

# GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

Harvest 2014: FREE

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Youngsters from Newday out on the Mile Cross estate in Norwich getting ready to ask the Who Cares? question.

## 20,000 respond to Who Cares? survey

Nearly 20,000 people across **Norfolk** have been reached by more than 60 local churches and organisations working together as part of the Christian mission **Who Cares?** in the past three months. **Helen Baldry** reports.

**F**ollowing the survey, Who Cares is now hoping to get around 2,000 local Christians and their friends together for a Big Alpha Supper at the Royal Norfolk Showground on October 2.

Attendees of the Christian youth festival Newday, which was held at the Norfolk showground in August, were sent out by the bus load to churches throughout the area to help them with the survey.

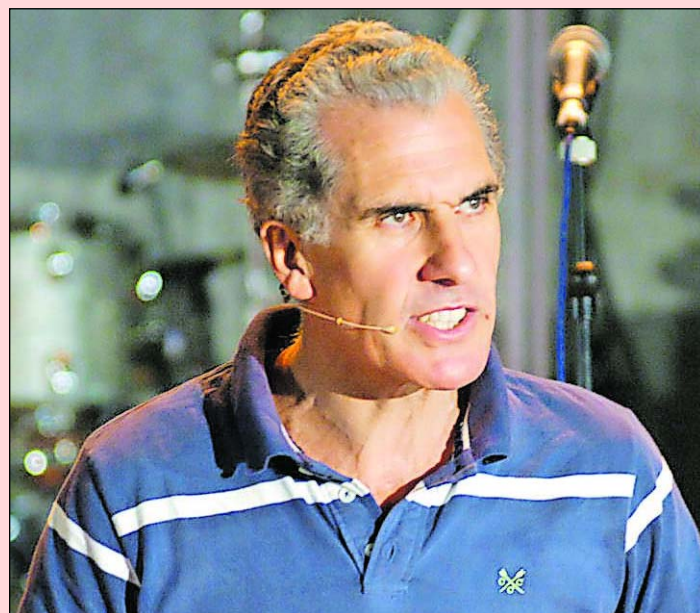
A staggering 18,560 responses were given to the one-question survey, simply asking 'What hurts the most?', plus more replies to the survey in local schools. The mission now moves into a phase where churches are assessing and responding to the issues that people have raised.

Mission organiser Rob Tervet explained about this unique approach to outreach: "Who Cares is all about churches taking the time to listen and then gently and humbly offer people compassion and hope for the things in life that hurt the most.

"We're thrilled to have received so many responses. People are clearly ready to share, but now comes the really important bit as churches are thinking and praying hard about how best to respond with compassion and share hope."

Mark Fairweather-Tall, minister at Norwich Central Baptist Church, said: "At the beginning

## Gumbel to speak to 2,000



**■ Nicky Gumbel, the pioneer of the Alpha Course, which has seen over 20 million people find out about the Christian faith across 169 nations, will speak at the Big Alpha Supper near Norwich on October 2.**

**Appearing alongside Nicky will be Darrell Tunningley a former drug dealer and convicted armed robber who attended an Alpha Course whilst in prison and experienced God dramatically break into his life. The cost is £5 per person for dinner, soft drinks, live music, a talk and an introduction to Alpha.**

some were understandably a bit nervous about going out and speaking to strangers but they really grew in confidence as the time went on. In addition to asking the question: 'What hurts the most in life?', some were able to talk about their faith and pray for those they spoke to. They set a wonderful example of how Christians should be... full of the joys of life, excited by what God is doing and willing to step out in faith."

Tim Hayward, from Mulbarton parish church, said: "Here in Mulbarton, we were blessed to have a group from Newday come and help us with the Who Cares survey. They

arrived full of enthusiasm and soon covered the 800+ homes allocated. Their friendly nature won over most of the people they encountered and might even have planted the seed with some."

People were invited to write their response to the question on a postcard. The results have been analysed and churches are now responding to needs of the people in their local communities. The overall county-wide results will be announced at the October 2 Alpha supper.

Full details of all events held in response to the survey, including the Big Alpha Supper, can be found on [www.who-cares.org.uk](http://www.who-cares.org.uk)

## Norwich Chinese church is the first in East Anglia

**■ NORWICH:** The first Chinese church in East Anglia was established on Monday September 1 at a celebration at Wroxham Road Methodist Church in Norwich. The journey to get to this point started over a decade ago in a living room in Taverham.

The celebration service was packed with members of both the Chinese and British congregations of Wroxham Road Methodist church, who each meet at different times on Sundays and enjoy mixing together as well as appreciating the space to worship in their own cultural styles.

Pastor Edmund Tsui explained how the church grew from a small gathering of seven people to a regular congregation of around 120. Billy Wong, who owns a fish and chip shop in Sprowston, played a prominent part in forming the congregation. Edmond said: "Billy has a great faith... he bought many chairs, and 20 Bibles. Soon after, all the chairs were filled!" The church moved to Taverham village hall but soon outgrew the space. In 2003 they moved to Wroxham Road Methodist Church, with pastoral support from church member Margaret Hardingham, plus many others who helped establish a Sunday school.

The church has now officially joined the Methodist circuit. Rev Nigel Fox, minister at Wroxham Road said: "I felt it was my task to create a space in which the Chinese community would flourish. What has challenged me is the sheer scale of life and vibrancy that we see here."

The church is able to thrive in its own culture and have the space to do so at Wroxham Road. In the New Year they plan to move to Bowthorpe Road Methodist Church, which will be beneficial to the many Chinese students at UEA. Nigel said: "Students come to faith here and go back to live and work in China and Hong Kong. The work of God through this congregation is beyond our measure."

Rev Prof Lo Lung Kwong, former president of the Hong Kong Methodist Conference, preached on Hebrews 13 1-2 and Rev John Fenn, Superintendent of the Norwich circuit, and new District Chairman Rev Julian Pursehouse said prayers and words of blessing.

**By Helen Baldry**



## GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH &amp; NORFOLK

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 This will not only encourage those Christians involved in similar activities but also inform leaders in other churches who are contemplating similar forms of outreach.

■ The deadline for material for the Christmas edition is Friday November 14. Distribution is from Friday December 5.

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## Something to make us eternally grateful

■ God has given us life in all its fullness and richness. Everything that we are - all that has been given to us, comes from God. We have been given everything that we need and more. Our God is a God of infinite love and compassion.

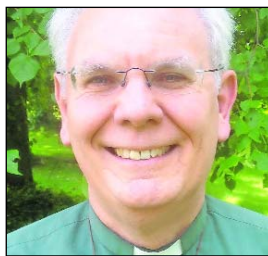
So how come that sometimes we feel separated from God? How come we feel cut off and in a dark place?

It is not because God is not there. God is always present. It is our own actions and our selfish ego that has made this separation.

God is waiting for us. He waits for us to return to our source and our home. Like the story of the Prodigal Son, God is our Father who is longing for us to come back.

One of the best ways to reconnect to God is to be thankful for all that has been given to us. When you wake up in the morning, before you do anything else, become aware of all the things that you can give thanks for.

Gratitude is a great way to bring healing



By Rev Philip Young, Anglican, Quaker and Franciscan.

into your life.

Saying thank you is a good way of reconnecting with God. The humble creature reconnecting with their Glorious Creator.

The Creator outpours himself into his creation. The creature pours out their gratitude to their Creator. The circle of love is complete. All is made whole. Health is restored to the separated creature.

Jesus came to restore this wholeness. His life, like no other, is a light shining in a dark

place. Helping us to reconnect with our Creator. Jesus and the Father are one. Jesus is fully aware of the love of his father. He returns that love with all of his body, mind, soul and heart.

Jesus is divine and human. He shows us that his divinity and his humanity are connected with God. He shows us that our humanity and divinity are also our way back to God. From God he came and to God he returns. In the same way we come from God and to God we return.

In the most important and central act of his coming to us, he shows us the way of death and resurrection. We put to death the selfish in us, that which keeps us separate from God. We rise with him as new creatures, fully in touch with God.

Jesus is the Light of the world. He brings enlightenment to us, God's creatures.

This is something to make us eternally grateful.

## Churches together become stronger



A Churches Together gathering in Poringland.

Under the banner of "Churches Together" the Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic and Free Churches have pooled together a number of resources and concentrated on what they have in common to help build the Kingdom of God.

Anglican Rector Robert Parsonage explains: "Together we are greater than the sum of our parts, pooling resources makes sense, especially in a rural setting."

Besides activities including shared services, luncheon club, Good Friday processions, Harvest lunch and a joint Christmas Card sent to some 2,500 homes, perhaps the biggest impact has been on working with children and young people. With the comprehensive support of Norwich Youth for Christ, the Churches Together are funding youth worker Pete Tyson for 20 hours a week.

"While it has been a challenge and struggle to meet costs, God has been faithful. The youth work also helps glue our Churches Together relationship," adds Robert.

More recently the "New Day" conference, a gathering of some 6,000 youth from across the UK and overseas, converges at the Royal Norfolk Showground. Here the Churches

For over ten years the churches in Poringland and Framingham Earl, just south of Norwich, have enjoyed a "light touch" formal relationship. Kevin Gotts reports.

Together financially and practically invite and support 50 young people to be involved in the two parishes.

Over the years activities have included car washing, litter picking, visiting a nursing home and this year carrying out the "Who Cares" survey. "This impacts our community and we believe gives a positive view of young people motivated by their faith," says Robert.

Youth Worker Pete Tyson said of his work in this community: "It's a privilege to be part of such a strong ecumenical group which is joined together by its passion for sharing Jesus with young people. 4D Youth Project has been running for about 10 years and there have been three youth workers in that time, each building on what had been achieved by the

previous leader.

"I get really excited by being able to share faith with young people. What's even more exciting is that I get to do it with a varied mix of brothers and sisters from very different churches and expressions of Christianity.

"All of us coming together with our range of gifts, talents and experiences mean that the young people we serve get an excellent and enriching service. Everything we do is underpinned by love and our calling to share the Good News with young people. My job is the best job in the world!"

Robert is the longest serving minister in the churches together group, since his installation in 2001, and he has found that the newer leaders from the other churches share enthusiasm and commitment, enjoy the fraternity and learn from each other.

Robert concludes: "We are a diverse group with a love for each other where we choose to focus on our love for Jesus Christ and building up the Kingdom of God. In some ways we are like a "fresh expression" of church, in that we are trying to make ourselves relevant to the 21st century, and this makes sense to a lot of people outside the church."



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# All Saints closes but spirit of hope lives on

The All Saints drop-in centre and café in Norwich city centre closed with a final service on August 29, but there is hope that the spirit which has carried it over the past 35 years remains and can yet be resurrected elsewhere in the city. **Keith Morris reports.**

**A**round 60 volunteers, supporters and clients gathered for a short service led by centre chaplain the Rev Janet Wyer and attended by the Bishop of Norwich and the Sheriff of Norwich. Prayers, songs and memories were shared in an emotional finale. Janet said: "It was a sanctuary of peace and an oasis of love and support where people could rest for a while. That now has gone and it is incredibly sad. We are praying that this expression of God's love in the city will grow and flourish somewhere else. At the moment we have hope and meetings are going on to try to find a way forward."

Trustee Katherine Gray, daughter of the centre founder, Jo Cook, said: "Over the last 35 years the centre has met hundreds of different needs with hundreds of different volunteers and other involved in the ministry, all playing their different part."

"We have come to a halt now, but the spirit is very much still alive and the need is very much still alive. We have had so much support expressed through this process and we need to find out if all of this support will bear fruit and we will be able to get the support we need to find a new venue and some funding to start it off."

"We have been entirely self-funding over the past 35 years, which is quite a feat, but now we really have to take stock. The trustees are meeting in the middle of September to look at the finances and see if we have anything left. We may then have an open meeting with all of those interested to brainstorm and see what is possible in terms of continuing to provide



The closing service at the All Saints Centre led by chaplain Rev Janet Wyer.

the service."

Speaking at the service, the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Rev Graham James, said: "The vision and inspiration that has been with All Saints is bound to continue in one way or another. As Christians we believe in resurrection and I believe that the spirit will raise itself again in this part of the city."

The centre in All Saints Church on Westlegate near the John Lewis store, was well known for providing a warm welcome and food for anyone who needed it, whether they could pay or not, and its Food Voucher Scheme.

The trustees announced the decision to close in a letter to the centre's friends and supporters. Katherine Gray said: "We have been in real financial difficulties for some time. Our expenses have been rising year-on-year: rent, heat, light and other running costs have had to be found as well as salaries for our wonderfully committed members of staff."

"Added to this, the need to find in the region of £8,000 to repair the dangerous floor and try and fund the re-decoration of the building that would cost £14,000, it is all too far beyond

our means."

"In the last year or so the Centre has continued to see an increase in the number of underprivileged and marginalised people coming to us for assistance but, most notably in recent months, there has been a decline in the number of people spending money in the Centre and therefore in our main source of income."

"Our coffee bar income has dropped dramatically and we were losing £500 per week, which was unsustainable. We had to close before all our funds dried up as we have to pay redundancy to our staff and pay all our current bills and any costs in winding down the charity."

Katherine also outlined increasing difficulties in finding new grant funding and being unable to negotiate a more affordable rent from landlord, the Norwich Historic Churches' Trust.

An eleventh hour proposal by the centre's Patron, the Bishop of Norwich, that the Diocese of Norwich should take on the lease of All Saints was also turned down by the NHCT.

[www.allsaintsnorwich.org.uk](http://www.allsaintsnorwich.org.uk)

## New Billy Graham video message set for UK release

**■ NORFOLK:** Some 30 years after American evangelist Billy Graham visited Carrow Road in Norwich for the Mission England crusade, his message of hope will once again be heard in the city with a new video message for the UK released in November, with the help of Norfolk churches.

On November 7, Billy Graham will release a new message to the United Kingdom in the form of a half-hour video.

Entitled 'The Cross', the film will be offered as a free DVD resource to churches, Christian organisations and individuals in the UK.

The Cross will bring a balanced and clear proclamation of the Gospel, interweaving recent and past words from Billy Graham with testimonies of Lacey Sturm (a heavy metal singer) and Lecrae (a rap artist).

The film will be accessible to a wide age range.

Eldred Willey, local Billy Graham Association Co-ordinator for East Anglia, said: "This cinema-quality film captures the beauty of the Gospel, and also of the scenery of Billy Graham's home region in the Appalachian Mountains."

"Many people will find echoes of their own experience in the dramatic stories of Lacey and Lecrae."

The Cross follows on from film projects which the Billy Graham Association has run in 59 countries, resulting in some ten million conversions and rededications. In all, some four million homes and 300,000 churches worldwide have hosted these films.

Alongside The Cross, the Billy Graham Association of producing supporting films of testimonies, two of which are already available on [www.myhopewithbillygraham.org.uk](http://www.myhopewithbillygraham.org.uk)

In 1984, Billy Graham made a powerful impact on the city of Norwich when he preached during Mission England to a crowd of 63,000 at Carrow Road. There were 3,700 recorded decisions for Christ at that meeting, and many local people continue to date their Christian journey from that event.

As with Mission England, the Billy Graham Association will be entrusting follow-up to The Cross to churches in the United Kingdom.

The Billy Graham Association in the United States is generously funding the UK project, which means that resources are free to British churches.

To sign up for free resources please contact the BGEA Coordinator for East Anglia, Eldred Willey, on [eldred.willey@bgea.org.uk](mailto:eldred.willey@bgea.org.uk) or 07904 840772.



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## Time Norfolk is new name for pregnancy loss charity

**Pregnancy loss charity Pregnancy Choices Norfolk has been renamed as Time Norfolk. The launch on July 16 saw a balloon release by BBC Look East's Jenny Kirk and support from actress Amanda Holden. Helen Baldry reports.**

■ Time Norfolk has provided care and support for over 15 years for those facing any kind of pregnancy loss or an unplanned pregnancy.

Around 40 people, including volunteers, trustees, agencies and clients of Time Norfolk witnessed the release of 15 balloons - to mark the number of years the Norfolk charity has been in operation - and in remembrance of babies lost to clients.

Before releasing the balloons, Jenny Kirk (pictured below) spoke about her personal experience of miscarriage and how talking through the loss helps with the grieving process. She said, "We all deal with it differently. I have found that talking to people about it really does help." She commended Time Norfolk for the support and understanding they offer. She said, "They make you realise you are not alone."

Actress and Britain's Got Talent judge, Amanda Holden, gave a video message in support of the work of Time Norfolk. Amanda lost a baby in 2011 while seven months pregnant. She described Time Norfolk as "an amazing charity helping people cope with bereavement and loss."

Time Norfolk gives time, free of charge, to support anyone who has experienced a pregnancy loss such as a miscarriage, stillbirth or termination. Support is also offered to those facing an unplanned pregnancy, who may want information about the options available to them.

The name change from Pregnancy Choices to Time Norfolk reflects the unique service provided; giving time to listen to people and giving them time to grieve and to heal. The need for the service is even greater with the reduction of state provision.

Jackie, a charity volunteer for 10 years, said: "It's so exciting to see the difference this work makes in people's lives." She described meeting people overwhelmed by grief. "We help them process what has happened. We see change and restoration."

Time Norfolk is funded by charitable donations. They are encouraging more people to give regularly by direct debit through their 80 More campaign. One-off donations are also very welcome.

■ For further information on Time Norfolk contact Lesley Bradfield on 01603 482732 or visit the website: [www.timenorfolk.org.uk](http://www.timenorfolk.org.uk)



Sheriff of Norwich, William Armstrong, talks to children at the Cadge Road FISH lunch club.

# Sheriff sees key role of lunch clubs

A new network of lunch clubs providing vital meals for children during the school holidays have begun operating in deprived areas of **Norwich** and their vital role has been recognised by the **Sheriff of Norwich** during a visit to one of them. **Keith Morris** reports.

**S**heriff of Norwich, William Armstrong, visited a FISH (Food (and Fun) In School Holidays) club at the Cadge Road Community Centre in West Norwich on August 7, to see 40 local children enjoying lunch and an hour of fun activities.

The lunch club, which is run by volunteers mainly from the Eternity Christian Centre, has run since last April under the Make Lunch charity. It has now joined together with the FISH initiative and four other brand new clubs operating during the summer school holidays at Lakenham, Thorpe Hamlet, Catton Grove and Silver Road.

Each caters for between 30-50 children and ran until the beginning of September. The initiative has been co-ordinated by Norwich Foodbank.

Lisa Marshall-Nichols, who runs the Cadge Road club, said: "We provide a hot meal and dessert and an hour of activities such as football or crafts, three days a week during the school holiday. We have also had some visits from beat boxing and animals from Banham Zoo."

"The children are all registered through family workers and parent support advisors at local schools and then invited to the club. We

have 50 on our list and more people waiting as we are in an area where it is really needed and we are not big enough to meet all the need.

"We run the club because the need is there and we want to show the church stepping out of its buildings and working in the community. I have children myself and the thought that I could not feed them during the holidays would be awful," said Lisa.

During his visit, William Armstrong, Sheriff of Norwich, said: "I think that the FISH lunch club is wonderful and I have had a chance to talk to both the helpers and to some of the children who obviously enjoy being here. They are given a good meal and are being introduced to activities and allowed to do what children should have the right to do - to enjoy themselves and have a happy and fulfilled existence. Providing children with that sort of positive experience has got to be good for them and for the community. It is about recognising that we all have a responsibility for each other."

"Much of the work of Foodbank and FISH seems to be connected with the church and is about putting the Christian gospel into action. Caring for each other is an important imperative of faith.

It is great that so many church folk support it and recognise the importance of the work," he said.

The network of FISH lunch clubs has been set up by Norwich Foodbank and its development manager, Hannah Worsley, said: "We set out to provide children with healthy, nutritious food and fun in the school holidays, when so many families struggle to find money for extra meals and entertainment. There are so many people giving up time, money and resources to make these projects work and the community spirit behind FISH is amazing. It's very sad that it is needed but we thank God that we have the resources and supporters to provide help to those who need it."

The initiative has been supported by many organisations including Norwich Consolidated Charities, Norfolk Chicken Association, West Norwich Lions, supermarkets, allotment groups, Norse, Britvic and activity providers including Right Angle doing CSI activities and the National Bookstart Trust, as well as private individual donations.

It is planned that the initiative will continue and expand during the October half-term with more clubs in the pipeline.

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# Julian is new East Anglia Methodist chief

A minister with a **Norfolk** connection has been welcomed as the new **Chair of the East Anglia District of the Methodist Church** - the equivalent of a bishop. **Keith Morris** reports.

**R**ev Julian Pursehouse was welcomed to the District at a special service on August 30 at Chapel Field Road Methodist Church, Norwich, from his previous position as superintendent minister in Otley near Leeds and Acting Chair of the Leeds District.

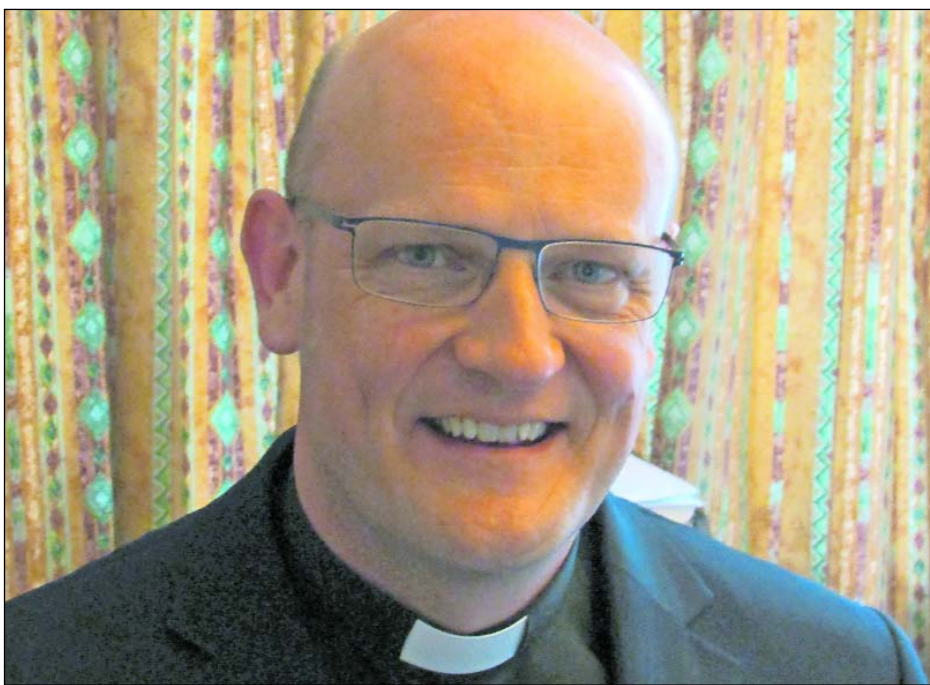
Julian's father, who was himself a Methodist minister, grew up in Diss where Julian's grandfather was headmaster of the Grammar School.

On his appointment, Julian said: "It is a privilege to be appointed by the Methodist Conference to serve as Chair in this district. East Anglia is a particularly idyllic part of the British Isles and an area where you can be constantly reminded of the beauty of God's creation."

"The East Anglia district is geographically vast and culturally diverse, stretching from the North Norfolk coast to the leafy suburbs of Cambridge and from the flat expanse of the Fens to the bustle of Felixstowe docks. I trust that within this rainbow community you will find a warmth of welcome, an optimism in God's grace and a passion for the Gospel."

"The Methodist Church cherishes its place within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church whilst expressing a particular blend of Christian faith characterized by the desire to sing our faith, a catholic spirit that welcomes all, a systematic and accountable approach to discipleship and a thoughtful engagement with the wider world through justice and social action," said Julian. "I have no doubt that you will find these marks of discipleship amongst the good folk of the East Anglia District."

On his recommendation to be appointed



Rev Julian Pursehouse, the new Chair of the East Anglia District of the Methodist Church.

by the Methodist Conference, held in Birmingham in early July, Synod said of Julian: "The son of a Methodist Minister, Julian was candidated from the East Anglia District and after initial training at Lincoln Theological College has served in three Districts: Nottingham and Derby, Northampton and Leeds. In each of these appointments he has inspired and encouraged people to think strategically and theologically, and to focus on appropriate patterns of ministry and mission. He has experience of a number of contexts of ministry, including rural experience, apt for the varied contexts found in the East Anglia District."

"Julian is known as a person of deep spirituality, a careful listener and a thoughtful, reflective and caring pastor. He is committed to teamwork and encouraging and enabling others to participate with confidence to the benefit of all is natural to him. He is a gifted communicator and leader of worship, known for his clarity and

insightfulness."

The welcome service was led by Rev Dr Brian Beck, past President of the Methodist Conference and attended by The Lord Mayor of Norwich and The Sheriff of Norwich. Other guests included the Bishops of Norwich, Huntingdon, St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and Thetford, the Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech, the Regional Minister for the Eastern Baptist Association and the Chair of Essex, Beds and Herts Methodist District. Representing the Methodist Connexion was Rev Gareth Powell, Assistant Secretary to the Methodist Conference.

Julian has been appointed for six years from September 1.

Julian is married to Jean and has two children, Chloe and Tyler. On his Twitter page he describes himself as a reader of theology, partial to real ale, a mountain-biker, catholic in spirit and seeking to discern God's presence in the world.

[www.eamethodist.org.uk](http://www.eamethodist.org.uk)

## Good News stalwart Peter retires after 22 years with paper

■ **Good News for Norwich & Norfolk** stalwart Peter Barnes has retired from his position as advertising manager and administrator after 22 years' service.

The first edition of the tabloid Christian newspaper was published at Christmas 1992 under the banner of Festival Norwich 1990s carrying stories about chaplains in Ritz's nightclub, Radio Cracker and an interview with broadcaster Adrian Plass.

Festival Norwich chairman, John Betts, was quoted in the first edition, saying: "I believe the paper will be a tool for God among the churches, which will give us a better idea of what is happening here in Norwich. Too often as Christians we are unaware of what is going on outside our own circle. I hope that Good News will help us to see more of the big picture. This newspaper will make a contribution to the advancement of the Kingdom of God."

There have been 68 editions of the paper over those 22 years, totalling over 1.5m copies printed and distributed.

Every Christmas up to 70,000 homes across Norwich have received copies through their doors or via local newspapers.

The paper has carried interviews with two archbishops and countless bishops, mayors and sheriffs. It has also featured well-known Christians such as Tony Campolo, Nicky Gumbel, Roy Castle, Joel Edwards, Jonathan Aitken, Simon Thomas, Rick Wakeman, J John, Steve Chalke, Helen Shapiro, Cyrille Regis, Graham Cole and Lord Richard Dannatt.

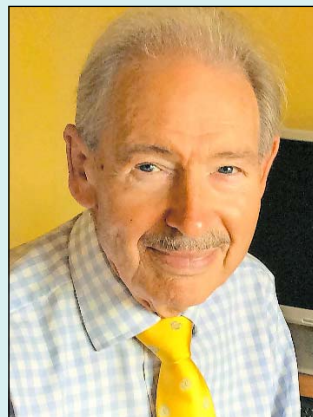
There have also been some more unusual interviews with lorry legend Eddie Stobart, Wallace and Gromit creator Nick Park and American heavyweight boxer Tony Tucker.

Peter said: "The aim and objective of the Good News for Norwich & Norfolk newspaper has been to inform, encourage and excite the local Christian and non-Christian community in what God is doing through the churches of Greater Norwich."

"It has been a privilege to be part of an outstanding team doing just this over these 20 plus years."

Editor, Keith Morris, said: "Peter has been the rock on which the Good News was first established and then flourished over the past 22 years. It simply would not have been possible to continue over all that time without his efforts and for that I and the rest of the team are forever grateful."

Good News said farewell to Peter at a team barbecue on August 16, when he was presented with a card and a small token of appreciation for his work.



Peter Barnes, retiring.

 <p><b>THE HAYES HIGH LEIGH BELSEY BRIDGE CONFERENCE CENTRES</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.cct.org.uk">www.cct.org.uk</a></p>			
	<p><b>THE HAYES</b> Swanwick, Derbyshire <b>01773 526000</b></p>	<p><b>HIGH LEIGH</b> Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire <b>01992 463016</b></p>	<p><b>BELSEY BRIDGE</b> Ditchingham, East Anglia <b>01986 892133</b></p>
	<p><b>HIGH QUALITY AFFORDABLE CONFERENCE CENTRES</b></p>		



Bible college students with director Richard George (front centre).



## Bible college success

Director Richard George reports on another successful year at local Bible College, The Way of the Spirit at Framingham Earl Hall, based just south of Norwich.

■ The Way of the Spirit is a ministry that is impacting many places around the world, bringing the Bible alive for many, including those who thought they already understood it.

As far as I know, The Way of the Spirit, is the only residential bible college in East Anglia. We've just completed our third year here; before which we had a year based at Quiet Waters in Bungay, a year at a property in central Norwich, and two initial years using any rooms we could find to teach in. The college is relatively small - ten residential students last year - but the vision is big. Though not limited to training Bible teachers (we've seen evangelists, intercessors and administrators, for instance, raised up and released), it is our calling to train Bible teachers and send them out around the UK, Africa, India, Korea (to name but a few recent missions) or wherever God calls them. It's a place to receive

impartment as much as instruction. We had a wonderful year last year, and many of those who came gave testimony to transformed lives and new clarity as to what God was calling them to. Almost everyone is coming back next year, to serve on the team here or to have another year as a student.

Smith Wigglesworth prophesied there would be a mighty revival one day, and it would follow two earlier revivals of the Word and the Spirit respectively. This revival would be of the Word and Spirit together.

This prophetic word describes well what lies at the heart of The Way of the Spirit and the spiritual dynamic in the Bible college. Not an academic course, it seeks to impart life, through the Word brought alive by the Spirit. Students come following a call of God to be here, not because they consider themselves qualified in any other way to be teachers. It is quite amazing to see how God equips them in such a short time.

The college starts again in October, and is open to applications, including non-residential students. If you'd like to know more, please contact us on 01508 495346 or [info@thewayofthespirit.com](mailto:info@thewayofthespirit.com)

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## Church reborn as

As a 50-year-old Norwich church held its last service a new one was reborn to take its place.

Keith Morris and Mike Wiltshire report.

Fifty years of history for a high-profile Norwich church were brought to an end on July 6 when the final service of Norwich Family life Church was held at its Mason Road premises in the city.

The service, with a packed congregation of around 650 people, also marked the stepping down of Trevor and Joyce Pimlott from leadership of the church which was started by Trevor's father

Sedley Pimlott some 50 years before. The church first met at Oddfellows Hall on Bethel Street in Norwich and within two years this proved too small and it moved to a redundant Salvation Army chapel on Ketts Hill and was renamed as Mount Zion.

Further growth within the next five years saw a move to Nelson Street and then a six-acre site at the old Gothic Social Club on Heartsease Lane was bought. A new

purpose-built church and community complex was built and well used until a devastating fire in February 2006 saw it burnt to the ground. A brief stay at Drayton Hall was followed by a move to Mason Road.

During the service, a carved wooden baton was passed from Trevor to Jon, and Jon and Chantel were prayed over by the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Rev Graham James and anointed with oil.

Trevor said: "Leading the church has been a tremendous privilege and honour. I can see the potential in Jon and his passion for God. He is a man of integrity and honour and will take the church to a higher level than it has ever been before. I am confident that he is God's choice for this hour and generation."

In a tribute to the former leaders of NFLC and its founder, Dr Sedley Pimlott, Jon said: "We honour pastors Trevor and Joyce and the Pimlott family for the remarkable church they have built over the past 50 years."

"We assure everyone who has been a part of NFLC that we'll always highly esteem the heritage which has been laid. We now have the amazing privilege of standing on their shoulders in building on their legacy."



Jon and Chantel Norman with their daughter Miracle-Joy



Malcolm and Moira Springall.

## Christian pilot

Having time for people, a community spirit and taking opportunities are values that have driven Norwich-born Malcolm Springall. Kevin Gotts reports.

■ Born in 1949 and after leaving St Thomas Moore School at 15, Malcolm was offered employment with an electrical engineering company in Helleston.

"I took on a five-year apprenticeship and just as I finished my time the boss said he was emigrating to Australia. At 20 years old I took over the business and had contracts with many local factories and builders," he recalls.

"In 1976 I thought builders were earning much more than me so I decided to buy building land and started building new houses. I had jumped out of the frying pan into the fire. House building had just gone into





Pictured left, Trevor Pimlott, right, hands over the symbolic baton to Jon Norman, new pastor of Soul Church and, above, the first service at the new church.

■ "A kilo of kindness" is one of the themes of the newly-launched Soul Church as it looks for practical ways to help relieve poverty among needy families this coming December.

Speaking recently on the theme of "I love my city," Pastor Jon Norman of Soul Church noted that there are almost 30,000 people in Norfolk living in poverty - and declared: "God loves the poor, but he hates poverty. Poverty isn't beaten by sympathy, but by action."

While highlighting the Bible's strong views about injustice and poverty, he added: "It's time for us as Christians to wake up and have the eyes and ears to see and hear the lost, the hurt and the broken."

At a celebration of new beginnings in

mid-July, Soul Church in Mason Road, Norwich, gave away its offering of £3,000 to help needy children in South Africa and elsewhere. Gifts have also gone to street children's ministries in Mumbai, India.

In the "kilo of kindness" campaign, church members, who are able, will be encouraged to bring in "at least a kilo" of good food items as gifts for needy families.

Jon is originally from Norwich and ran the hugely successful Wildlife youth club at the former Mount Zion church, at Heartsease before moving to Hillsong Leadership College in Sydney, Australia in 2002. There he met Chantel, who was born in Los Angeles, California and they married in 2006.

The couple served on the pastoral leadership team at Hillsong Cape Town in South Africa for six years, Jon as the associate pastor and Chantel as the worship director. They have a two-year old daughter, Miracle-Joy.

As a family, they felt the strong call of God at the beginning of 2014 to pioneer a church in Norwich and were released and supported by Hillsong Church to that endeavour.

He adds: "Norwich has always had a special place in my heart - and when God opened the door for us to come back here and establish a church in this city, I knew it was time - the best is still to come."

Soul Church hopes to eventually rebuild on its site at Heartsease Lane.

## sees heaven as his destination

recession so and I couldn't sell a thing," he confesses.

Fortunately, a couple of years earlier, Malcolm had obtained a pilot's licence and was intent on building hours towards a commercial licence. One day he was early for an appointment and dropped into Fridays' Garage in Norwich and spoke with owner Graham Dacre. A week later, Malcolm received a call to fly businessman John Wright to a Full Gospel Businessmen's meeting in North Wales.

At a fog-bound Welsh RAF base, Malcolm heard the two passengers John Wright and Colin King praying for a break in the weather so that they could depart. Within 30 minutes the fog had lifted and they flew out safely. Malcolm later learned

that after their take-off, the fog returned.

With new-found business flying FGB men around the country, Malcolm attended a meeting in Bristol and became a committed Christian.

Malcolm married wife Moira in 1969 and they have been happily together for 45 years. They had two children, Neal and Elaine, but sadly Neal died eight years ago, aged 28. They have two grand-daughters, Amber and Amy.

In addition to running a flying school at Norwich Airport he was a tug pilot for many years and gliding instructor at Tibbenham in Norfolk.

Tragedy struck again five years ago with the onset of cancer which curtailed any flying, with Malcolm expecting he would die.

He now rejoices, "Through the power of prayer I am here today, I see Heaven as my destination."

Describing themselves as inter-denominational people, they have been members of Mount Zion, a local church and more recently a house church.

Their hobbies are ballroom dancing, cycling and bowling.

"I am very much a community person and served on parish councils for many years.

"When a vacancy recently came available in Wroxham, Salhouse, Rackheath and Belaugh for a District Councillor I was asked if I would stand and was elected. I think I am the sort of person who gets things done," he concludes.

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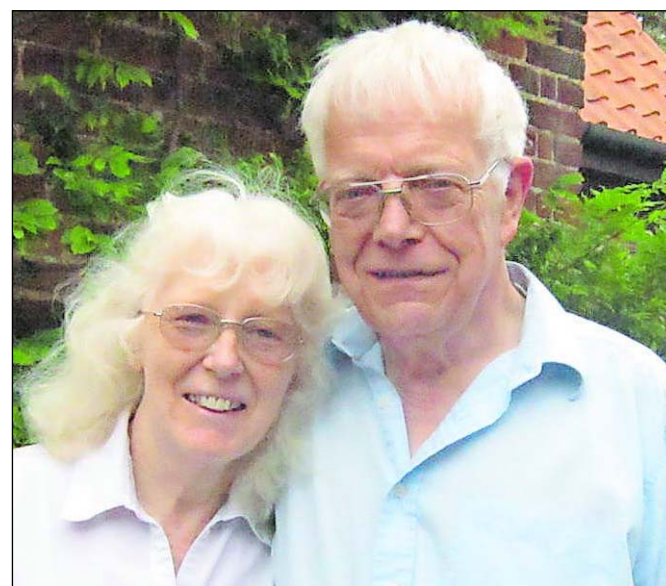
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St Michael's Workshop, left and the Bowthorpe Worship Centre, right.

# Workshop born in prayer

A visionary idea born in a small home prayer group in a seaside village in north Norfolk led to a pioneering project to help needy people in **Norwich** which this year is celebrating its 30th anniversary. **Mike Wiltshire** reports.



Barbara and Peter Tomlinson.

**T**oday, hand-made wooden products from the award-winning St Michael's Workshop in Bowthorpe are exported all over the world - the workshop is also the UK supplier of the popular "Godly Play" creative materials used in many churches, schools, hospitals and care homes.

The original vision was shared by Christian friends with Barbara and Peter Tomlinson in the village of Bacton. The couple moved to Bowthorpe, Norwich, and Peter started a workshop in his double garage, close to the Bowthorpe Church Centre, located alongside the 600-year-old ruins of St Michael's Church.

With the encouragement of Sally Simpson and her brother, Ray, the former minister at Bowthorpe, the pioneer workshop project grew, despite many financial challenges. The fully-equipped

workshop is now located in modern premises in former stables alongside Bowthorpe Church, teaching skills to people with physical or learning disabilities and to unemployed people. The charity project is part of Bowthorpe Community Trust and funded in part by the Norfolk Learning Disabilities Service.

Peter recalls: "We started by making toys. The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation were the first to support us. Today we have a fine workshop supplying wooden educational materials and other items all over the UK and worldwide."

Peter, who formerly worked in the gas industry, retired from the workshop 10 years ago, but returned five years

ago, and he is still there on a part-time basis, working alongside the workshop staff and volunteers.

Sally Simpson, a retired teacher from City College, is still very much involved in the workshop project, as well as being the pastoral co-ordinator at Bowthorpe Church.

Among many giving strong support for the workshop is Canon Simon Stokes, a former minister at Bowthorpe who, even though he is registered blind, jogged the Beachy Head marathon to raise money for the project with his Labrador guide dog, Tigger. Simon is now vicar at St Cuthbert's Church in Wroxham Road, Sprowston.

Customers of the Norwich and Peterborough Building Society in Bowthorpe recently voted for St Michael's Workshop to win the N&P Community Award.

Meanwhile, workshop trustees, encouraged by the Rev Mark Elvin, minister at Bowthorpe for the past two years, are planning an "anniversary open day" for May 16, 2015, and plan to invite all former clients and their families, support workers, staff, patrons and community leaders to a lunch and tea event.

"It's remarkable to think that all this began more than 30 years ago in a small prayer meeting," says Peter.



St Michael's Workshop wins an N&P Community Award.



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# Vicar's move from Pakistan to Norfolk

**R**iaz (43) left his home country with a thriving ministry. He had held the position of Vicar at St Luke's Church Abbottabad within north eastern Pakistan for seven and a half years. Within that time the church had enjoyed considerable growth. He said: "That was a small congregation when I started ministry there. There were about 37 families but we left with 115 families. It was a bigger, growing church and I baptised some of the non-Christian people there."

In Pakistan, Riaz was an influential figure both in his town and province. He specialised in interfaith dialogue; speaking at, and organising, seminars and conferences on the subject. He joined the parish in the aftermath of a disastrous earthquake, and so for four years he and his wife, Mary, ran a medical camp providing free medicines, check-ups with doctors and treatment for the poor who could not otherwise afford it.

In March, Riaz flew from Pakistan to the UK with his young family to take up the post of Priest-in-Charge of the parishes of West Winch with Setchey, North Runcton, Middleton and East Winch with West Bilney, in rural West Norfolk.

Since arriving in the Diocese of Norwich they have enjoyed a warm welcome, being licensed by the Bishop of Norwich Rt Rev Graham James and installed at a special service with Rt Rev Jonathan Meyrick, the Bishop of Lynn.

Riaz already has a great fondness for his parishioners, but he is aware that his congregations are elderly and have been on the decline. He is eager to see the churches grow and attract more young people and families.

He is already planning different ways to engage with families including starting a Messy Church service. As part of his role he has become the School Governor at the Church of England's Middleton VC Primary School and will be taking assemblies in the West Winch Primary School. As he and his family are friendly they expect to meet people at the market and park and build relationships naturally.

He said: "My family are very friendly. We open our house to everyone and back in my country we opened our church to other denominations to use. I made my church a welcoming church. Here I'm working to make these four parishes welcoming parishes so that people can feel at home."

The journey to West Winch began four years ago. Although his success had made him a strong candidate for promotion he was looking for God to use him practically.

He said: "I left a good position back in my previous Parish and look forward to serving all; wishing to develop good terms and



In March Rev Riaz Mubarak moved from Pakistan with his family to take up the role of Priest-in-Charge of a West Norfolk parish. Jenny Seal met him and found out about his journey so far.

relations with other denominations as well as with other people of faith. We were praying for many years that God would show us where to go next because we were not the owner of that church but simply stewards to serve. We were there for a certain time, now God has called us to come here to serve."

Riaz had completed studies at a Seminary in America and had previously visited the UK, completing an Army Chaplaincy course in Portsmouth in 2012.

His search for his next post was international and when he approached his Bishop in Pakistan for a reference he agreed, where for previous applications he had refused.

Riaz said: "This was a divine sign that God was moving and calling us to these parishes as the Bishop saw that perhaps God had a purpose for me here. Hopefully God will show me that purpose."

Riaz grew up in a Christian home and was baptised at an early age, but it wasn't until he became ill at 18 that he found a personal faith. He realised that he couldn't rely on his own talents and strength and so in 1988 his life

changed. He began ministry as a Sunday school teacher before becoming the Youth Officer in his church.

He also served as an evangelist and was captured twice by Muslim Imams and sent to jail in Pakistan. But as he spoke to the officers in jail they found him not guilty and released him after receiving a copy of the Bible. For 10 years he struggled with whether to become a priest until two people spoke into his life, and his decision to become a full-time minister was confirmed.

Reflecting on the differences between his own culture and the western culture, he observes that in Pakistan the 'picture of God' has become muddled with different faiths and especially personal faith claiming ownership of God. In the UK, Riaz says the 'picture of God' seems to have been broken at some stage in history, and we collectively need to work on it.

He said: "In the 20th century, Christianity was squeezed within the buildings and secularism broke the picture of God. That is the point where we need to work with people. I want to work so that people might have a proper restored picture of God."

"My slogan in Pakistan was 'We serve but Christ heals', and here I see my ministry as 'Christ heals and works in life so that people may be able to find their saviour Christ'. I believe that God will transform lives and bring them to His House to serve."

In the end he says: "I go with the Christian faith. That's what I have learned in my ministry: that faith works and serves."

## Hundreds at Sheringham beach mission

■ **SHERINGHAM:** The BeachLife activity outreach for children and young people on Sheringham cliff top and beach in late August was another great success, attracted over 200 children and young people. **Tony Rothe** reports.

This was the third successive summer that BeachLife has taken place. It is a joint venture by the churches in Sheringham, aimed at engaging with local youngsters, as well as holidaymakers.

Activities kicked off each day with the "Beach Special", where all ages came together at the cliff-top marquee on The Leas for music, games, drama and fun, and to introduce the day's theme, which this year was "Meeting Jesus". Popular features included "More Tea Vicar?" and the "Musical Medley", and six of the team, as well as town mayor Patricia Brooks, took part in the Ice Bucket challenge on the Friday. The children and young people then split into age-groups to explore that day's theme in more depth.

The afternoons comprised of beach sports, beach sculptures, a bouldering wall, the return of the popular "egg parachute" challenge, and the construction of a huge BeachLife logo on the beach using flints. The week was rounded off with a carnival-themed afternoon with a barbecue and the Leas resounded with laughter as hundreds of children and young people and their families enjoyed Jamie Jolly's Ministry of Fun, with circus activities, sumo suits, space-hoppers, two bouncy castles, a coconut shy and a special visit by the "Mad Science" team.

Evening activities included a quiz night, tide fight on the beach, with chips, treasure hunt, and a "Sheropoly" trail around the town, all of which were well attended.

"Once again, we have had a great time engaging with hundreds of kids and young people," said Richard Allen, co-ordinator of the event. "We had large numbers of children and young people having a huge amount of fun whilst finding out more about God. Feedback has been extremely positive, with many people asking when next year's BeachLife would be. We have a great team from the various churches in Sheringham, all working together to make this happen."

Next year's outreach will run from Tuesday August 25 to Friday 28, 2015. But Sheringham youngsters will not have to wait until next summer to continue the fun, as the team are already planning for a Light Party on Friday October 31, and another "BeachLife Extra" activity day on Friday February 20.

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# Julie found her destiny not in stars but in God

She worked for the **Beatles**, married a pop star and became a single parent but now **Norfolk-born Julie Anderson** is an influential church pastor with her husband **Rod**, in **Suffolk** and **London**. **Sandie Ridgley** reports.

**A** woman with a love for God, she has walked and talked with Him through the dramatic twists and turns of life and today she is helping open the doors to His heart for others.

In August she brought musicians and teachers from America and across the UK to a barn near the Norfolk/Suffolk border to bring healing, miracles and hope. Quite simply, having tasted that God is good, Julie wants others to taste and know His goodness too.

Recalling her young first marriage, Julie says: "Somehow I just knew however much I had messed up I could start again and if I had a destiny I felt I had one relationship left to get right in my life and that was with God."

Over four decades ago she went to America to receive everything she could from heaven and made a new and lasting pact with her Saviour, Jesus. "Since that day a fountain of life and encouragement has always risen up in me to pray, no matter what I have faced and I have not stopped praying and seeing answers to this day!" says Julie.

She grew up in Norwich where her life was a vibrant mix of city and rural living that included sailing, riding and tennis with friends. Armed with shorthand and typing she later took a job in the capital working for an oil company but she was bored. Reaching for the London evening paper one day, she made a heart-felt plea: "God, if you have anything for my life, show me!"

The result was startling. She immediately answered a one-line advertisement - 'Famous Impresario seeks private secretary' - and soon she was mingling with celebrities when she worked for BBC TV chat show host, Simon Dee. The doors of the music world swung wide with a developing love for music that continues with Christian vocals and instrumentals today.

Julie became involved with an



Julie Anderson outside Ostler's Barn in Mellis, Suffolk.

emerging era and an ever-widening circle of musicians and eventually worked for the Beatles and married pop star, John Walker, of the Walker Brothers. But celebrity life brought later despair.

"While living in the South of France among the Rolling Stones while my former husband was recording I saw what the Stones offered and it was not enough for me. In desperation I cried out within to God. I wanted to know why I was born and what for? One night, sitting eating dinner opposite Mick Jagger, I was desperate and cried out to God again for help."

A moving spiritual encounter followed and God continued to point her heavenwards after her first marriage ended and she became a single parent.

"My mother told me I had blotted my copy-book by marrying a pop star and ending up as a single parent. My Norfolk friends were settling down with families and my mind was filled with my own problems and life looked like a dark wilderness, but I learnt that God was my maker and my husband.

"I spent a lot of time listening to

the inside conversation of my heart and I wanted to leave Norfolk. I felt humiliated by all that had happened and I knew change had to happen. I wanted a new beginning, a new chapter and to learn how to be responsible for my life and my child."

A window of time opened to put things right with God. She left England with her three-year-old son and a couple of suitcases to join friends in America.

"Over dinner one night they said I should repent of my sins and ask Jesus into my heart. I thought that was quite rude and they were crazy. I had grown-up in a Christian family, school and nation - why did I need to repent of sins and ask Jesus into my heart, wasn't I already a Christian?"

But despite her reservations Julie did just that while also hearing about the Holy Spirit. "I wanted anything God would give me if it was real, so the Holy Spirit became my best friend."

Today her transformed life is helping to transform others. Together with her husband Rod, by her side for the last 31 years, she runs an international prayer

and healing ministry. The doors of destiny and providence have widened as she has regularly prayed at Westminster and with high ranking officials for God to impact the nations and the UK.

Prayer has been important since she was a child. "My mother prayed with me every night and I learned she knew who she prayed to! I understood it was not hard to talk to God and prayer was about being real and talking to Him from the heart."

Prayer was her upholding force a few years ago when Rod was diagnosed with Hepatitis C and liver failure. He was given just 20 months to live, but as he fought infection, medics believed he was too ill for a transplant. Heartbroken and numb, Julie went home to pray and read her Bible as a 24-hour prayer vigil continued for Rod.

"It was April 17 and there was a huge storm as I set my face like flint and prayed hard and heavy. I went to my Bible reading and believing that God had given Rod breath and spirit and his times were in God's hands. That evening there was a telephone call from Rod - the hospital were going to operate the following day having found a liver for him. He came out from hospital 11 days later - it was a total miracle," says Julie.

The couple lead the Commonwealth Church at London's Regent Park and they took over Ostler's Barn at Mellis, Suffolk seven years ago, turning it into the Prayer Foundation's headquarters and launching an annual family prayer camp three years ago.

At times Julie has been ushered into a spiritual realm beyond her own. When she was just three she recalls seeing angels at her Norwich home and later in life she remembers meeting Jesus when she was given a vision of heaven and hell. That vision has been part of the driving force to share God's love and help light the fires of faith for others while enabling them to grow through prayer.

"Today is a rehearsal for tomorrow. If you want to go to heaven you have to be willing to let God change you. He is concerned about your heart so can you say: 'God do you have more for my life?' because your heart is in His hand. Until you find your identity in Jesus, you are not going to be successful in finding your destiny. Once done, it's eternal!"

[www.prayerfoundation.org](http://www.prayerfoundation.org)

[www.commonwealthchurch.org](http://www.commonwealthchurch.org)

## Yarmouth church to host summit

■ **GREAT YARMOUTH:** Willow Creek has announced the full-line up of speakers for this year's Global Leadership Summit (GLS), which will be hosted by Kingsgate Community Church in Great Yarmouth and Norwich Youth for Christ for the first time ever on October 17 and 18.

Speakers include Carly Fiorina, former CEO of Hewlett Packard, Jeffery Immelt, President and CEO of General Electric, Wilfredo De Jesus, Senior Pastor of New Life Covenant Church & TIME's 100 most influential people 2013 and Tyler Perry, film-maker, actor and philanthropist.

The Global Leadership Summit is held each year in Chicago, attracting thousands of leaders hungry to develop and hone their skills. Taking the best of the talks, they create a two-day video-cast event which is then hosted all over the world in 105 countries, including Great Yarmouth.

[www.willowcreek.org.uk/gls/about\\_rsp.shtml](http://www.willowcreek.org.uk/gls/about_rsp.shtml)

## Hunger for justice

■ **NORWICH:** Renowned Christian speaker, Ruth Valerio is speaking at the Hunger for Justice event on Saturday October 18, 2pm at Norwich Central Baptist Church. This free event will be the start of a series of meetings for Christians passionate about justice.

Over the weekend of October 18-19, hundreds of churches nationwide will be urging their local MPs to tackle climate change, and praying for sisters and brothers around the world.

Millions of the world's poorest people are feeling the impact of climate change right now. They are suffering first and worst from the consequences, and yet they are least to blame.

Julian Bryant, Christian Aid Norfolk Coordinator said: "Over the Hunger for Justice weekend it would be fantastic if every MP in Norfolk was invited to attend their local church at a Sunday service or another event. We believe we can find joy in God's creation without always craving for 'more'. A simple and profound act of prayer in each church across Norfolk would be wonderful."

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## Shoebox support needed

■ People in Norfolk are among the most generous in the country according to a Christian charity as it launches its annual shoebox appeal for families and the elderly across Eastern Europe.

Last Christmas, Link to Hope distributed 34,000 shoeboxes of gifts in Eastern Europe. Since 1992, the charity has provided boxes of essential items such as clothes, hats, toothpaste, hairbrushes, pens and pencils to the poorest communities in Moldova, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania and Albania.

This year with the deteriorating situation in the Ukraine and the need for shoeboxes for Syrian refugees, who have fled into Bulgaria, Link to Hope is really hoping that the people of Norfolk can help.

Historically Norfolk gives more shoeboxes than any other region in the UK apart from the charity's home county, West Sussex.

Link to Hope's General Manager, Lisa Hector, said: "People may feel that the situation in Eastern Europe is much better than before but as we can see on the news, events have not been good in this region. We particularly want to support our projects in the Ukraine with shoeboxes this year as they are working in very difficult situations amongst many refugees and people that have had houses destroyed.

"In Bulgaria our project teams want to give shoeboxes to the many Syrian refugees currently housed in schools and camps with no



Recipients of Link to Hope shoeboxes.

possessions having had to flee the fighting with nothing. We know that our supporters in Norfolk will do all they can to help us."

Link to Hope start collecting shoeboxes in November. For details of local arrangements contact Clifford Watson on 01603 927886 or drop shoeboxes off at Mile Cross Methodist Church, Alysham Road, NR3 2RU.

To find out more about the work of Link to Hope, contact the office on 01903 529333 or visit [www.linktohope.co.uk](http://www.linktohope.co.uk).



Mary Hayes, left, with Denise Hunter from YMCA Norfolk.

## Leap of faith as a thanks to YMCA

Twice abandoned by her mother, **Norwich** teenager **Mary Hayes** was given a home and a future by the work of **YMCA Norfolk** and is now repaying that help by completing a skydive to raise cash for the Christian charity. **Keith Morris** reports.

**M**ary, aged 17, planned to complete the jump on September 14 with UK Parachuting at Beccles Airfield to fulfil a lifelong ambition and as a way of saying thank-you to the YMCA.

"I have always wanted to do a skydive," said Mary. "I was quite scared but I really wanted to do it. I also cannot think of anything better to do than to raise some money for the YMCA, to help them provide housing and support to other young people who find themselves in the same situation as me, because they have helped me so much and there is no way I could physically repay them."

At the age of just 12, Mary faced a situation that no child should ever have to face: "One Sunday morning I woke up at home with my brother and two sisters and my mum had just disappeared," she said. "We were all separated and I ended up in care, which was quite hard for me."

"After 18 months in care I returned to live with my mother but it happened again when she left me to go to live with her partner and this time I was completely on my own. I was 16 and just about to start my GCSEs."

"The YMCA took me on straight away for five nights under the emergency NightStop scheme in Norwich and then that was renewed for a further five nights. The woman I stayed with, Annie, is absolutely lovely and I got on really well with her and her two daughters."

"Annie said she would like me to stay on and changed to the YMCA's Supported Lodgings scheme. I have now been with Annie for five months and I can now live here for up to two years. I feel like I can now be a 'normal' 17-year-old and that I finally belong somewhere."

While with the YMCA, Mary has completed a

Ready to Employability course, and is about to start a Phoenix Plus course, including retaking some GCSEs plus doing some new ones.

"I want to go on to do A Levels and then go to university to study law," said Mary. "I have seen a lot of things on the other side of the law and I am just so interested in it as well. I am also very good at arguing and enjoy it."

Being in Supported Lodgings has also helped Mary to acquire some life skills such as cooking and cleaning. "I do now feel that I could live independently and that is down to the YMCA and Annie," she said. "Otherwise I don't think I would have the motivation to do anything around the house or anything."

Mary has also been to the dentist for the first time in her life and is now able to use buses alone. "When I first came to the YMCA I suffered from high anxiety and depression," she said. "Now I can travel on buses alone, which may sound small but for me was a very big thing and I had never been able to before. I got a panic attack just standing at the bus stop. I feel a lot more positive and don't feel anxious at all."

Mary's determination has impressed her YMCA support worker, Denise Hunter, too: "Mary told me that if she can jump out of a plane then she feels that she can take on anything in life and know that she can succeed," said Denise. "She has arranged it all herself and even run a car boot sale to raise some of the cash."

"We have been working in partnership with NCC Children's Services to support Mary. She has a fantastic social worker Liz and guidance advisor Fiona and we have worked together to ensure that Mary is aware of all opportunities in order to achieve her goals. Together we have worked towards giving Mary a stable, supportive, empowering foundation from which she can spread her wings and fly when the time is right for her. This is what collaborative working is all about!"

Mary feels that she now has a future to look forward to: "Throughout my life I have never had control and it is a big thing for me. At the minute I feel I am starting to gain control and I think it is something that everyone needs. I think the skydive will make me more confident as well and allow me to realise that if I can do that there is not a lot else that I cannot do."

To sponsor Mary visit: <http://uk.virgin-moneygiving.com/MaryHayes1>

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