. It was open at one of the passages in the Gospels

describing the miracle of the feeding of the 5000! I took this as a clear indication that I should go to the Mission England meetings

On June 10, I made my way down to Carrow Road and listened to Dr Graham and went away again without responding to his



Mike Cary.

call to make a decision to follow Jesus Christ. On the following evening I returned, finding a place halfway up the terracing at the Barclay End. At the River End, on a platform at the opposite end of the stadium, was Billy Graham.

I cannot remember the details of what he said, other than that his message centred on Christ's sacrifice on the cross. As he always did, he closed his message with an invitation for people to make a decision to leave their seats and come forward to accept Jesus Christ as their saviour and

Lord. There was a brief tussle in my own mind. I clearly sensed that if I walked away that evening without having gone forward, I would not return for the mission's final meeting the following evening. I walked down the steps at the Barclay End and onto the Carrow Road turf – it was a momentous decision, a decision of the will rather the emotions.

There were no overwhelming feelings, either at the meeting itself or in the days and weeks afterwards. Yet, slowly but surely, my life began to change – for the better. My counsellor at that meeting was a humble, gentle Norfolk farmer, Bernard Flint. He was very conscientious in his counsellor role, visiting me in the flat into which I moved later that year and inviting me to visit him at his farm in the small village where he and his wife led a Christian fellowship.

Around the table in the farm kitchen, I was made welcome by this wonderful Christian couple and met some of their extraordinary friends, missionaries in far-flung parts of the world who had also made their way to the farm deep in the Norfolk countryside. It was also through Bernard and Joy that I first met Mo, the woman who was to become my wife a few years later.

Meanwhile my life gradually began to change. I started to make contact with my parents again and begin the slow process of rebuilding the bridges broken through my own foolish actions. Although I now had my own rented accommodation I remained unemployed. I made numerous applications for work as a care assistant without success.

In 1986 I joined a small Pentecostal fellowship on the outskirts of Norwich, where I found love and support as well as solid teaching and heartfelt worship. In early

1987, becoming desperate because of my lack of success in finding work, I asked an elderly visiting preacher to pray for me at the end of the Sunday evening service. He listened to my story and then prayed an astonishingly simple prayer: “thank you Lord, for Michael's job”.

The following Monday morning I visited the Jobcentre, then on Rampant Horse Street, and saw an advertisement for a part-time switchboard operator, work I had never done before. I got the job and was never out of work again.

When I was still unemployed I'd had an entirely unexpected nudge when visiting a friend in hospital that I might be suited to nursing as a career so, after I began work as a switchboard operator, I also began volunteering at the (old) Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. This led on to my beginning training as a mental health nurse two years later and to a very fulfilling career during which I was privileged to be able to help people rebuild their lives after very traumatic experiences. My own past troubles proved to be invaluable in relating to those people. Amazingly my first shift on a psychiatric ward as a student was on my 40th birthday.

It is now 40 years since my decision to make a public commitment to become a follower, a disciple, of Jesus Christ. I have never regretted that decision. I am still a learner, a disciple, with a great deal yet to learn. Did Billy Graham change my life? I'm sure he would not want to take any personal credit but I will always be thankful that he, Bernard Flint and all the other volunteers placed themselves at God's service to make Mission England possible

Jesus says “Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you”.



# A place of rest

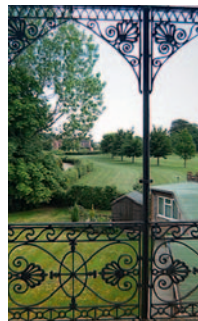


Norfolk Christian home aims to offer Godly care



For further information, please contact:

Mark Woodgett (Manager)  
Quebec Hall Limited  
Quebec Road, Dereham  
Norfolk NR19 2QY  
t 01362 692504  
e info@quebechall.co.uk  
w www.quebechall.co.uk



# Retirement home care with a Christian ethos

Care and retirement homes in Norfolk, including **Eckling Grange**, **Corton House** and **Quebec Hall**, are providing loving care with a Christian ethos.

**C**hristian retirement home **Quebec Hall** at Dereham, in Mid Norfolk, has provided a home for retired Christians for 63 years, the management and staff aim to provide a secure, home-from-home atmosphere coupled with personal care and attention. Above all, they wish the home to be one in which the love of God is readily apparent from the care shown.

The Hall has 19 rooms and all are bright, airy and en-suite. The Hall has two large lounges, one of which features a balcony that affords good views of the gardens and beyond. The lounge on the ground floor is used extensively for the majority of the Hall's activities including the weekly services.

There are also 43 bungalows situated in the grounds of Quebec Hall. The self-contained bungalows are well suited to those who are seeking peace in their later years and who wish to maintain their independence.

For more information visit [www.quebechall.co.uk](http://www.quebechall.co.uk) or contact manager Mark Woodgett on 01362 692504 or via email at: [info@quebechall.co.uk](mailto:info@quebechall.co.uk)

Quebec Hall can be found at Quebec Road, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 2QY.

Founded over 70 years ago on the Christian ethos of community and kindness, the home has fostered links with local churches over many years, and has recently been blessed by the Bishop of Lynn following a large-scale refurbishment. There are regular worship services for those who wish to participate, and the opportunity to receive Communion and pray with the dedicated chaplain, who has been officially licensed as the Chaplain of Corton House by the Diocese of Norwich.

Hailed as a pioneer in social care back in 1952, Corton House continues to stand for innovation today. One of the cornerstones of this is the home's progressive activities and wellbeing programme, offering something beyond the standard knitting and board games – although there is plenty of time for those too!

Corton House regularly partners with specialist arts and culture providers, and has strong community links, allowing plenty of opportunity to socialise and learn something new. Recent examples include British Sign Language taster lessons, clay sculpture-making inspired by local wildlife, and collaborative poetry writing with a local school.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to care at Corton House; each resident is treated as an individual and supported to make their own choices and be as independent as they can be.

The best way to see what Corton House can offer and get a feel for its warm, caring atmosphere is to arrange a tour – just call 01603 620119 or email [manager@cortonhouse.co.uk](mailto:manager@cortonhouse.co.uk). [www.cortonhouse.co.uk](http://www.cortonhouse.co.uk)

**E**xcellent loving care and support is provided at **Corton House**, a not-for-profit care home situated in the heart of Norwich, enjoying the leafy surroundings of mature walled gardens, and with a variety of bright and comfortable communal rooms, all with wheelchair access.

**E**ckling Grange Christian care home in Mid Norfolk celebrated 60 years of caring for thousands of residents last summer.

Eckling Grange was officially opened as a Christian care home for retired missionaries in 1963, and since then, the charity has continued to care for the elderly from all four corners of the globe.

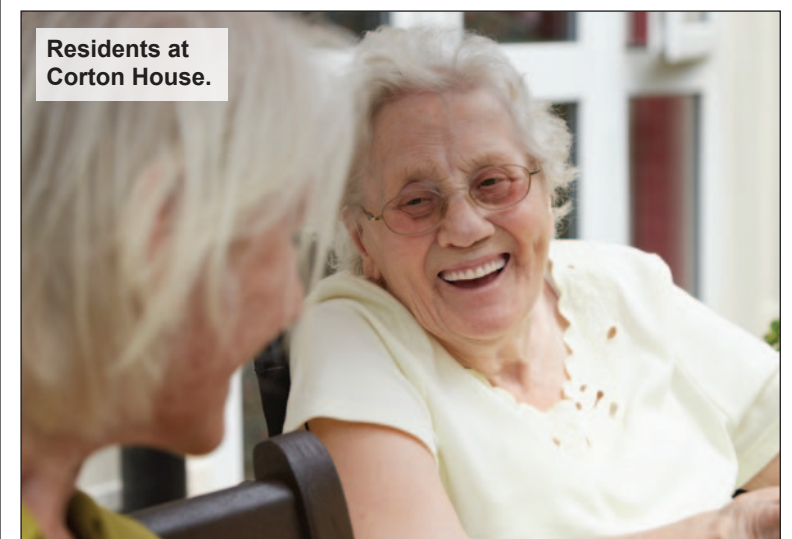
General Manager, Stewart Barber, said: "Thousands of residents have lived at the complex and we are still celebrating God's continued faithfulness, that in 2024 the origi-

**Corton House**  
*Loving Care and Support*

**"Corton House has really pulled out all of the stops to adequately meet Mum's needs, with dignity and careful consideration. There is always a genuine, happy atmosphere. I don't doubt for a moment she is content and in the right place."** - Resident's Son

We are a not-for-profit care home for older people, with a Christian ethos, welcoming to all. Get in touch to book your tour of our newly refurbished home and find out more:

City Road, Norwich, NR1 3AP • [www.cortonhouse.co.uk](http://www.cortonhouse.co.uk)  
01603 620119 • [manager@cortonhouse.co.uk](mailto:manager@cortonhouse.co.uk)





# mes provide ristian ethos

nal aims and aspirations of the charity are still going strong.

“Eckling Grange will obviously suit committed Christians down to the ground, but of course it is open to anyone; none of the services or other overtly Christian activities are compulsory. It is a wonderful, caring Christian community.

“The complex continues to thrive, providing residential and dementia care, day and respite care, as well as providing 54 sheltered accommodation bungalows. But along with the physical and social care, the spiritual care has developed and grown enormously in the last 10 years.”

Eckling Grange now employs both a Lead and Assistant Pastor to guide the spiritual life of the complex covering the



The residents Dining Club at Quebec Hall.

residents, their families and the 100 strong staff team. Recently a new lounge opened on site called the Gatehouse to seat 50 people. This is particularly aimed at supporting those who live in the bungalow complex.

There is also a 16-seater minibus with full disability access, which is going out weekly, taking residents from the care home or bungalows to various locations around the county.

Visit: [www.ecklinggrange.org.uk](http://www.ecklinggrange.org.uk)

## When it's time for a leap of faith

**Rev Ron Skivington, pastor of Stalham Baptist Church, urges us not to hold back from taking bold actions if we believe they are God's will.**

■ When I was asked to write this article my initial thought was “Do I really want to?” and then “What would I write about?” However, going to a family night out in Norwich, due to closed roads I ended up parking somewhere I have never done before. Walking into the city I passed a large graffiti-



message on a door “Is it being scared of making a fool of yourself that's holding you back?”

“I wonder who that was written for?” went through my mind and I thought no more about it until I woke up early next morning with it in my head, and realised it didn't matter who it was specifically for, it was relevant to me and this article.

Was my reason for not wanting to write because people might not agree with me, or that some may think the articles not very relevant or dynamic, intellectually challenging or spiritually deep enough? Was I reticent to say yes at some level due to thinking what if I make a fool of myself?

So here it is as a question for you reading this – whoever you are, or wherever you are in your relational journey with Jesus. Are you holding back from perhaps making a decision to put your life in Jesus' hands? Are you held back from doing something that has been bubbling in your thoughts for a while, that makes you wonder “Does God want me to do this – to take a step of faith by volunteering for something, or to open my home to host a family, or make a gift?”

Is the reason you are holding back from doing these things because you are scared of making a fool of yourself? Or is it because you don't believe God is capable of helping you accomplish whatever it is you are putting off?

Whatever the reason, perhaps now is the time to place your trust in God, and take that leap. Then see what outcome He has planned.

## Horstead Centre

Residential Stays and Activity Days



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**office@horsteadcentre.org.uk**

For more details visit:  
**www.horsteadcentre.org.uk**

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- enquiries@ecklinggrange.org.uk
- Norwich Road  
Dereham  
NR20 3BB
- www.ecklinggrange.org.uk



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# Celebrate

## Norwich & Norfolk

Highlighting the work of the Norwich & Norfolk Christian community

### Community chaplaincy offers support for people leaving prison

**Community Chaplaincy Norfolk (CCN) is a Christian charity which provides Volunteer Mentors for prison leavers 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 small staff team: 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.

We are based at the 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 will 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.



**CCN MENTORING**  
Walking with Prison Leavers to Rebuild Their Lives  
**COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY NORFOLK**

*"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.

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 Mentor Coordinator.

We would love to hear from you if you might like to become a Mentor for CCN. You can find more information on our website or contact 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 joining the forum or 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](http://www.norfolkchaplaincy.org.uk)  
Facebook: [communitychaplaincynorfolk](https://www.facebook.com/communitychaplaincynorfolk)  
Email: [info@norfolkchaplaincy.org.uk](mailto:info@norfolkchaplaincy.org.uk)  
Phone: 07882 288348

If you would like Celebrate Norfolk to highlight the work of your Christian group or organisation, email Keith at [celebrate@networknorwich.co.uk](mailto:celebrate@networknorwich.co.uk) to find out more

## Offering a 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.

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:

■ Young man unable to raise his arms due to severe pain for 6 years was instantly healed after prayer.

■ Man with depression and anxiety came for prayer several times, starting to feel much better. Gave his life to the Lord and we were invited to his baptism.

■ Man came for prayer with cancer, has been told he is all clear.

You can read more about Norwich Healing Rooms at:

[www.norwichhealingrooms.co.uk](http://www.norwichhealingrooms.co.uk)

It opened in September 2013 and is currently operating from New Hope Christian Centre on Martineau Lane in Norwich.

The Norwich Healing Rooms 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 and has shared training sessions with them.

Norwich Healing Rooms are available every Thursday from 7.30pm at New Hope Christian Centre, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2HX. Tel: 07508 811020 or 07951 567684. 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

### Can you help the Good News reach its readers?

Volunteers distributors are needed to deliver this paper to churches across Norfolk. You need access to a car and the time to spend half a day, three times a year. For more information please email [alan.lusher@live.co.uk](mailto:alan.lusher@live.co.uk) or ring 07743 926884

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# Charity is a place for new beginnings

The House of Genesis is a Norwich charity, which offers supported accommodation to homeless men, many of whom are ex-offenders.

Val Dodsworth founded the charity in her home in December 2000. With very little in the way of initial resources other than faith and determination she, helped by an ex-offender, combined their skills and life experiences to begin the work that has grown into The House of Genesis – a place to make a new start.

Since that time the charity has grown steadily and now uses four properties on the east side of Norwich, with five staff offering supported accommodation for up to 15 men.

Genesis offers a comfortable and friendly place to call home for up to two years, giving men the opportunity to become re-established in the life of the community.

Chair of trustees, Alan Lusher, said: "We offer help with everyday things, like getting registered with a doctor and a dentist, help with form filling and applying for benefits. We link up with many local agencies for services like counselling, help with addictions, establishing family contact, dealing with debts, managing finances and the many other things that crop up for our residents



*the House of Genesis*  
A place for new beginnings

from day to day.

"Genesis was founded by Christians with the purpose of providing, not only a home for those without one, but also to express in our daily living the genuine care and concern that we believe God has for every individual. A verse from the Bible that has been an inspiration to us from the beginning is 'Remember to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have entertained angels without knowing it' (Hebrews 13:2).

"There is no expectation that any resident should be a Christian although should a resident express an interest in the faith, we have a chaplain who will help and guide them," said Alan. "We believe that each man who comes to us is a unique individual, made in the image of God and has the potential to live a successful and fulfilling life. It's then our job to help him to find the best within himself and to encourage him to take that way forward in his life."

You can read more about the charity on its website: [www.thehouseofgenesis.org](http://www.thehouseofgenesis.org)

*"Remember to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have entertained angels without knowing it" Hebrews 13 v 2*

# David is new Baptist chief

The Eastern Baptist Association (EBA) has appointed **Rev David Mayne** as its new Regional Minister Team Leader to help it navigate through a period of significant change with creativity and a heart for building relationships. **Peter Bending** reports.



Rev David Mayne.

David will serve the 170 Baptist churches across Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Cambridgeshire and he has spoken of his commitment to working alongside other churches.

He was Lead Pastor at Shoeburyness & Thorpe Bay Baptist Church in Essex and before that served for six years at Selsdon Baptist Church in Croydon, and as an elected church leader in Brentwood and then Winchester.

He has always been engaged with wider Baptist life, including serving as Moderator of Baptist Union Council from 2015-2021, and being part of teams working across the European Baptist Federation from 2018-2022.

From 2012-2016 David served as Moderator of the EBA and during that time was able to get a good appreciation of the way the EBA works and some of the challenges the EBA faces.

David said: "Throughout my ministry I have also supported national Baptist life in a variety of ways, including through the work of the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT), a joint endeavour of the Methodist Church, United Reformed Church, Baptist Union, and Church of Scotland. JPIT seeks to help churches work together for peace and justice through listening, learning, praying, and taking action on public policy issues."

Throughout their appointment process the Association emphasised their need for someone to help the EBA navigate through a period of significant change with creativity and a heart for building relationships.

Former EBA Chair of Trustees, Rev Fiona Heddle said, 'Our search for a new Regional Minister Team Leader has at times felt a long one but God has been at work, and we are delighted to welcome David to the EBA team; we look forward to his collaborative leadership.

"We face some big challenges as an Association, David is a creative, strategic thinker with a generous, kind heart who seeks to follow where the Holy Spirit leads."

Speaking on his appointment, David said: "It is a constant joy to see the impact churches have in working together to speak out on the environment and on poverty, pooling our ideas and resources to better become a society which welcomes the stranger and priorities the marginalised. This work, alongside our historic commitments to build friendships with one another and live well together in our local contexts, can bring energy and life

to our ecumenism.

"Engaging with social and political issues also provides our churches with opportunities to build links with others in our communities. Many of our Foodbanks have volunteers from beyond the churches that host them, and there are plenty of people in every village, town and city who want us to do more to tackle climate change. We will be far more effective at bringing Kingdom change about if we can develop relationships with the people of peace around us.

"Far from being irrelevant or hunkered down, our churches can be hubs of connection and change, bringing new life and the justice of the Kingdom of God more into view, and into the daily experiences of our communities."

David continued: "As Baptist churches, we always start at the grassroots. Change starts with individuals working together and local churches partnering with one another. It is my hope that in the years ahead we can continue to play our part in those partnerships, working with sisters and brothers from other denominations to create places of sanctuary and joy for everyone.

"It's not always easy work, I know, but I have been privileged to see it happen in so many places, and I hear such excellent stories from so many of our churches. I'm very much looking forward to visiting groups and projects in the years ahead, and to hearing more from across Norfolk and Waveney.

"I will miss my ministry at STBBC very much, but the call to this new role has grown and been made clear in lots of ways over recent weeks. I'm excited about getting started and encouraging and supporting all our EBA ministers and churches. God is at work doing new things inside and outside the Church, and so our mission and ministry must always be looking for signs of the Spirit, trusting that the future is bigger than the past. I'm pleased to be part of leading the EBA into that future."

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