



Norwich churches call for refugee action

■ Church members and leaders joined a packed meeting of over 200 people at the RC Cathedral in Norwich on March 4 calling on local councils to act on their pledges to welcome 50 Syrian refugees to Norfolk.

The meeting, organised by umbrella organisation the Norwich Refugees Welcome Here Group, heard passionate speakers from a local Mosque, churches, aid agencies, refugee support groups, trade unions and political organisations.

Among the speakers was Norwich Cathedral's Canon for Mission & Pastoral Care,

Rev Andy Bryant, who told the meeting: "Let us make Norwich a Fine City because of the quality of the welcome we can offer. We will not let ourselves be divided but will be a community that works together.

"I would love to see Norwich become a city of sanctuary and create a culture of welcome and the most vulnerable and the most marginal people will always know that they are welcome here. That is what the Church of England and all the churches across the city want to see."

Meanwhile, Christian groups across Norfolk are doing what they can to prepare for the

refugees' arrival. Diocese of Norwich Mother's Union president, Marguerite Phillips, also speaking on behalf of the Sanctuary Norfolk coalition, said: "We are pressing for a response from the government and Norfolk County Council on when something might happen. We are also praying constantly for refugees wherever they are. There is a lot of willing support in Norfolk and our members are prepared to do whatever is necessary."

A public march has been organized for Palm Sunday, March 20, starting from the RC Cathedral to St Peter Mancroft church.

Norfolk pastor issues Easter cross challenge

A South Norfolk church pastor has challenged his congregation to erect eight-foot high wooden crosses in their front gardens during Holy Week to remind people of the Easter message.

Keith Morris reports.

Rev Mark Taylor of Carleton Rode Baptist Church said: "I was sat at home planning for Easter services and in my imagination I just saw a street in the village with crosses in the front gardens. A simple cross shouts a message on its own, you don't need any words.

"The crosses will be made of timber and will have red ribbon where the nails would have gone through Christ's wrist, and a crown of thorns to loop over it.

"We want people to erect them in their gardens early on Good Friday morning, with the words 'Jesus Christ' stapled to the cross spar - we will provide everything people need.

"Then on Easter Sunday morning, early again, remove the crown of thorns and add the word 'Risen' to the upright stake," said Mark.

Congregation member Steven Halstead has volunteered to help make the crosses, for a suggested donation of £10 to cover the costs.

"There was a good response verbally last Sunday when we put order forms out," said Mark. "The local Anglican Pilgrim Benefice of churches are also distributing the order forms and the chapel at Great Moulton has expressed some interest.

The cross will come flat-packed with an eight-foot and four-foot spar, plus the ribbons, a wreath and some signage and a couple of screws. Mark and his team will distribute them and help people put them up if necessary.

"If you are used to walking through your community and suddenly one morning a cross appears in a garden and a bit further another one appears, with some ribbons and a sign, then that is a big message," said Mark.

"There are some tracts to go with them if



Rev Mark Taylor, left, and Steven Halstead, with one of the wooden crosses.

people want them to explain the Easter story."

Mark is happy to give details of the crosses and how to collect the bits needed if other

churches are interested in also using the idea.

You can contact Mark on 01953 789899 or at mark.954@btinternet.com.



Ven Jan McFarlane.

Archdeacon of Norwich set to become bishop

■ The Queen has approved the nomination of the Ven Jan McFarlane, Archdeacon of Norwich as the sixth Suffragan Bishop of Repton in the Diocese of Derby and the ninth female bishop in the Church of England.

Jan will be consecrated as a bishop by the Archbishop of Canterbury on Wednesday 29 June in London and will begin her ministry in Derbyshire later in the summer.

The Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Revd Graham James, said, "Jan is greatly loved and much admired in the Diocese of Norwich. She has been a fine communicator of the Christian faith in the local and regional media, and an archdeacon who has won the confidence and affection of lay people alike. We will miss her enormously in this diocese but we are thrilled that she has been called to be a bishop in God's church."

"She has been a very familiar voice and face in the local and regional media and greatly appreciated for her clarity of mind, quickness of wit and vigorous exposition of the Christian faith," said Bishop Graham.

"It will be little surprise to many who know Jan well that she has been chosen to be a bishop. It seemed unlikely a couple of years ago when she was diagnosed with cancer, but it is a huge blessing that she has come through her surgery and treatment so well and is now in such good health."

Jan said: "I am honoured and delighted to have been invited to become the next Bishop of Repton, and I'm looking forward to all the challenges and opportunities which lie ahead. But it will be very hard indeed to leave Norfolk where I have spent 16 very happy years working alongside first rate colleagues both in the church and in the local media. I have been proud to have been archdeacon of such a fine city and will miss this county and its people more than I can say."

Since 1999 Jan has been Director of Communications in the Diocese of Norwich. From 2001 to 2009 Jan served as Chaplain to the Bishop of Norwich and has been Archdeacon of Norwich since 2009. She combines this job with the communications role and as Warden of Readers. She has been a member of the General Synod since 2005.

Jan is married to Andrew Ridoutt, a television cameraman and will have a leaving service in Norwich Cathedral.

GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

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■ The deadline for material for the Celebrate Norfolk edition is Friday April 29. Distribution is from Thursday May 19.

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Let's celebrate life's victory over death

■ Recently I did a question and answer session with a group of 12-year-olds who were surprised to discover that, although a Catholic priest, I can still smoke (I don't) and drink (I do) and go to the cinema and stay out past ten o'clock at night (I do quite a lot).

Their whole concept of any organised religion was to define it from a negative viewpoint: religion is about what we can't do or at least about what we shouldn't do.

I can accept that Christian ethics are often portrayed in a "Thou Shalt Not" framework.

The Ten Commandments are an obvious example.

But the "No" of Christian ethics is always and only ever the reverse side of a much bigger "Yes". It is the "No" said to the persistent moth about the electric light bulb: no, because without it the moth will kill itself by its frantic



Fr Sean Connolly is parish priest at St George's Norwich

hitting against the burning bulb; no, because instead there is on offer a bright and sunny day to be explored and enjoyed.

This season of Easter for Christians is a reminder of the radical "Yes" that is at the heart of our religion.

Having fasted for the 40 days of Lent and celebrated the gruelling and terrible events of Calvary, Christians at Easter bathe in the

reflected glory of the Resurrection.

Easter is overwhelmingly positive: it is about life's victory over death, about the forgiveness of our sins, about a new beginning for each of us, and about our welcome into a vibrant and loving community which awaits the outpouring of God's own Spirit at Pentecost.

Christianity, especially in this Easter season, should be a religion of enjoyment and laughter and life. It should be fun. We should have fun.

Often at this time I tell people who come to me in confession to go out and do something they really enjoy: celebrate life!

As Christians we are to be life-giving people, affirming those around us, building up where others tear down, making everyone we meet feel loved precisely because we know that they are loved: loved utterly by a God who was prepared to die for them.

Norwich church goes green to win award

A Norwich church has received an eco-award to recognise their ongoing efforts to care for the environment in all areas of church life. Helen Baldry reports.

A dedicated team from Norwich Central Baptist Church (NCBC) have been working for many months towards the 'Eco-Congregation' award, administered by Christian organisation A Rocha.

Being an eco-friendly church goes beyond the good practices of recycling and serving Fair Trade tea and coffee - churches who receive the award must demonstrate that they care seriously for God's earth and ensure their church life and activities have a positive impact on the environment.

The church carried out an 'eco-audit' to identify priorities for improvement. They then drew up an action plan which included many aspects of church life, including the management of their buildings, travel to church, sourcing ethical suppliers and the recycling of food waste.

The team was led by Kirstin Aitken, who said: "We have taken action in a lot of different areas of church life. We have had a sermon series, taken part in a climate



The Eco-Congregation team, with Kirstin, centre holding the plaque, and Dr Weaver, fourth from right.

change campaign, focused on how we can steward our resources better, and held prayer meetings about the environment. As a church we've been learning how we can worship God more fully through caring for creation."

The goals were successfully achieved and awarding body, A Rocha, praised NCBC for the way so many groups within the church were represented on the eco team and for the support for the project from the whole church.

A special service was held at NCBC on January 24 with visiting preacher Revd Dr John Weaver

from the John Ray Initiative, an educational charity which encourages action on the global environmental crisis.

Dr Weaver spoke about the Biblical mandate for caring for the earth and the hope there is in Jesus for God's world. He said, "Eco-congregation is our Christian calling. It's not just an award but it's about the life of the church."

The award plaque - fashioned from recycled church pews - was presented by Dr Weaver and will take pride of place in the church building.

More churches are encouraged

to take the challenge to go green and the Eco Congregation award has been simplified and relaunched as Eco Church to become more accessible to churches in the hope that many more people will participate and incorporate caring for God's earth into their everyday work and witness.

NCBC are planning an information evening to let other churches know about how they can be more green.

If you would be interested in attending please email Kirstin on kirstinaitken@hotmail.com

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change taking place

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with yearning tears

We sing out
broken hallelujahs

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■ From Joy's new book of poetry Seeking Solace.

The Kindle edition of the book and the Words of Joy blog can be found at: www.wordsofjoy.me

Pictured, Joy Lenton is presented with her Best Blog award at the Norfolk Christian Digital Communications Awards by Bishop Graham James and Network Norfolk publisher Keith Morris.



Joy writes of life of faith and freedom

Winner of Network Norfolk's 'Best Blog' award in the Norfolk Christian Digital Communications Awards in November, Joy tells of how life's challenges, and God's grace, have shaped her writing. Joy, who lives in Norwich and has been married to Phil for 40 years, has always enjoyed writing.

As a child, she wrote stories and read them to her school friends at break time. Joy had a challenging upbringing in a dysfunctional family, with a particularly difficult relationship with her mother. Writing was a means of retreat from problems at home. She found putting pen to paper cathartic, although that is not the main reason she does it now.

Joy first started blogging three years ago. She did not disclose her identity at first as she felt very shy and nervous. Her son Sam encouraged her to share her writing Words of Joy, which includes poetry, personal reflections and thoughts inspired by ordinary life. Joy said, "To my surprise, my writing has morphed into a ministry offering hope and encouragement to others."

God has given her a new perspective and inspires the words she writes. Poetry is Joy's main means of expression and she has coined the phrase

For somebody who is housebound and suffers from chronic illness, **Joy Lenton's** life is one of remarkable freedom. The painful experience of abuse and mental health breakdown has generated beauty and vitality in her writing as Joy shows how God has pieced her life back together. **Helen Baldry** reports.

'prayer whispers' as the way God speaks to her.

Day-to-day life is not easy for Joy as she suffers from the chronic illness ME which leaves her constantly exhausted and virtually house-bound.

She often hears from God when she is in bed resting. Sometimes she hears him say 'write this down' and words form into a blog post. She said: "It's all from God. It's not me trying to write a good poem. I write from the heart."

A reader put her blog forward in the awards and a large number of people

voted for her to win. She expresses disbelief at winning her category. She said: "It's a huge gift of grace to me. I sense God saying to keep going because He knows who needs to read the words I share."

Attending a church is now impossible for Joy, but rather than becoming isolated, she belongs to a supportive online community. She said: "Church for me is everywhere and nowhere in particular."

Although she is no longer physically going to a church, Joy feels she is not missing out on teaching and fellowship. A particular friend from church faithfully keeps in touch and she has found genuine friendship online and has developed an interest in contemplative prayer. Joy always tries to answer her readers' comments. She said: "I sense God's given me a ministry of prayer and encouragement."

When Joy talks about God, she makes him sound very immediate. Her close relationship with him is evident and she has learnt to listen to his voice. Although she writes about pain, her blog posts are positive. She said: "Healing is a process. We have to work through the painful parts but we don't go through it alone. I want to pass that on to others."

Norfolk gets fourth Filling Station with new launch

■ Norfolk was set to get its fourth Filling Station with the launch of the Yare Valley group in South Norfolk on March 17.

The first monthly informal mid-week evening 'celebration' meeting, is being held at Alington and Bergh Apton Primary School.

"We have responded to a groundswell of a desire from local Christians from a range of church backgrounds to get together by the setting up of A Filling Station, and are very excited in making the reality of Jesus Christ more known locally," said Al Evans (pictured below) who leads a team of six volunteers.

This will be the fourth Filling Station in Norfolk, each designed for supporting rural communities and churches, and are free to attend. The guest speaker will be James Nickolds, the regional director for London and the South East of the Filling Station.

The Filling Station model of Christian practice is now ten years old and started in Wiltshire, but now covers six countries (UK, France, Switzerland, Canada, USA and South Africa) and some 80 regular meetings.

"Al said: "In addition to bringing Christian renewal and evangelism, it is attractive for those outside the existing church and those searching for faith feeling comfortable. This is a place to network and make new friends, and especially build faith and meet God."

Many local church leaders, supported by senior Church leaders, appreciate what these monthly meetings, held in neutral venues, can do for their local communities. Bishop Colin of Dorchester said: "I think these Filling Stations are marvellous! They are one of the few things I can see bringing fresh spiritual life to rural area. I would like our diocese to be covered in them!"

Guests are drawn from current church members (40%); "de-churched" individuals (40%) and up to 20% unchurched.

Yare Valley Filling Station meetings will be held monthly, on the third Thursdays (other than August and December), featuring a guest speaker, contemporary worship, prayer and ministry.

The venue is the school's new Hall, Wheel Road, Alington, NR14 7NH. Coffee and cake at 7pm for 7.30pm, all adults welcome.

For more details: Al Evans, 07760 770797, yarevalley@thefillingstation.org.uk or visit: www.thefillingstation.org.uk

By Kevin Gotts



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Norwich church launches jobs club

■ A boost has been given to a new Christians Against Poverty Jobclub which is set to be launched in a Norwich city centre church at the end of March.

St Stephen's church was awarded £250 towards the cost of two laptop computers through the EDP's Community Chest fund.

Madeline Light, priest-in-charge of St Stephen's, said: "Congregation members asked friends and relations for help in collecting newspaper tokens and in this way all these people know about the CAP Jobclub starting at St Stephen's. Everyone knows that being unemployed is a big problem in our city."

The CAP Jobclub gives intensive help to small groups of people who are unemployed. It forms a supportive community and gives well tried and tested advice via the CAP Jobclub course. St Stephen's have two members of the congregation who have the right skills to train as manager and coach.

The first of the 14-week JobClub courses begin at the end of March at St Stephen's. Addressing the issue of unemployment, the JobClub will be open to all providing a chance for the church to provide resources and a community of encouragement to enable those seeking work to find meaningful employment. Anyone can book a place through Jon Price (0794 7371514).

Project kicks off

■ Kickstart is the latest Norfolk project to be launched by ENYP offering a tailored programme of either football or multi-sports to cater for the interests of young people.

In March, ENYP will be delivering Kickstart in Acle primary school, where ENYP has been building a programme of clubs and activities for the past two years.

Kickstart will also soon be delivered in local schools/projects in Norwich. It has the ability to be tailored to the interests of the group of young people, and can be offered in a range of settings e.g. holiday programmes, after school provision, and is delivered by ENYP's qualified Sports and Outreach Worker.

Danny Doran-Smith, ENYP Director, said: "The heart of ENYP's constitution is to promote the holistic developmental needs of young people, and Kickstart is part of our delivery to support the physical needs of the young people we work with. The project provides a sports activity whilst supporting young people to develop life skills."

Gospel adventurer who helped reach millions

Gospel adventurer and former Fleet Street journalist, **Mike Wiltshire**, has helped to reach literally millions of people with the message of Christ thanks to his pioneering work with mission ship charity **Operation Mobilisation**. **Keith Morris** reports.

God has been utterly faithful to me in my 50 years as a believer and my life as a Christian has been a huge adventure," says Mike, who has lived in Norwich for the past decade with his wife of 33 years, Lois.

In 1963, as a young journalist and a church youth leader, Mike met George Verwer, founder of Operation Mobilisation, then a student movement working in 20 countries. It was the start of a 50-year friendship.

In his 20s Mike, with others, drove 4,000 miles overland to India where the OM team set up a massive publishing programme and saw the distribution of 100 million pieces of Gospel literature in 12 different languages.

But not everyone was happy with Mike's path. His concerned and loving parents were so upset that they "practically disowned" him and refused to attend his wedding because they felt he was "completely throwing his life away after a public school education". Later, they realised their fears were groundless and all was forgiven.

After five years in India and Nepal, Mike was sent to Scandinavia with a key mission - to look for a ship that OM could buy "by faith".

In Norway he found and secured the Umanak, which was renamed Logos (which means 'Word' in Greek) by OM and became an iconic ocean-going mission ship.

The ship eventually set sail from London to India with 200 tons of literature and a volunteer staff and crew of 120 young people, comprising many nationalities. In 18 years, the ship visited 108 countries and more than 370,000 people attended conferences on board.

Mike was given the key role of pioneering line-up man, travelling ahead of the Logos and arranging programmes in dozens of ports, before the ship's arrival.



Mike and Lois Wiltshire.

On one day, 15,000 people queued up at an Indian port to go on board, and everyone received a packet of Christian literature before they left.

The work took Mike to 50 countries across the world and today OM has more than 3,000 workers in 110 nations. It works in every region of the world and "aims to motivate and equip Christians to share God's love, and to strengthen and plant churches, especially where Christ is least known."

Eventually, four ships were purchased which, through scripture distribution and meetings, have shared the gospel with a billion people. The largest of the OM ships is Logos Hope (12,500 tons) which was purchased in 2004 and is now visiting ports in Mozambique, South Africa and Namibia. The ship has a volunteer crew and staff of 400 people from 45 different countries.

Looking back, Mike says he is "amazed at the way God used such a group of nobodies."

While travelling the world, Mike also had the honour of meeting many well-known Christians because, he says: "We all need our heroes and those who inspire us."

Mike recalls encounters with evangelist Billy Graham, China pioneer missionary Gladys Aylward, and Bible teachers such as Martyn Lloyd-Jones and John Wimber, as well as Bakht Singh, who planted 400 churches in India.

While working with OM, Mike was also developing a career as a newspaper journalist.

"I won my first job as a newspaper reporter after offering to sell papers on a street corner if the editor would just give me an interview! Cheeky, maybe, but I was offered several interviews," recalls Mike.

"I started on weekly papers at the Kentish Times, moved to evening papers, such as the Lancashire Evening Post, became deputy editor of a group of London regional papers and finally worked with the Financial Times on Fleet

Street for more than 20 years."

After "retiring" in London, Mike and Lois, moved to Norwich some 11 years ago. They have four children and nine grandchildren. Their son, Mark, who was born in India, is now a London pastor. He is also national missions' leader for 550 churches with Assemblies of God in the UK.

Once in Norwich, Mike showed no signs of slowing down and has been a national director with the FGB, the Christian businessmen's fellowship, for ten years, and is still involved with the news media, editing two magazines and writing for Good News for Norwich among other titles.

Lois is herself active in the community as a local 'Dementia Champion', encouraging the setting up of church-based dementia-friendly communities.

Inspired by the life of Billy Graham, Mike recalls a "crazy prayer moment" when, as a shy young Christian, he nevertheless asked God "to use him to reach millions for Christ - with no idea how that prayer would be answered."

He had little idea then that one day 100 million people would receive scriptures and Christian literature through the Logos ship ministry alone.

In 2013, at the age of 75, Mike had a complex heart valves operation at Papworth Hospital: "The surgeon later smiled when he told me the outcome was 'a minor miracle'," said Mike, who is now a thankful member of the 'zipper club'.

But true to form, Mike, to the despair of Lois, shows very little sign of slowing down in his life's work to communicate the Gospel in as many ways as possible.

Today, after a lifetime of faith adventures, Mike likes to quote Proverbs 3:5: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding."

"God has never let us down," says Mike "His promises are utterly trustworthy."

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Jane extends welcome at Norwich cathedral

Installed as the first female Dean in **Norwich Cathedral's** 900-year history in June 2014, the **Very Rev Jane Hedges** says that time has gone very quickly and, thanks to the welcome she received, Norwich now feels like home. **Helen Baldry reports.**

Jane's role as Dean of Norwich is varied and interesting. When she arrived, the development of the Refectory and Hostry was already complete and her challenge is to make the Cathedral accessible to the whole community.

Along with her team at the Cathedral, she has drawn up a strategic plan for the next five years where the focus will continue to be upon the worship of God and the service of his people. The plan contains ideas for outreach and further links with different sectors of the community.

She said: "I'm really delighted about the good relationships that we have built upon. There is a lot of goodwill towards the Cathedral. There's been the opportunity to meet people in their places of work and people that are engaged in doing really important things in the life of the community through voluntary organisations."

During her first months in Norwich, Jane met a lot of people and has connected with many local groups. She became a trustee of St Edmunds Society, which provides training to vulnerable young people in Norfolk. Tourism is a vital part of Cathedral life and Jane is also on the board of Visit Norwich.

Jane has forged a connection with the Norwich Research Park and a successful science festival was held at the Cathedral in March comprising lectures, events and activity days. It was an opportunity to explore how science impacts on our faith and how faith impacts on the world of the scientist.

Education and lifelong learning is another thing Jane is very committed to. Last year 12,000 school children visited the Cathedral and participated in their educational activities and there is a programme of courses for adults and



Very Rev Jane Hedges, Dean of Norwich Cathedral.

an extensive library.

Jane's role includes the stewardship of all the buildings in Cathedral Close. A recent development is a small flat available to clergy and lay people who wish to come and have a short break at the Cathedral, to enjoy the environment, do some study and have time to recharge their batteries.

Jane participates fully in the daily round of worship at the Cathedral, with regular preaching and leading commitments. She said: "We are very keen to encourage some different kinds of worship."

Jane is delighted that local group Soul Circus has made its home at the Cathedral and lead a service once a month at 6.30pm on a Sunday.

There are plans to introduce a healing service once a month, regular Taize prayer and for

parishes to come and bring their style of worship to the Cathedral.

The Cathedral identifies firmly with its Benedictine foundation where everything that is done matters to God. Until 1538, it was run by a prior and monks. It then became a Cathedral with a Dean and residentiary canons.

Times have since changed in the Church of England with the ordination of female priests and the consecration of female bishops.

It is significant that Jane is the first female Dean. She said: "I sometimes think back to then and wonder what they would have made of it all today."

Things are different now, but Jane cherishes the Cathedral's Benedictine history and is keen to nurture the tradition of hospitality and welcome.

Norwich churches group ends after 20 years of work

Norwich Central Churches Together has come to an end after 20 years of ecumenical work following a final AGM held at Trinity United Reformed Church on February 23. NCCT liaison officer, John Myhill reports.

■ It was an emotional gathering attended by many lay people from the 18 churches of NCCT, who have worked ecumenically for more than 20 years, and two clergy who came to Norwich in 2015.

Notable successes of the past year for NCCT were a special service for World Mental Health Day, the United Service at St Peter Mancroft for the week of Christian Unity, and the chain of prayer at the cathedral arranged by Graham Fletcher.

Clergy will continue to exchange pulpits, arrange joint ventures, and welcome those from other churches to share their work.

The clergy will continue to meet over lunch each month as arranged by Transforming Norwich for prayer, informal contact and to share the very special problems and opportunities of working in the city.

The NCCT was formally laid down at the AGM and the decision taken to give any remaining funds to the Network Norwich & Norfolk website, which will continue to provide ecumenical communications for the churches of Norwich and across the county.

It was also recommend that all NCCT churches become members of Transforming Norwich and take an active part in ensuring that this body accurately represents the full diversity of Christian action, faith and learning in our city.

The united free churches service will be at the Central Methodist church this coming Good Friday, March 25 at 10.30am, and there is hope for some united act of Christian witness on Easter Saturday. Celebrate Norwich & Norfolk will take place at the Forum on June 11.

This was a moving celebration of the Grace of God as shown in the life of this Covenant; and a positive discussion of the future of inter-church co-operation in Norwich. The meeting was concluded with prayer led by Rev Robert Avery of St Peter Mancroft.

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Godwin and Patience preparing a community lunch at Clover Hill, Norwich.

Community group offers inspiration, training and great food

■ “Let’s live life to our full potential!” – that’s the focus of Society Alive, a vibrant community group which offers inspiration, training and even free three-course lunches at Clover Hill Village Hall in Bowthorpe, Norwich.

The project is the vision of a Norwich Christian couple, Godwin and Patience Unazi, who were born in north-central Nigeria.

Godwin and Patience and their team of volunteers prepare generous community lunches – a service they started more than two years ago.

Life is busy for Godwin, who has two university degrees in agronomy and environmental science, and Patience, who has a degree in economics, as they have four children under eight years of age. The family also attends the nearby Bowthorpe Church.

“Our faith motivates us to reach out to people at all levels of society, regardless of age, race, gender, beliefs and so on. We want to help inject vitality into our community and encourage social cohesion,” says Godwin, who has a strong sense of social justice.

Society Alive not only offers lunches, but training and activities for young people ranging from arts and crafts to health issues.

Godwin and Patience are always looking for volunteers to help run the ‘Young and Silver Time’ community café on the first and third Fridays of the month, introducing games for people of all ages. Another project, ‘Sewing Delight,’ offers free lessons every Monday between 10am and 1pm.

“We are always keen to start new community initiatives,” says Godwin. For more details, email: society.alive@yahoo.com

By Mike Wiltshire

Emmaus is a life

A year ago, **Jonny Sage** was addicted to heroin and crack cocaine. In his own words, his life had sunken into a spiral of “debauchery and horribleness,” until he came into contact with **Emmaus Norwich**.

Jonny’s relationship had broken down, he was sofa-surfing and getting a night’s sleep where he could but also spending more time than he wanted living rough on the streets.

However, desperate to “clean-up his act” and get off the drugs, he discovered Emmaus and applied for a place at the charity’s base in South Norfolk.

Those joining the community, at the former All Hallows Convent at Ditchingham near Bungay, are known as companions and work to recycle furniture, household goods and other items, re-selling them to raise funds for the charity’s work.

With its origins in France, having been founded by Catholic priest Abbe Pierre, there are now 26 communities in the UK with Terry Waite as patron.

Jonny, 36, who in the past had worked as a carpenter, was accepted as a companion and given support to rebuild his life.

Emmaus Norwich, which currently hosts 12 companions from across Norfolk and has aims to accommodate 27 by next July, was launched in 2011 when the sisters at All Hallows Convent gifted the premises to charity on a peppercorn lease.

In the last four years it has grown, using the premises to display recycled and revived goods and furniture for sale and providing accommodation for companions.

Buildings were repainted, donations made from benefactors across the Waveney Valley and government funding secured to further develop its work.

General Manager Cathy Hembry said: “The idea is that companions join the community and work, offer their skills and begin to rebuild their lives with the aim of eventually re-entering mainstream community or creating a home for life.”

“Companions can self-refer or be referred from hospital, hostels, prison or councils. They need to be homeless or at risk of homelessness and willing to participate in 40 hours of work each week in our social enterprise.”

“The idea is that ‘you can help others and in



Some of the Companions and staff at Emmaus Norwich, including Jonny Sage, back row, fifth from left.

doing so you can gain something for yourself’. That bedrock still underpins Emmaus throughout the world.”

There is no alcohol or drug use permitted on-site and in return for work, companions are provided with a single room, shared bathroom facilities and sign off their benefits, receiving an allowance of £35 a week.

All meals, laundry, clothing, TV, telephone and internet are provided with additional support offered for those who have been drug or alcohol dependent or had issues with their physical and mental health and relationships.

With three members of staff, supported by a team of volunteers, the charity takes in furniture, electricals, household items, books, clothing and homeware and revives them – ensuring they are not despatched to landfill – and sells them from the convent buildings.

Companions sort, mend and sell the products, either from the Ditchingham site or the charity’s shop in Bungay.

“Our buildings are a maze of small

showrooms, all laid out with furnishings, beds, electrical items, bric-a-brac and antiques for sale, all individually priced. Customers come in, have a look around and often buy. We aim to process items for re-use rather than see them dumped,” said Cathy, “and have about 30 customers come in every day.

“We have also opened The Old Orchard Café and are looking to create a broader visitor experience where people can come along and look around and shop and spend up to half a day with us.”

The premises also include a reception, office space, sorting rooms for clothing to be cleaned and sold. Emmaus collects furniture within a 20-mile radius, though donors often take items to the Ditchingham community.

There are plans for more showrooms and to expand by creating a commercial and training kitchen to serve a bistro restaurant within two years, while upstairs at Abbe Pierre House there are the former cells of the sisters, which will be converted into rooms for more companions.



Rev Mark Elvin.

Norwich church launches

■ As Bowthorpe Church, west of Norwich, celebrates the thirtieth anniversary of its church building, members are launching an unusual “sign-a-tile” project to help repair the leaking roof. **Mike Wiltshire reports.**

To raise the community share of the money needed to complete the £70,000 project, local people and members of the vibrant fellowship are being offered a chance to permanently write their name into Bowthorpe’s heritage.

A two-day “Sign-a-tile” event is planned for Friday and Saturday, April 8-9, when people can come between 10am and 3pm to write their

name on one of the new tiles. There will also be a book of remembrance where the names will be recorded for posterity.

The Rev Mark Elvin, senior minister of Bowthorpe Church, says: “We want to make this a fun event, with refreshments. There will also be a children’s treasure hunt, plus a surprise guest for the children.”

Distinguished guest and local MP Clive Lewis will also be signing a tile on Friday April 8 from around 12.30pm.

The church is suggesting a donation of £5 for each tile. “A family may choose to sign a tile

line for Jonny



outcome and that would be that the drugs would kill me or that my thoughts would lead to me killing myself. I was definitely having suicidal thoughts, but Emmaus has taken me away from all that. I now have a purpose to get out of bed for.”

Several months on from his lowest point he drives the charity’s van doing deliveries and furniture pick-ups, works in reception, answering telephone calls and booking in deliveries and also in the charity’s showrooms.

Being a companion has allowed Jonny access to funding to retrain and prove his life and the path he has chosen is to do an addiction counselling course online. Once he has the certificate in that he hopes to progress to a Foundation Course and do some pastoral care in schools.

He sees that coming to fruition over the next two years.

“Where I was before was a very dark place and I am extremely grateful for Emmaus for what they have done, I am grateful on a daily basis,” added Jonny. “But for me it is now very rewarding to be helping others.”

Companions stay with the community for varying lengths of time depending on their outlook and progress.

“About a third stay for less than three months after finding it is not for them; another third stay for 1-2 years; and the remainder stay for longer than that,” explained Cathy.

“If people have a 40-year drinking history and have been sleeping on the streets they may need to spend more time within the community than if they are only 22 and looking to get back into the wider world as soon as they can.”

It does not, however, always have a happy ending. Some companions leave before they are ready and head off to make their own way in life again.

“Emmaus Norwich is a place for people to come and recover, a place where they feel safe. They often arrive unwell and in many ways broken but over a period of weeks we already start to see a difference; their shoulders go back, their hair gets trimmed their bellies are full and they begin to look and feel better and they start to use their skills.

“Emmaus is about everybody working together to end homelessness.”

For more details, to donate or buy items, or volunteer, call 01986 895444 or visit: www.emmaus.org.uk/norwich

ions in the future.”

There are many reasons why people arrive at Emmaus after their lives took a downward turn. Some find themselves homeless and sleeping rough on the streets of Norwich, others have drink or drug addiction, or may simply have lost their way in life.

After a marriage breakdown, one individual reflected how he was living in a Norwich park and drinking a bottle of vodka every day - an existence in stark contrast to the affluent lifestyle he once led only a few years earlier with a home, good wage, family and foreign holidays.

Another companion found himself homeless after the elderly relative he cared for died. He too ended up drinking heavily and sleeping in shop doorways but was referred to Emmaus by his support worker and found stability in the community and a new focus to his life.

The broader aim is to help companions rebuild their lives, learn or regain skills, and re-enter the mainstream community.

Companions are being trained in an array of skills; as counsellors, or in cycle maintenance, PAT testing and driving.

Jonny, for example, is on a drug recovery programme with the Norwich Recovery Partnership and is receiving support to combat his addiction.

“Being at Emmaus saved my life,” he said. “It has put me in a frame of mind to get up in the morning and do some work and has taken me away from the life I had of debauchery and horribleness.”

“It is great being able to work around others, to talk to people and make eye contact with them, my confidence has grown so much.”

“If it was not for Emmaus there was a road I was going down with substance misuse where there was only one

tile appeal

between them. Some may even sign a tile in memory of their loved one,” says Mark. “Whether it’s for yourself or a loved one, come and write your name into Bowthorpe’s heritage!”

The ecumenical building stands on a historic site where a parish church stood for 1000 years. The ruin and present-day Garden of Remembrance of St Michael and All Angels is adjacent to today’s church.

In the 14th and 15th centuries the same stone that used in the building of Norwich Cathedral was used to enlarge the church which eventually became a ruin in the 1790s.



Bowthorpe Church which needs roof repairs.

Pope gives special status to Walsingham

■ Pope Francis has granted Minor Basilica status to the Catholic National Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham in North Norfolk.

The rare designation is given by the Holy Father to places of worship which are of particular historical significance.

The Pope’s decree was announced at Walsingham, known as England’s Nazareth, at the feast of the Holy Family on Sunday December 27, by Bishop Alan Hopes, the Bishop of East Anglia.

Making the announcement, Bishop Alan said: “The Holy See’s recognition of the importance of the church in Walsingham is a recognition of the growth and witness of the Shrine over these many years.

“It has also come at a very important moment in the life of the Shrine as it seeks to develop and refurbish its facilities in the light of the ever growing number of pilgrims, a work being led by Mgr John Armitage, the recently appointed Rector of the Shrine.”

Mgr John Armitage, Rector of the Shrine of Our Lady, said: “This is wonderful news because it represents so much of what has been happening in the Shrine for so long. It’s a recognition by the Holy Father of the long history of this shrine.

“It’s recognition of the remarkable devotion, particularly of the people who work here, the volunteers and all the loyal pilgrims who come from so far, for so often and from such great distances.”

The Bishop of Norwich, Rt Rev Graham James, said: “In a BBC survey nine years ago Walsingham was given the accolade of being England’s most spiritual place. Now the Pope has added to the honour in which Walsingham is held. Anglicans as well as Roman Catholics come to Walsingham in big numbers and the relationship between the two shrines is close and supportive. I came first to Walsingham as a pilgrim in 1971, and I hope the new status the Pope has granted Walsingham will encourage many more people to discover the spiritual treasures of England’s Nazareth.”

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As a child, she cared for her seriously ill mother and her brother who had a heart condition. Years later she relied on her own children to support her when she was diagnosed with ME, fibromyalgia and carpal tunnel syndrome.

Sallie was determined to find support for her eldest child, Connie, who was also struggling to care for her triplet siblings that included two with disabilities. Sallie's initial plan was to open her front room to a handful of children with a box of Pringles and a video to provide shared respite. It soon paved the beginnings for a far wider plan.

Sixteen years later, despite on-going health issues, Sallie has become a champion for young carers, charting a new course of hope through the ground-breaking charity, Connects & Co, that she launched with a £2,000 grant.

Today the charity is based at Catton Grove Community Centre, but for years it has supported hundreds of despairing young carers who have often been lonely, bullied and forgotten.

"God has given us the gifting to deal with these fragile, delicate lives which are so easily shattered. It is a privilege to build their trust and confidence as God uses us as a bridge of love," says the Norwich street pastor and mum of six.

Connects & Co began in 2000 for youngsters caring for parents, siblings or both. Today there are six support groups in Norwich and Dereham for children, teenagers and young adults that provide a positive environment for change. Last autumn the charity began a group for Young Adult Carers (YACs) who are mums but still maintain a caring role for a family member.

There are currently 130 club members with a waiting list of 40. Many bear the stress of caring but are determined not to quit despite the pain and isolation, says Sallie.

Their lives are marked with growing confidence and purpose as difficulties are shared with fun, stress-free activities that include bowling, skating, crafts and residential adventure breaks.

Many older members have become uniformed cadets, gaining volunteer certificates for running the tuck shop, helping with newsletters and mentoring younger children. In addition there are workshops around bullying, self-esteem and sexual and mental health.

Sallie recalls the plight of one young carer: "His head

When Sallie Boyd launched a Norwich charity for young carers she had all the credentials necessary - won through heartfelt experience. Sandie Shirley reports.

was bent under the hood of his sweatshirt and he was unable to look anyone in the eye. During activities he hid under the table but his confidence and hope began to bloom when he joined the cadet scheme and helped with mentoring."

There is also new hope for young mum carers, many of whom were former young carers with Connects. Says Sallie: "God is calling them back during their stories of pain as they look after parents who may have MS, mental health issues or cancer while being a single mum. They are finding friendship and support while joining activities at the group run by a young mum carer who has found faith."

Sallie's vision has evolved beyond her wildest dreams. It has won favour, recognition

faint-hearted. "We are on call 24 hours, seven days a week and the lives of young carers are extremely challenging. These vulnerable young people often face a murky underworld of incredible darkness. Every way they turn it seems the pressures of this world try to suck them under but we have an opportunity to be real, open and honest so they know that they are cared for and accepted," says Sallie.

Connects is leaving a vital legacy. "There is a unique plan and purpose for these youngsters' lives; they have a story and voice to share that can make a difference. Now many have butterfly wings to fly. Some have moved to Scotland, Bristol or Leeds. Others have gone to university or taken-up nursing or caring professions while another is a staff member at Connects," says Sallie. Meanwhile, daughter, Connie, who was a young carer with her younger brother Oli, is the staff member who inspired and helps lead and provide training for the cadet scheme.

Sallie worked tirelessly without a salary for 12 years. Today she is one of three paid employees but there are also 15 volunteers.

Sallie's faith underscores her



Sallie Boyd and daughter Connie.

and financial backing as she has networked with outside agencies to help forge a 'life-line' for youngsters and their families.

Some £6,500 a month is needed to run the organisation and over the years there has been 'miracle' provision with double allocations of funding; peppercorn rent and costs have been waived when money has been tight. Young carers and their parents also raise funds and give sacrificially, explains Sallie.

The work, that is built on prayer and care, is not for the

vision and stamina. "I would never have managed as a young carer without it; there were no support groups and agencies then," says Sallie.

Today she faces her own health challenges with a stoic resolve despite ME and two serious leg injuries over four years that have meant using a wheelchair for several months. "I know what it's like to be out of action so you are totally dependent on the care of others but I have still been able to do the work God calls me to," says Sallie.

www.connectsandco.co.uk

Ruth helps women embrace destiny

Life coach, speaker and writer, **Ruth Tong** is passionate about helping women grow tall, dream big and embrace their destinies. She hosts an annual woman's conference at her church, **Eternity Downham Market**, and runs courses and events in the community to boost self-esteem in women and teenagers. **Sandie Shirley** reports.

Ruth is dedicated to helping young and old break out of the confines of the past and reject media pressures to find true worth and value from their creator God.

Her ministry has been birthed from her own misery. Various abuses kept her locked in rejection and low self-esteem during childhood and adolescence, leading to wrong choices that only deepened the wounds. "When the sacred place of a woman's heart is violated it is a terrible thing," says Ruth. "It can mean you look for love and affection in all the wrong places."

Today she has a powerful message to share. Her background in psychology means she understands the dynamics of a woman's heart and mind and has seen God restore life.

"Suddenly I woke up from the sleep of self-destruction and changed the direction of my life when I was in my early twenties," said Ruth. "I began by going to church and found new friends who honoured me with

Life coach and writer Ruth Tong.



God's love which took time to grasp so you can never underestimate the power of loving someone."

It is the power of love that drives Ruth forward in her quest to release God's best for the women she ministers to. She will be hosting the annual women's conference on June 11 with the help of a team of women at Eternity. Inspiring speakers and a craft activity will be included – it is all about fun explains Ruth.

Fun is essential when reaching out to the wider community which began with 'Princess Nights' for teenagers in 2005. "I had a teenage daughter at the time and her friends were getting into abusive

relationships and they had no expectations for their life," says Ruth whose ministry is always underpinned with prayer.

Pink lemonade in champagne glasses, tiaras and a photoshoot were part of the gentle evangelising 'prom' events that included talks from women with diverse careers. "We also ensured the girls knew the nights were staged because they were fearfully and wonderfully made so we spoke God's word over their lives although they did not know it."

Ruth is currently helping mums at a local children's centre to widen their horizons and grow in confidence through Hillsong's Shine self-esteem course. The seven-week course

is proving a success and other doors are opening to take it into the wider community, explains Ruth.

She runs the sessions with church member Libby Manning. The women on the course are loved, honoured and nurtured during the hour-and-a-half sessions that aim to give them worth, strength and purpose. The lesson plans provide a framework so they can be tailored to each group explains Ruth. "We include refreshments and there is a small gift and some inspiring quotes to take home each week while role play encourages them to share heart issues."

www.ruthtong.com/blog
www.weareeternity.com



Norfolk pupil's 100-mile trek boosts community hub

■ Ten year-old South Norfolk schoolgirl, Lydia Hawker (pictured above), has raised £1,500 towards the community project for her family's Wymondham church after walking a mammoth 100 miles along Hadrian's Wall.

The epic sponsored eight-day trek that included driving rain and steep hills, did not deter the plucky youngster, a competitive gymnast at Norfolk Academy.

"I knew I could do it. I did not have a single blister or feel tired afterwards," said Lydia.

With the help of 45 sponsors, her efforts brought a further cash boost to Hope Community Church's flourishing community hub at Ayton Road, Wymondham. Hub Community Project is enriching the community after church members have dug deep to provide £200,000 for the building which they share.

Lydia was accompanied by her mother, Selina, and grandmother during the school holiday walk. The three generations of walkers averaged 12 miles a day across industrial and scenic landscapes in the north of England.

"I never imagined Lydia would finish it when we walked through two days of endless rain at the beginning," said Selina, who helped plan the route with daily provisions and a residential base. "One day I needed four changes of rain jacket to keep dry and Lydia's socks were soaking."

Hope Community Church and Hub Community Project moved from Fairland Street to their new premises last May. Activities have grown in line with the town's expansion, providing much needed community facilities and activities to enrich the community.

"This dream has been made possible by the commitment and sacrificial giving of church members who provided £200,000 for the building alterations," says church leader, Grantley Watkins.

"The improved facilities and ample parking have enabled people to access the community facilities with greater ease. The resulting growth of the community projects, with their widening resources, is established evidence for the need of the site's second development phase which is expected to increase the activities of the community rooms threefold," says Grantley.

The town's Hub Community Project includes support for carers, youth, families and the lonely. It also provides ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) lessons and award-winning 'Hoppers' toddler groups.

Contact details: The Hub, Ayton Road, Wymondham, NR18 0QJ, 01953 798505, www.hubproject.org.uk

By Sandie Shirley

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Ex-newsman takes on role

■ Former news photographer, John Potter (pictured right), is set to become the next minister within the Norwich Area group of United Reformed churches. He is due to arrive in the summer, and will have primary responsibility for Ipswich Road URC and Princes St URC.

Congregations from the group of seven churches in and around Norwich agreed in early February to call John to serve alongside existing minister Rev Bruno Boldrini and Norwich Area URC Group Leader, Rev Ian Foster.

John, aged 55, is married to Pauline - also a URC minister - and they have a son who is taking A levels this summer.

After school in Colchester, John trained as a press photographer and worked for local newspapers in Coventry and Birmingham and for a news agency that covered the Midlands for the national press.

During this time he was a part of URC congregations in Coventry and Birmingham, eventually serving as an



elder. In 2000, the family moved to Gloucester where Pauline was ordained as a minister after training at Westminster College, Cambridge. John began training for the ministry through the ecumenical programme at Queen's College, Birmingham in 2002.

In 2007, John was called to an ecumenical team ministry in Thamesmead, South-east London and then in 2011 John and Pauline began a shared ministry with a group of churches in Leicester.

Following the merger of congregations in 2015, John continued to serve that pastorate as sole minister.

John said: "I am very excited about moving to Norwich and am looking forward to supporting Ipswich Road URC's involvement in the community on Eaton Rise and Tuckswood. I am also looking forward to helping the Princes St URC congregation develop a vibrant ministry based in the redeveloped building in the city centre."

www.norwichareaurc.co.uk



Helen Pennington and Carolyn Skittrall of Mums in Prayer UK in Norfolk.

Rallying call for mums to pray

Hope church is joining forces with Mums in Prayer UK (part of Moms in Prayer International) for a breakfast event between 8-10am at The Hub, Ayton Road. The aim - to build a strong army of praying mums to advance God's purposes for their children in today's adverse culture.

The meeting will bring fresh prayer impetus to release hope and strength for mums carrying heavy burdens for their children explains Carolyn Skittrall from Hope who is staging the event with Helen Pennington - Mums in Prayer UK's Norfolk co-ordinator.

Mums are invited to trade their anxiety for peace, joy and hope as they pray scripturally and specifically for their children and their schooling with other mums, prior to a simple breakfast.

The women behind the event have been meeting together for three years using the Moms in Prayer International four-step prayer guideline of praise, confession, thanksgiving and intercession to actively transform the lives of their children and their schools.

Now they are encouraging other mums, as well as any woman committed to pray for a specific child and school, to join the revolutionary prayer initiative to see breakthrough and direction for their youngsters.

When faithful women set aside an hour a week to get together to honour God, esteem his character and intercede with scripture for their children and their schools

A rallying call, mobilising women to pray for their children and local schools, is being mounted at **Hope Community Church, Wymondham** on **May 21. Sandie Shirley** reports.

transformation can begin explains Helen, a member of Mulbarton Church.

She believes the power of unified prayer has removed obstacles to her son's future and brought protection. Helen explains that her teenager was snatched from the wreckage of his car, virtually unscathed, after it hit black ice when he should have died.

"As we persevere in prayer we see God in our children's lives from week to week since he loves them more than we do. There is mutual support with text messaging for increased prayer cover and when you hit a crisis you know you have prayed and there is peace because we give it to God - the all-sufficient one," she adds.

"Children do not always fill the mould you expect of them but you can feel God's presence when you pray. We want to see mums commit to praying together once a week as they are led by the Spirit to pray God's words and record their prayers," says Carolyn, a mother-of-two.

Mums can pray in pairs or more, using resources and

support from Moms in Prayer International to change the spiritual environment and effect change, confident that God is involved for the long-haul. The network of dedicated mums is growing with groups in South Norfolk and Norwich. Specific groups can be formed for college and military children or those with special needs. Groups can also be formed for nursery to adult children adds Helen.

Helen is part of a team that spearheads the ministry countywide after God touched her heart six years ago during a women's prayer breakfast. She heard about mums who were hurting for their children, believing prayer was the answer. She later discovered the international ministry that began in America 30 years ago but now includes over 140 countries. Before long Helen was using a copy of their manual to pray regularly with a Christian friend who was concerned for her children.

Those initial, faltering prayer meetings spawned a new ministry. "God gave me a mission and unless I did something about it, it would not go away," she says. Today she raises its profile with prayer breakfasts and joins the UK co-ordinator and national team for monthly Skype prayer meetings to see every UK school covered in prayer.

Helen is set to join the first UK prayer gathering for Moms in Prayer International in Oxford on April 16.

For more details about the breakfast event email: c.skittrall@yahoo.com, or hkp.mipuk@gmail.com

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Retired people play key role in local church

In a special feature on the vital role that retired people play in the local church, we take a look at a former teacher who has been honoured by the Queen and an ex-seaman who is chairman of his PCC.

Maureen Dougall, who was honoured in the Queen’s New Year’s Honours list for her services to the community in Brundall, has been a member of the village church for almost 50 years.

She was awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) for her services to the Broadland village. This includes running a luncheon club and a group giving single, retired people five days out every year, including trips to the theatre, river trips and visits to National Trust properties. Most of the trips include a meal and help build relationships for these pensioners who may find it difficult to enjoy these events on their own.

“I was a teacher in Thorpe St Andrew and did not have a lot of time for the community then,” said Maureen. “But when I retired I took on the luncheon club in Brundall and helped at first and then took it on when the



Maureen Dougall.

organizers retired. “I couldn’t do all of this without the tremendous support from a fantastic team of people,” she said, “I have a team of 37 who support the luncheon club, including cooks, servers and drivers, the award is for them just as much as it is for me,” she added. “There is such a wonderful team spirit.”

“My family have also been fantastic,” said Maureen, who has two daughters and two grandchildren. “They have helped and supported all of this and see how much enjoyment I get from helping others. It is very rewarding.” Maureen is also a member of the church choir and her husband, Ian, is one of the church organists.

“I suppose I am living my faith. It is wonderful to just love and care for people,” said Maureen. “I was very humbled when I heard about it, a bit overwhelmed and very honoured – why me, I am just an ordinary person who enjoys living in Brundall and helping the community.”
■ By Keith Morris

David Tranter.



With 40 years’ service in the merchant navy, former chief engineer David Tranter has been able to use his skills and experience in the running of a local Parish Church.

David, from Poringland in South Norfolk, retired in 2001 and within two years was supporting his wife Frankie, active in St Andrews Church in nearby Framingham Pigot.

David said: “Starting off as a volunteer, helping Frankie and dealing with minor maintenance, it was not long before I was being volunteered by others. Firstly serving on the Parochial Church Council, and then as a Synod Representative. I went along not expecting much, but could be surprised.”

“In the Navy we had to work together for the ships to survive, helping people along and getting stuck in, and this influence is engraved in my mind set,” continued David.

A year ago he was elected acting chairman during the Interregnum – period during the filling of the vacancy of a replacement clergy – and looking after necessary arrangements.

With Frankie serving as a Church Warden, David can be found printing “5 Alive”, a monthly news sheet for the Thurton Benefice.

David describes St Andrew’s Church, “a refuge which warmly welcomes those from a wider area and typically attracts 12 to 20 worshippers for our 8.15am services and up to 40 for the 11am.”

■ By Kevin Gotts

Ex-Archbishop is key speaker

■ Former Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O’Connor (pictured below), is the keynote speaker at the 2016 series of Newman lectures at the University of East Anglia during April.

He will be joined by the Bishop of Norwich, the Bishop of Portsmouth and the Vice Chancellor of St Mary’s University, Twickenham.

The Newman lectures are a collaboration between the Diocese of East Anglia and the UEA, attract wide audiences from across East Anglia and are free to attend.

The theme of the 2016 lecture series is ‘The Church and the Modern World’, taking inspiration from the 50th anniversary of Gaudium et Spes (December 1965).

Deacon Andrew Eburne, who organises the lecture series for the Diocese, said: “The Newman lectures were established in response to Pope Benedict XVI’s call for the voice of the Church to be heard in the public square. Over 500 people came to last year’s lecture series, and we are hoping for even greater numbers this year.”

The dates for the lectures are: April 4, Francis Campbell, Vice Chancellor - St Mary’s University, Twickenham; April 11, Rt Rev Graham James, Bishop of Norwich; April 18 Cardinal Cormac Murphy O’Connor, former Archbishop of Westminster; and April 25 Rt Rev Philip Egan, Bishop of Portsmouth

Lectures will be held in the Julian Study Centre at the UEA and will start, promptly, at 6:30pm. Full details can be found at: www.newmanlectures.co.uk



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Port chaplain under threat

■ The future of the port chaplain in Great Yarmouth has been cast into doubt with news that his funding is to be cut after 15 years of service.

Rev Peter Paine has been hit by cutbacks being made by The Mission to Seafarers who are paying his salary until the end of the year when their contribution will end after 15 years.

Peter, however, remains upbeat about the future and is appealing to local businesses to help support his role on at least a part-time basis.

Although reliant on a handful of large companies for handouts he hopes a number of smaller businesses could be persuaded to contribute £250 a year for three years ensuring he stays in the town, helping workers on land as well as those at sea often enduring long periods away from home.

With a floating congrega-

tion of up to 10,000 seafarers and cadets he said pulling the plug would affect the service given to sailors who come to the town needing help, support and sometimes just a listening ear. The move, he added, had come just as his workload looked set to increase with new owners at the helm of the outer harbour.

"What it means for the Seafarers Centre which is now up and running and gaining in popularity is that it will only have a part time chaplain. My basic role is that seafarers are mentally and physically ok, spirituality comes into it but it's not first and foremost. I am there as their intermediate person for any problems that come up. I go on ships and try to sort things out or get someone else in who can."

"I do not see it as an impossible situation," he added. "There are only two or three companies in the port

that support the work that I do. At a rough guess there are 150 companies in the town that have links with the port and I really need to appeal to them.

"If I went there would be no-one looking after the seafarers and nowhere for them to go."

Peter was instrumental in bringing a Seafarers Centre back to the town on South Quay last April after a break of nine years.

Ben Bailey, project manager, The Mission to Seafarers, said: "Over many years the Rev Peter Paine has provided comfort and support to seafarers using the Port of Great Yarmouth. We hope that alternative sources of funding will be found and we encourage the local maritime community to get behind him to continue this good work."

To find out more contact Peter on 07788 111823.



YMCA Norfolk CEO Tim Sweeting is set to run the London Marathon.

YMCA issues 160 challenge

Members of staff at the Christian charity have themselves already signed up for sky dives, team hikes, bike rides and the London Marathon and now friends and supporters are being invited to join in the fun by undertaking their own charitable endeavour, however small or ambitious.

This year, YMCA Norfolk is marking 160 years of service to the Norfolk community, and it hopes to find 160 people to join in the challenge, doing whatever kind of activity they enjoy to raise some much needed funds for its vital work with homeless and vulnerable young people across the county.

YMCA Norfolk CEO, Tim Sweeting, has started the ball rolling by signing up for the London Marathon in April, along with colleague Matthew Willingham.

"Every member of the YMCA team has a target for fundraising that pays for some of the personal development activities we do with homeless young people, so I wanted to make sure I was doing my bit for this great cause too," said Tim. "It has been tough pounding the streets over the winter months but I have had lots of encouragement from experienced runners and all the people who have sponsored me, which has helped me keep motivated."

"I keep coming back to the fact that a few achy joints is nothing compared to what

YMCA Norfolk has launched a bid to find 160 people who are prepared to undertake a charitable challenge to raise funds in celebration of the organisation's 160th anniversary. **Keith Morris reports.**

homeless young people have to go through and I am sure that thought will help keep me going when the going gets tough on the big day," said Tim, who you can sponsor at: www.justgiving.com/Tim-Sweeting/

Other members of staff who have pledged to join in the fun include Anthony Spry and Charlie Wall who are bravely

doing a sky dive in April, Martin Rye who is leading a YMCA Team Hike, Abi Canham who is doing the Jurassic Walk and Kevin Dynes who is doing a cycle tour around Norfolk.

People can sign up for any organised charitable event and then donate their sponsorship to YMCA Norfolk or create their very own charity challenge.

Ideas for challenges include the Tour De Broads cycle challenge in August, the Run Norwich 10k or YMCA Norfolk's own Sleep Easy event.

You can use the YMCA Norfolk Virgin Giving page to set up your own online sponsorship page.

To get involved, contact Stef Pearson with your idea and she will help you get started, on 01603 621263 ext.102, or at: stefanie.pearson@ymcanorfolk.org

Heritage project is launched

■ YMCA Norfolk is set to launch a heritage project which will provide homeless and hard-to-reach young people with exciting and interactive opportunities to engage with local heritage and explore the varied history of the YMCA in Norfolk as it celebrates its 160th anniversary.

Thanks to a grant of £47,100 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Y-Heritage project will focus on researching, capturing and sharing the history of YMCA, one of Norfolk's largest and oldest youth organisations, as it celebrates its 160th anniversary this year.

The project, which will be shaped and led by young people in or accessing YMCA's services, will research and re-present the historical events and key moments in time that have shaped the YMCA in Norfolk and the community in which it works.



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