



Celebrate shows church in action across Norfolk

The work of the Christian church in action across Norfolk will be showcased at three linked events across the county in June, in **Norwich, King's Lynn** and at the **Royal Norfolk Show**.

Celebrate Norwich & Norfolk will return to the Forum and Millennium Plain in Norwich city centre on Saturday June 29 for its tenth year with a free exhibition of over 20 Christian organisations, charities and churches, including Norwich Foodbank, Community Action Norwich, Christian Aid, Kids Matter and the Matthew Project.

There will also be a civic opening ceremony at 10am, a programme of music and entertainment from a number of choirs and the chance to sample cakes from a variety of church cafes - **see page 2**.

Celebrate will also take place in King's Lynn for the fourth time, on Saturday June 8, from 10am to 5pm with a free, fun-filled community event for all of the family at The Walks, near the town centre.

A dozen local churches will gather to celebrate the town and its community and there will be a wide variety of activities, games, sports and entertainment from the main stage including live music, free inflatable activities and refreshments - **see page 8**.

Celebrate will also be represented at this year's Royal Norfolk Show on June 26 and 27, where the Diocese of Norwich is hosting an exhibition of the church in action across the region. The Diocese has a large exhibition marquee and a whole host of Christian groups and organisations will come together to join in.

Features will include school choirs, children and youth activities, a mini peace art exhibition, interactive displays and a large café area - **see page 12**.



NORWICH



KING'S LYNN

Celebrate will be showcasing the Christian church in action at The Forum in Norwich, above, the Walks in King's Lynn, left, and at the Royal Norfolk Show, below.



ROYAL NORFOLK SHOW

Pregnancy loss charity expands to Yarmouth

■ Norfolk based charity Time Norfolk, which has supported women and men through pregnancy loss for over 20 years, is expanding its services and is opening a new office in Great Yarmouth this summer.

The charity delivers a range of services designed to meet the needs of people who have suffered a pregnancy loss, whether through miscarriage, termination, ectopic pregnancy or stillbirth.

One-to-one counselling and group sessions are offered, as well as support for unplanned pregnancies and other issues such as post-natal depression.

Director Lesley Bradfield said: "In recent years the demand for our service has seen a huge increase. By bringing Time Norfolk to Great Yarmouth we can help more men and women who have been affected by pregnancy loss and other pregnancy related issues."

The new office is based in the heart of the town at the Priory Centre and the team of staff and volunteers are in place ready to welcome their first clients.

Lesley said: "It's an exciting time for us. We're passionate about spreading hope after pregnancy loss across Norfolk and we look forward to becoming part of the community in Great Yarmouth."

Find out more at www.timenorfolk.org.uk

Alcohol seminar

■ The Matthew Project is offering introductory drug and alcohol training for Norfolk church leaders and workers on July 3.

The Norwich-based charity is running an informative drug and alcohol seminar that could help to provide better support around substance misuse in their communities.

Chief Executive Andy Sexton said, "Alcohol and drugs are not picky. Their misuse can affect anyone. In church, like anywhere in society, we know there are people struggling with drug and alcohol issues or the misuse of substances by their family members. I am aware how difficult it can be to know how to help them. That is why we are offering this briefing led by professional substance misuse practitioners."

The practical two-hour seminar will be held at St Luke's Church Aylsham Rd, NR3 2HF, from 12:30-2:30pm. The cost is £8. Bring a packed lunch. To book email: enquiries@matthewproject.org

GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

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Marking ten years of Celebrate Norfolk

■ I rejoice in the goodness of God to us over these ten years since we first launched Celebrate. The years have been marked by much to give thanks for as you will see in our centre spread feature.

So many people and such a wide variety of churches and ministries have been involved. We have been delighted to share with all those who have caught the vision and joined with us to celebrate, demonstrate and communicate something of what the Lord is doing in our city and county over the years.

Much of the time we have operated on a wing and a prayer, never quite certain whether the event will come together or not and yet it has, again and again! But God is faithful and we have occupied the Forum and Millennium Plain year in and year out. I personally have undergone major heart surgery and yet still Celebrate happened as the team pulled it all together. The Forum staff have always been

John Betts,
director of
**Celebrate
Norwich &
Norfolk,**
looks back
over ten years
of the Chris-
tian charity's
events.



outstanding in their support of us and enabled the smooth running of the event.

It has been great to have people and churches in King's Lynn catch the vision and run such a successful event over recent years. The churches there have really got behind Cel-

eborate and joined in with enthusiasm. The diocesan tent at the Royal Norfolk Show has expanded to include many of the wider Christian ministries which operate in Norwich and Norfolk. We very much appreciate their fellowship in association with us in witnessing to what God is doing in our city and county in this the biggest county event of the year.

The years have brought changes to what we do and how we do it. We have learned to be flexible and adapt to what the Lord enables with the people and ministries which come together to make Celebrate what it is year on year.

We are always open to fresh approaches and new ministries joining us as we present the work of the Kingdom of God to so many people in the heart of our city. We believe it is important to witness to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ where people are because he loves our city and its people.

Celebrating at the Forum

A full day of activities is planned in and around the **Forum and Millennium Plain** in **Norwich** city centre on **Saturday June 29**, to highlight some of the wide range of work undertaken by the city and county's Christian community, at the **Celebrate Norwich & Norfolk** festival.

Hundreds of visitors are expected to be attracted to the event which aims to show the work of the Christian community in action across Norfolk.

An official opening takes place at 10am, attended by civic dignitaries, leaders, exhibitors and visitors. There will be a short opening speech by Rev Alex Irvine, curate of St Stephen's Church. Alex is also a visiting lecturer at the London School of Theology where he is on the board of governors.

The main Christian Social Action and Services Exhibition in the Forum and on Millennium Plain will be open from 10am to 4pm (see page 5 for a full list of exhibitors).

Christian organisations appearing at the event include: Christian Aid, Community Action Norwich, Healing Rooms Norwich and Norfolk, OMF, Norfolk Postal Bible School, Heartbeat Ministries, Good News, Rafiki Creative Ministries, Norwich Foodbank, the Matthew Project, Life Stories, Kids Matter, The Pleasance, Norwich Community Gospel Choir, Grace Communion International, Old Meeting House, Norwich FGB, Redeemed Christian



The Norwich Community Gospel Choir will be at Celebrate in Norwich.

Church of God, Bethany Church, Christ Embassy Church, Little Fellowes and Create.

Norwich Foodbank works closely with Norwich FoodHub and FareShare in their fight against food waste and at the exhibition will be highlighting this, as well as the importance of variety in food donations through Foodbank inspired recipe kits, which are given out regularly to clients.

There will be a programme of music and entertainment during the day on Millennium Plain and this will include:

10am Catton Community Choir (including singing in the formal opening with the Lord Mayor)

11.30am Norwich Community Gospel Choir
1pm The Redeemed Christian Church of God.
A Celebrate Bake Off Competition will also

be running, aiming to highlight the work of church cafes across Norfolk and will include cakes from The Chapel Coffee House, Ormesby; The Sanctuary Coffee Stop in St Alban's Church, Norwich; Hope Cafe at New Hope Christian Centre, Norwich and Cafe Soul at Soul Church.

The Bible Comes to Life exhibition, which will run at St Stephen's Church in Norwich during August, will be bringing a donkey to Celebrate to highlight the event.

Celebrate Norfolk project director, John Betts, said: "Our aim, as we celebrate the work of the Christian community across Norwich and Norfolk, is to showcase a few of the many activities which go on 24/7 serving at all levels of our society. Frequently going where others don't go because the love of Christ persuades us to do so."

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The humble coffee bean helps in slavery fight

A former Norfolk police officer has started an online coffee company to fight modern-day slavery, after spending a year in the Dominican Republic rescuing trafficking victims. **Jenny Seal reports.**

In January, 33-year old Bryn Frere-Smith launched the Blue Bear Coffee Company. The new enterprise sells 1kg and 220g bags of premium, fairly-traded coffee and 100% of the profits go to charities fighting human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

Bryn, whose family live in Dereham, trained as a police officer and worked for Norfolk Police from 2009-2013. After a transfer to the Met, he left the police in 2014 to work as a bodyguard protecting high profile clients.

Whilst guarding a young Arabian prince on yet another Christmas shopping trip to Harrods in 2016, Bryn decided he needed to do more with his life. He said: "I realised that it was time for me to leave the world of bodyguarding and turn to protecting those who can't afford to pay for it."

Bryn joined the Christian anti-slavery organization International Justice Mission (IJM) investigating child-sexual exploitation in the Caribbean's Dominican Republic. For a year, it was his job to pose as a tourist looking to pay children for sex. "Obviously, it was all for the right purposes," said Bryn, "and as soon as we found someone that was being trafficked we would respond and justice would take its turn. But it was a very, very dark place to spend your time."

On one rescue mission, the young girl who had been the victim of terrible abuse was asked if there was anything from her home and place of captivity, she wanted to bring with her. She asked for her old blue teddy bear. Bryn was struck by the image of her being driven away with this dirty, dog-eared and damaged teddy sat on her lap giving her comfort.

He responded by setting up the Blue Bear Fund, asking friends for money to buy some teddy bears and age-appropriate toys for the rescued children. Bryn said: "It was a means of responding to something truly sad and heartbreaking. To be in a position,

when we did go on a rescue and we did encounter young children, there was something for them to hold that was new, and fresh and clean and came from a place of love, not from one of suffering."

The fund raised over £2,000 and with it he worked with IJM's after-care department, helping victims sort out health care, education, housing and furniture.

Bryn said: "To be able to engage on the lighter side of things, the loving side of things, the compassionate side of things, was very important for me and brought me an enormous amount of joy. So, when I got back to the UK in June 2018 I decided that I wanted to invest more of myself in that side of it, in providing and finding a means of supporting the excellent work that goes on."

Bryn realized that he didn't need to set up his own charity or investigative agency. "There are plenty of them and they are doing it very, very well," he said. "I decided to try to start a business that could generate a decent level of sustainable income, where 100% of the profit goes to the trafficking charities".

Bryn had a passion for drinking good coffee and through a family connection met Josh Clarke, Head of Coffee at Clifton Coffee Company and the UK's 2019 Coffee Tasting Champion. Bryn and Josh are both Christians, and the pair developed Blue Bear Coffee in partnership.

Josh and his company already had the relationships with indigenous coffee growers, as well as the equipment to roast and package the coffee. They were able to supply Blue Bear Coffee with the final product to sell.

Bryn crowdsourced £7,000 for the coffee company's inception and in a very short time had created an ethical company that was generating profit.

He attributes the speed in getting the venture up and running to God. Bryn, who worships at Taverham Evangelical Church when he visits Norfolk, said: "This is God's project not mine. God brought along Josh Clarke, the relationship with Clifton and all the different people he put around me to do the website. God orchestrated all of that – I could never have made that happen. I've not even been back in the UK a year and in less than nine months we had a great company that was up and running. That's amazing and only the Lord's provenance will allow that."

Bryn has big dreams for Blue Bear Coffee. It is already growing an individual customer base but the big challenge is gaining

wholesale customers. "It's through wholesale relationships that we can start to make decent levels of money," said Bryn. And that's really, really hard. We are looking for churches, businesses and hospitality companies that have a heart for this issue, that are already somewhat invested and engaged in the issue of social justice, social reform, human trafficking and modern-day slavery. Identifying those businesses is a challenge for us."

Bryn has gone back to bodyguarding and takes no salary from Blue Bear Coffee despite working long hours to run it. He is motivated to work hard and keep costs low by his strong passion for justice and his memories of the Dominican Republic.

"It just takes a reflection, sometimes a painful one on the many, many children, young women and women of age that I met, that have found themselves in a position of abuse one way or another. That brief reflection is plenty to feel super turbocharged, to re-motivate me and to help me go, 'Come on, let's do this! Let's push, push, push!'"

Coffee lovers can visit www.bluebearcoffee.com, read about the different coffee profiles and the growers who supply it and order it knowing it has been fairly-traded and the profit will go to anti-trafficking charities.



Blue Bear Coffee Company founder Bryn Frere-Smith.

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Life-changing hope in action

Last year **Levi Milsom** was a troubled, homeless teenager with limited options. Today he is a happy, house-proud 18-year-old enjoying life, his music and other pursuits, thanks to a partnership between Christian charity **Hope into Action** and a Norwich church. **Jenny Seal** reports.

Over coffee at Norwich's Revelation café, retired Norfolk vicar Rev Gill Bridges is listening with interest as Levi Milsom enthusiastically describes the intricacies of heelflips, kickflips and other skateboarding tricks. The previous evening Gill and Levi had been to a modern line-dancing class, where Levi was just getting to grips with a Figure 8 move.

The generation-spanning friendship between Levi and Gill has developed over the past six months through their involvement with Hope into Action.

In December, Levi moved into 'Joy House' a home supported by Hope into Action and St Catherine's Church in Mile Cross, the church where Gill is an active member. For two months Levi had been homeless, only avoiding sleeping rough through the generosity of a friend. In October he had been evicted from YMCA accom-



Friends Rev Gill Bridges and Levi Milsom.

modation for causing a disturbance. Life wasn't going well.

"I didn't know what I was doing every day," said Levi. "I couldn't plan my week. I like to know what I'm doing. I was so stressed. I'd walk around the city or be outside the YMCA all day with my mates, and

then at night I'd go and stay at my friend's."

The Hope into Action team were preparing to open their tenth house in Norwich when they met Levi. An investor had bought the two-bed property in north-west Norwich for use by Hope into Action in partner-

ship with St Catherine's, Mile Cross. Volunteers from St Catherine's formed a 'Friendship and Support Group' to welcome, befriend and support the new residents of 'Joy House'.

Rach Hartley, Hope into Action's Empowerment Worker who attends St Catherine's Church, recalls Levi meeting the group for the first time prior to moving in. She said, "He wouldn't look you in the eye, he would just look down. He had very little to say."

What Levi did say at the meeting was that his favourite sweet treat was sherbet lemons. When he moved into 'Joy House' a couple of weeks later the first thing he saw on the kitchen table was a jar of sherbet lemons. Levi said: "I love lemon sherbet sweets so much. The sun was shining on this jar of sherbet lemons. It was like sun on a pot of treasure."

Another lady within the church had made a cake with 'Welcome to your new home' written on it. "That was so special," said Levi. "It was like nothing I'd felt in a long time. Having all this peace and love and the welcome, I was so excited."

Gill Bridges is a member of the Friendship and Support Group and tries to meet up with Levi regularly. "Levi doesn't have to tell me anything about his life before now," Gill said. "I'm not there to report on him, he doesn't have to report to me. I'm just there merely to befriend really, whatever that means."

The two regularly meet up for coffee in the city centre. They

have also been to Norwich Playhouse to see the dance company Rambert perform and Sir Ian McKellen's solo show (Norwich Playhouse gives Hope into Action free tickets). And Gill, an avid line-dancer of 20 years, has introduced Levi to a beginner's class at The Belvedere Community Centre.

"You get the hang of it", said Levi, "but it's not as easy as you think. It makes me so happy. I can't stop laughing."

Rach said: "I love that about the Friendship and Support Group - two people who may not otherwise have met each other doing something completely random and finding a connection through it that is wonderful to see."

Levi, who is chatty, smiley and filled with hope for the future, is by all accounts completely different from the person who moved into 'Joy House' in December.

"I was waking up stressed," he remembers. "I didn't know where I was going. I had quite a lot of anxiety. Today I wake up in my own bed, go for a morning coffee and shower. I can plan what I want to do. I still have my bad days but I'm more settled."

"I look at things as an optimist now rather than a pessimist. Back in the past, I was always like: 'no, things aren't going to go well'. Now, I'm like: 'I can do this'."

Levi has recently secured his first job as a retail assistant for 'B&M' and in his spare time hones his talent for music and songwriting. In March, he performed one of his songs, 'Rough', at the Hope into Action conference in front of 300 people. "I had mad confidence after that," said Levi. "There wasn't a dry eye in the house," said Rach.

Levi has also played guitar in Café Services at St Catherine's. "I love it," he said. "I got scared on the first one. I was quite nervous. But then the second time around was good. It was like every time I look at somebody they were smiling at me. They've made me feel at home."

He continues: "I'm definitely more open to religion. There have been times when I've prayed and stuff like that. It motivates you. The environment, the people and what it's all about is nice and it's not forced upon you."

Rach said: "There's no agenda. It's just people who care about you, they like you and want the best for you." Gill agrees: "Yes, that's all. All of this kind of thing delights me. It's just what we should be doing as Christians. Hope into Action is exactly that: real hope and real action."

Hope into Action now supports eleven houses in Norwich, housing 30 people.

If you would like to invest in a property for Hope into Action's use or find out more about partnering with Hope into Action as a church you can contact Norwich Coordinator Tony Gray on tony.gray@hopeintoaction.org.uk

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Church in action showcase

The Celebrate Norwich & Norfolk Christian Services and Projects Exhibition will take place in the Forum and on Millennium Plain, in Norwich city centre, from 10am to 4pm on Saturday June 29. The line-up of exhibitors includes:



Christian Aid

■ Reaching out to help the poorest communities around the world and has a local office in Norwich. We exist to change hearts in the rich world and change lives in the poor world. We help churches to pray, act and give to reduce poverty in some of the most deprived areas of the world.
www.christianaid.org.uk



Kids Matter

■ Kids Matter equips local churches to deliver our accessible and effective parenting programme to parents living within more disadvantaged communities; giving mums, dads and carers the tools to build strong families.
www.kidsmatter.org.uk

Community Action Norwich

■ Meeting the needs of people through a programme of community care in the Lakenham and Tuckswood areas of Norwich.
www.communityactionnorwich.co.uk



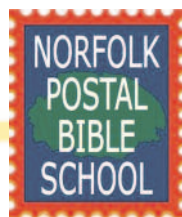
OMF UK

■ A Christian mission agency that serves the church and seeks to bring the gospel to all the peoples of East Asia. It helps to place Christians to share the love of Christ with East Asians worldwide.
www.omf.org/uk/



The Norfolk Postal Bible School

■ Uses the resources produced by Bible Educational Services to run correspondence schools through the postal system, and to supply groups, Bible classes, schools and Sunday schools.



Life Stories

■ A project from the team behind the www.networknorfolk.co.uk website to tell the life stories of ordinary people and preserve them for future generations.
www.lifestories.org.uk

Good News

■ Good News aims to share the good news about Jesus Christ at events across Norfolk.

Redeemed Christian Church of God

■ RCCG started in Nigeria (1952), now in over 180 countries, with over 800 parishes in United Kingdom and four in Norwich. We preach the good news of Jesus Christ with a mandate to make heaven and take as many people with us.
www.rccgswc.com



Norwich Foodbank

■ Norwich foodbank supports local individuals and families who find themselves on the edge of disaster through the provision of emergency food supplies. We work with local churches and care organisations.
www.norwichfoodbank.co.uk



Matthew Project

■ The Matthew Project is a charity which supports children and adults across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex with issues around substance misuse, drug and alcohol recovery and wellbeing.
www.matthewproject.org

Norwich Community Gospel Choir

■ NCGC is a non-profit choral organisation across the city of Norwich. We are passionate about building community, sharing faith and making amazing music together.
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■ The centre is in an ideal location for all holidaymakers, conferences, groups, school parties and retreats. A listed mansion set in six acres of grounds on the Norfolk coast near Cromer, The Pleasaunce can accommodate up to 80 visitors.
www.cehc.org.uk



Create

■ Create is a therapeutic art group which meets in The Chapel on Fellowes Plain. Create has been going for just under a year. Each session has a different theme and a variety of people from around the city come to have a chat whilst creating some marvellous art.

Little Fellowes

■ Little Fellowes is a baby and toddler playgroup in The Chapel on Fellowes Plain. There are lots of toys, games and songs to join in with, as well as a supportive environment for parents and carers.

Bible Comes to Life

■ Bible Comes to Life: An immersive experience which is great for people of all ages to learn more about the events and places described in the Bible. Bible Comes to Life Exhibition will be coming to St Stephen's Church, Norwich from August 15 to 18.
www.ststephensnorwich.org



Heartbeat Ministries

■ A Norfolk-based servant ministry that seeks to strengthen people to become healthy and active members within the Body of Christ. It has monthly meetings plus occasional regional conferences and events.
heartbeatministries.co.uk

Rafiki Creative Ministry

■ Offers puppet shows, workshops, training days, creative workshop and flag workshops, all can be tailor-made. At Celebrate we are presenting our Spin Crazy interactive paint spinning on a variety of card and fabrics. Come along and chat about how we can help you reach your community.
www.facebook.com/SpinCrazyCreations



Norfolk Healing Rooms

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Norfolk Healing Rooms

■ Exists to offer prayer for healing to anyone, free of charge and without an appointment, for physical, emotional or spiritual needs in accordance with scripture.
www.norfolkhealingrooms.co.uk



Bethany Church

■ Our primary aim is to share the Good News and the love of God to the Tamil speaking community in and around Norwich. Our services are in Tamil and English.

Norwich Healing Rooms

■ Anyone can come for prayer, no matter what the need, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual concerns. Our team is dedicated to seeing the same healings which took place in the Bible, take place today.
www.norwichhealingrooms.co.uk



Grace Communion International

■ A Christian faith family seeking to multiply mature followers of Jesus, through equipping and training them in proclaiming the relational nature of God.
www.gci.org



A decade of the church

In June, Christian charity **Celebrate Norfolk** is marking ten years of celebrating and showcasing the work of the Christian community across **Norwich** and **Norfolk**. Here is a look back over those ten years.

2010

■ Celebrate was officially launched in June with a three-day event at the Forum and on Millennium Plain in Norwich city centre.

It came out of a much smaller Churches Community Action Fair held in a city church as part of Transforming Norwich. The aim was, and is, to be an expression of all aspects of the life of the local Christian community. It took the form of a series of linked events in mid June in Norwich city centre.

Bishop Graham James opened the main event at the Forum which featured a Christian Resources and Organisations Exhibition. A highlight was the appearance of the Riding Lights Theatre Company.

A closing service was held on Millennium Plain, attended by 300 people.

2011

■ Celebrate became a registered charity.

Opening the event in Norwich, The Archdeacon of Norwich, Ven Jan McFarlane, said, "The work that these Christian organisations and churches do, in building a better community for everyone, proves that the new atheists, Dawkins and the like, are quite simply wrong."

Highlights included Russian singing group Lyra and Chris Duffett from the Light Project painting a giant cross.

On the Sunday afternoon hundreds joined together on Millennium Plain to worship God at a Global Day of Prayer service for Pentecost.

Norwich FGB held a high-profile dinner at the Holiday Inn that heard from Lord Elton and former mafia boss Davey Falcus.

2012

■ The Norwich exhibition had grown to 30 exhibitors including Christian radio station United Christian Broadcasters.

President of the Baptist Union, Chris Duffett, was also in attendance as were Riding Lights Theatre.

A Celebrate Youth Event at NCBC in the evening featured the Chip Kendall Band and DJ Galactus Jack.

A Sunday closing service was held at St Peter Mancroft.

2013

■ The three-day event at the Forum was opened by Rev Jonathan Meyrick, Bishop of King's Lynn and included workshops on Who Let the Dads Out and Footy, Family and Faith.

A café church was held in Bar Marzano and a family picnic in

Chapelfield Park.

The Magdalene Group held a public debut screening of The Rose Campaign film My Dangerous Loverboy.

2014

■ A full programme of entertainment on Millennium Plain on Saturday, was watched by hundreds of people and featured MOBO award-winning Christian rap artist GuvnaB, the Norwich YFC gospel choir and the Dance Off group.

In a World Cup year, cage football from the Norfolk Christian Football League was included as was a Norfolk churches video showreel on a giant World Cup screen on Millennium Plain.

A closing service inside the Forum, featured musician Libby Redman and Ed Walker, chief executive of Christian homelessness charity Hope Into Action.

2015

■ A two-day event at the Forum was opened by Rev Julian Pursehouse, Chair of East Anglia Methodist District.

The Christian Police Association attended for the first time and Philip Bamber, national director of Good Books For Asia, was on Radio Norfolk.

f showing in action



A closing service was held at St Stephen's.

2016

■ Celebrate spread its wings across Norfolk with sister events taking place in King's Lynn and at the Royal Norfolk Show during June.

In King's Lynn, churches of different denominations came together to stage a free family fun day in The Walks park near the town centre. It was enjoyed by hundreds of local people with live music, inflatable slides, a vast selection of complementary cakes and circus skills.

Celebrate also teamed up with the Diocese of Norwich at the Royal Norfolk Show to put on an exhibition of the church in action across the region in a giant marquee.

In Norwich there was drama from Saltmine Theatre Company and music from a combined 40-strong Norwich churches choir. Norwich YFC Tracks studio van provided a performance zone alongside Messy Church activities.

A panel of Christian leaders from the church, charity sector and the NHS talked about Christian Leadership in Today's World at a free breakfast seminar at St Stephen's.

On Sunday there was a free picnic for volunteers to celebrate Her Majesty

the Queen's 90th birthday and a celebration service followed at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist.

2017

■ Celebrate again took place in Norwich, King's Lynn and at the Royal Norfolk Show.

Celebrate Norwich & Norfolk returned to the Forum and Millennium Plain with a free exhibition of over 20 Christian organisations, charities and churches.

The Norwich event was the climax of the Norfolk Feeds 5000 campaign which included research, a website www.norfolkfeeds5000.co.uk and a newspaper supplement demonstrating that the church across Norfolk was regularly feeding more than 7000 people.

There was also a Leaders' Breakfast, Saltmine Theatre performing Soul in the Machine at St Stephen's, a combined churches choir, and a children's and youth programme from Norwich YFC. Free smoothies and snacks were provided courtesy of the Norfolk Feeds 5000 campaign, in conjunction with ENYP and Hope into Action.

Celebrate at The Walks in King's Lynn again ran a free, fun-filled community event for all of the family.

Celebrate was also at Royal Norfolk Show in the Diocese of Norwich

marquee showing the church in action across the region.

2018

■ Events continued in Norwich, King's Lynn and at the Royal Norfolk Show.

At the Forum in Norwich hundreds of visitors enjoyed music and singing from a range of groups and choirs, hosted by the Norwich YFC Tracks mobile music studio.

A Key to Life interactive mobile education unit gave free presentations on the life of Jesus and there was music from the London School of Theology.

Executive Director of HOPE, Roy Crowne, held a Christian leadership masterclass and then had a series of one-to-one sessions with organisation leaders.

The free family fun day staged by Celebrate King's Lynn, experienced a massive turnout with more people benefiting from the event than in any previous year.

2019

■ Celebrate Norwich & Norfolk is marking its tenth anniversary and the team behind the charity has been reimagining its future to come up with a new-look event for June 2019.



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Celebrating in King's Lynn

■ A dozen West Norfolk churches are set to come together for the fourth year running at the Celebrate Festival for a community fun day in the centre of King's Lynn on Saturday June 8, facilitated by Celebrate King's Lynn.

The event team is expecting an increase in the numbers attending as the people of King's Lynn gather for the free festival with music, food and entertainment which will be staged once again in the town's central park, The Walks, from 10-5pm.

As always, everything at the event is free and courtesy of the charity and the town's churches, including a free barbecue. This year's event will include a stage featuring live music, drama and a circus performer.

Music will be provided by bands including Matt McCleary, King's Lynn Street Church, Marty Breeze and Radical Church Norwich.

Free fun activities include Go Karts, The Gladiator, Sumo Wrestling, Eliminator, a bouncy castle, giant children's slide, face painting and more.

Other groups attending include the Christian Motorcycle Association, drama from Open the Book, Sally Beadle's Bible Circus, Girl Guides, Norwich Healing Rooms, Foodbank, Christians Against Poverty, Bridge for Heroes, Word on the Wash and UCB Radio.

The local churches involved with Celebrate will again be running games and have informa-



tion stands. They include: Church of the Nazarene; Cornerstone Baptist church; King's Glory church; The Gateway church; Radical church Norwich; The King's Centre; North Lynn Methodist Church; St John The Evangelist; Church in the Woottons; St Faith's Church; King's Lynn Community Adventist church; King's Lynn Evangelical church; Eternity church Downham Market

Celebrate King's Lynn project leader, Maarten Klem, said: "The whole idea of Celebrate King's Lynn's events is for the Christian community around West Norfolk to put on an entirely free event for everyone from the local community to come, enjoy and experience God's free, unconditional love. Any other churches or Christian groups that want to join us are more than welcome, just get in contact."

To find out more, contact the Celebrate team on engage@celebratekingslynn.com or visit: www.celebratekingslynn.com

Car parking is available in nearby streets and at the town centre multi-storey car park.

Exhibition aims to bring Bible to life

A well-known interactive exhibition which aims to bring the Bible to life with an immersive learning experience, is coming to a Norwich church this summer.

The Bible Comes to Life exhibition has been running in one form or another for over 125 years and from August 15 to 18 will be hosted at St Stephen's Church at Chapelfield.

Authentic Middle Eastern clothing, first person character talks, a scale model of the Jewish Temple, the Desert Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant, together with ancient artefacts portray the life and faith of people who lived 3000 years ago are included. Originally held in 1891, the current exhibition still features some items that were in the original displays

St Stephen's curate, Rev Dr Alex Irving, said: "We are really looking forward to welcoming this important and impressive exhibition which will enable visitors to experience so many of the places and objects described in the Old and New Testaments. We want to help people see something of the world that Jesus would have known and to read the Bible with renewed interest and understanding.

"The exhibition is completely free and there is no need to book. There is also a cafe in the church building as well as a children's play area, so visitors will have a chance to enjoy these as well as the exhibition.



"We are hoping that the exhibition will help Christians to engage in new ways with the Bible by helping us to visualize the culture and buildings it describes.

"It will also help Christians engage more with the Jewish roots of our faith, and to come to a better awareness of the culture in which Jesus lived. We also hope that visitors who do not know Jesus would be intrigued by what they experience and want to know more."

The exhibition will be in St Stephen's Church, Rampant Horse Street, Norwich, NR2 1QP from August 15 to 18.

www.ststephensnorwich.org/bible-comes-to-life

Families to benefit from parenting charity move

Christian charity **Kids Matter**, which aims to equip local churches to deliver its parenting programme in disadvantaged communities, has appointed Norwich-based **Lynette Woodward** as its Eastern Region Partnership Manager.

As a leader of Oak Grove Community Church, Lynette was looking for a way to support families in the local community of Catton Grove as she could see the growing need. The Kids Matter parenting programme seemed the ideal fit as it's an evidence-based programme written specifically for families facing adversity.

"Kids Matter equips local churches to deliver an accessible and effective parenting programme to parents living within disadvantaged communities," said Lynette, "giving mums, dads and caregivers the tools to build strong families."

"Kids Matter groups happen around a table with food and refreshments; the atmosphere is conversational as parents share the highs and lows of parenting, supporting one another, whilst working through material guided by a trained facilitator," said Lynette.

There are also follow-up 'booster' sessions after the initial six-week programme and the group and the church can offer ongoing friendship and support, drawing people out of isolation.

Excited about the idea of making a real difference to local

families, Oak Grove decided to partner with Kids Matter and Lynette trained as a facilitator last year and has run a successful first group and the second is planned for the autumn.

When the opportunity to apply for the regional manager job came up, while Lynette was training to be a facilitator, she jumped at the chance and was appointed.

"My job is to engage with churches across East Anglia, starting with Norfolk, to see if they would like to partner with Kids Matter and run the programme in their communities," said Lynette.

"Kids Matter has the potential to make a real difference to families and we are already seeing the fruit of running the programme; parents feeling strengthened and empowered."

Local churches have already expressed interest and a facilitator training session will be held in Norwich in October.

Before that, on July 10, Kids Matter will be hosting a taster session for churches/organisations that might be interested in running the parenting programme in partnership with Kids Matter.

If you would like to book a place on the taster or find out more about Kids Matter, contact Lynette on 07909 224170 or email lw@kidsmatter.org.uk

www.kidsmatter.org.uk



Lynette Woodward.



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The re-opening of Carleton Rode Baptist Church.

Rural church beats the odds

With faith, joy and unity, the congregation of a small Baptist church in rural **South Norfolk** has overcome the enormous financial and practical challenge of rebuilding their chapel after it was found to be at serious risk of falling down. **Jenny Seal** reports.

Carleton Rode Baptist Church sits on a quiet country road surrounded by farmland.

Somewhat surprisingly, given this unlikely location, the church currently being in-between ministers and their building having undergone major structural work, the church is thriving.

On Saturday, May 11 around 80 people gathered in the church courtyard to see and give thanks for the reopening of the building after an 18-month quest to replace the chapel's rotting timber frame.

The church's Moderator, Rev Neil Walker, said: "The story of how this place has been restored is legendary. What a refreshing change when so many country chapels are being sold off to become private houses. This one is not only up and open but very much in business."

Architect Rob Pearce, before cutting the ribbon to great applause and declaring the building open, said: "Richard Chapman of CRBC had set a very, very tight deadline for the project. At the interview I said to Richard that it was not impossible, but it was very, very unreasonable! You guys here made this project possible by raising all the funds, and that is a fantastic achievement."

In 2017, the timber frame of the chapel was found to be disintegrating and the building deemed unsafe. The timber work, including the base plate and windows needed to be replaced.

But it wasn't a straightforward task for the builders from R&J Hogg. The timber structure was hidden beneath brick cladding. In the service of thanksgiving that followed the ribbon cutting ceremony, CRBC's Barry Gotts explained: "We couldn't take the walls off to get to the timber because the whole place would've fallen down. The walls were holding the roof up but they weren't ever designed to do that."

The chapel building had to be closed and in September 2018 the congregation of 50-60 people

moved to Bunwell Village Hall for Sunday services as the work was carried out.

The church has a precedent for overcoming adversity. In 2009 an arson attack devastated the church's adjoining stable and school room. The church took the opportunity to convert the stable into a community coffee shop. Now open on a Tuesday afternoon, Thursday morning and Saturday afternoon, it can sometimes welcome over 80 people a session.

The cost of the current rebuilding project was just under £106k. While this was initially a daunting prospect the church met the challenge with characteristic faith. Rev Beth Powney, the Regional Minister for the Eastern Baptist Association (EBA) recalled: "The first encounter I had with this church, when I was very new to this job, was sitting in a leader's meeting where they were describing this problem. I said: 'You have a church that is falling down, are you serious? It's going to cost a lot of money and you're quite small'. It was just the faith of that leadership and Richard in particular, saying, 'Well the Lord will provide'."

She continued: "This community of people have the joy of the Lord, and that is their strength. And that's why this building is still standing."

In an emotional introduction to the thanksgiving service Church Secretary, Angie Bennett, said: "God's been here, and he has provided for us. As a fellowship we really have united together; it has been amazing. The people who have stepped up, come forward and gone over and above their jobs, thank you to all of those. I'm just overwhelmed. I'm just amazed and just so grateful to be back here."

The church raised the money from a range of sources. Almost £34k was raised from seven grant making bodies, a Gift Day saw church members donate £8k, the EBA's Project of the Year fund raised £2k and members of the community including customers of the café filled up small bottles with coins and raised an additional £2k. Along with Gift Aid, legacies and existing reserves, the cost of the repairs was met.

Beryl Dawson, Church Treasurer, said: "This is more than just a building. It is a building, where through the ages, people have come together to learn about God and to try to follow in his way. And more than anything else our prayer is that we will continue to learn about Jesus, to follow him more closely and to be a building that is open for everyone to come and feel God's love and God's welcome through everything that we do."

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A dementia friendly group

The **Oaks Friday Friendship Group** celebrated its second birthday at the ecumenical Bowthorpe Church with an open day on Friday 10 May. **Kevin Gotts** reports.

The group, open to all, supports visitors in a wide range of crafts, games and practical interests, with a special welcome for those with dementia and their carers.

Lois Wiltshire, church member and group leader, explained her involvement: "I have always had a passion for community and following a dream about this church being used for the community. I attended a Fresh Expressions course of championing new ways of being church which seemed to pull it all together. And it shows the love of the Lord with welcoming and accepting all."

Around 45 people attended the day in conjunction with Age UK Norwich and supported by various community organisations and charities, including a visit from MP Clive Lewis.

Lois said: "Everyone is equal here, we are a dementia friendly group and we welcome everyone, all ages, all abilities every Friday throughout the year. We have a wonderful teams of volunteers."

Student nurse Vicky volunteers and also helps with design, print and social media: "It's amazing; I've never come across such a nice place to hang out, relax and speak with friends," she said.

Sylvia, a member of the catering team which also provides lunches, arranges craft activities, said: "We also put on special events like the Nativity with 28 people taking part, each wearing an outfit made here. They feel happy, I feel happy."

Membership and visitors tend to live locally, and it is close to the Bowthorpe Care Village

which has been designed to care for people living with dementia.

A common theme is for friendships to grow, supporting and encouraging one another.

Angie attends with and supports her husband: "I have rheumatoid arthritis and we help care for each other. We look forward to this, meeting with our friends and talking to everybody, it's so friendly."

Richard volunteers regularly, plays dominoes and often leads singing: "I help with anything, clearing up. I come here and have a good time."

Sharon, a professional carer, brings along Phyllis and Brian – two older siblings, and is encouraged by the value of attending: "It is nice to see them interact with others of all ages and backgrounds. They remember people and faces and are more settled."

Not only has Lois an aim of Bowthorpe Church and Parish becoming a dementia friendly community, but seeing the group become a template for other communities.

As a member of a wider steering group, the Oaks is being considered as a pilot scheme with a potential to be replicated further afield, so that even more people have access to a group in their communities.



Dementia champion
Lois Wiltshire, centre,
with other guests and
some birthday cakes.

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Celebrating the church in local communities

The Church of England **Diocese of Norwich** will be at the **Royal Norfolk Show** in June to celebrate and highlight the church's role in local communities.

The Royal Norfolk Show takes place on Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 June and is the largest two-day agricultural show in the country with over 80,000 people visiting. Throughout the large Diocese marquee there will be a wide range

of activities, areas to explore and exhibits, including activities for children and young people to get stuck into.

As part of the activities, children and youth can make a mixture of origami and cut out paper doves which will become a mini art exhibition about peace inside a large geodome.

The marquee will have a large café area for those wanting refreshment or a place to stop and relax as well as featuring a large soft play area for toddlers and parents. School choirs and music groups will be performing on the stage during both days.

There will be an interactive Lord's Prayer area and visitors will be able to add prayers to a prayer wall, vote on their favourite style of church music, and pick up Bible passage cards for encouragement.

Speaking about the vision, Gordon Darley, Director of Marketing & Communications for the Diocese of Norwich, said: "The Show is an amazing opportunity to highlight what God is doing across Norfolk and Waveney through the local church, as well as promoting Christians working together through many different charities.

"Our vibrant, colourful and engaging presence enables us to showcase and demonstrate to thousands of people the love God has for all and the hope our

Christian faith brings."

Norfolk has the highest concentration of churches in the world. Earlier this year a new website, ExploringNorfolkChurches.org, was launched aiming to highlight these amazing 650 church buildings, many of them open all year round.

The new interactive website is live and there will be an area in the marquee where visitors can explore the new site and discover some of the stunning church buildings across the county.

Bright Map, an online map showing regular groups and activities happening across Norfolk and Waveney from all Christian denominations, will also be exhibiting in the marquee.

The website aims to help people connect to activities and groups in their local area, therefore helping to tackle loneliness, but also to highlight the huge amount of community work and engagement that churches are involved in.

Other local Christian charities and organisations will be exhibiting within the marquee to showcase the work they do, including YMCA Norfolk, Norwich Cathedral and Mothers' Union Norwich and others.

"Do come and visit us and see what amazing things God is doing through churches and charities in this wonderful county," said Gordon.

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The Diocese of Norwich marquee at last year's Royal Norfolk Show.