GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

Winter 2024: FREE

Inside

New leader – 2
Shelter opens – 4
Christian pioneer – 5
Stories of hope – 6
Fond farewell – 9



Animation dream for Oscar-winning pastor

An Oscar and BAFTA winning animator and Norwich church elder has launched an ambitious initiative to produce 365 high-quality animated Christian devotionals aimed at engaging young people with the Gospel and is looking for funds to help him make it happen. **Keith Morris** reports.

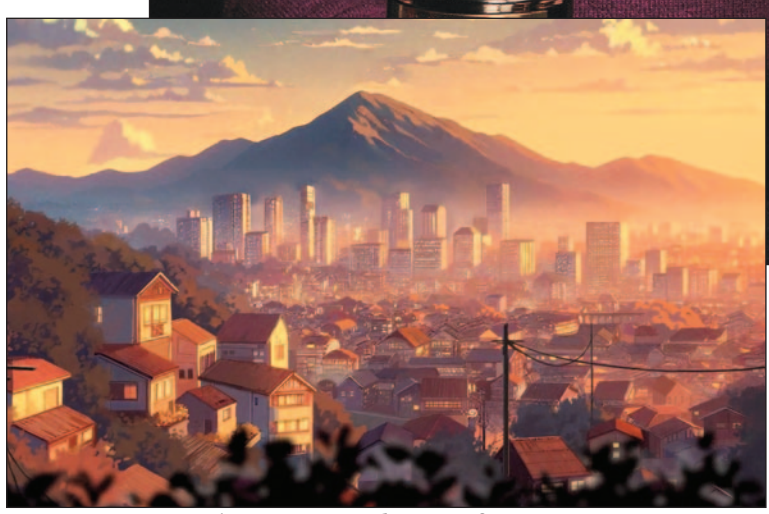


Norwich church elder and animator Jonny Hall.

Jonny Hall is a professional animator who has worked on some of Hollywood's biggest block-busters in collaboration with Disney and Marvel including Guardians of the Galaxy, Maleficent and Gravity on which he was part of the team which won an Oscar and a BAFTA for 'Best Visual Effects'. He has also just become an elder at Servant's Church Norwich.

Jonny has been developing a project called Manna for several years now, as he explains: "My love for God's Word and my skill-set in animation inspired the creation of Manna. We call them spiritual hors d'oeuvres because they are beautiful, bite-sized and rich in flavour.

"There seems to be a gap between content for children and adults – Manna seeks to fill that gap with content they can receive. They are short and packed with spiritual depth which can sustain viewers and encourage them in their pursuit of Jesus. We also strive for excellence which inspires young hearts and testifies to the creator God himself. I'm convinced that short, meaty videos that are well produced would really resonate with them and increase a desire to go deeper – as-well-as being very shareable.



"Last year myself and a small team produced a pilot episode, called Honey, and since then I've shown it to several Christian organisations who have encouraged me to produce two more (totalling to three episodes) to attract more funding and support from Christian partners.

"The long term goal is to make 365 (of which I've written nearly 50) to have as a rolling devotional year-upon year, and I feel that living Truth, delivered in an accessible and engaging way can continue to reap a harvest for years to come."

Now, Jonny has launched a crowd-funder appeal to make two more episodes. For context, a typical minute's worth of TV animation costs about £20,000 to make.

"For this campaign I'll be aiming to raise £30,000 to form a talented team of creatives to make the next two episodes, averaging at about 90 seconds each video, which we will release online for free. Eventually we want to create enough devotionals for every single day of the year.

"Please consider donating and being part of this mission to inspire the next generation with the eternal truth of God's Word," said Jonny. "It's a big vision, and only something that the Lord can accomplish."

You can watch the pilot video at: www.manna-productions.com

Visit the funding page at: gofund.me/5f235bbd

Christian news website marks two decades

The Network Norfolk website is set to mark 20 years of serving the local Christian community over the next 12 months, and has a number of initiatives planned to celebrate the achievement including free media training events and a Norfolk Christian Communications Awards.

■ The long-standing independent website, which provides a news and information service for the Christian community across Norfolk, was launched in October 2005.

Launch editor Keith Morris is still at the helm, now as publisher, and has been joined over the years by other team members, who include senior content editor Helen Baldry and regional content editors Tony Rothe, Anna Heydon and Peter Bending.

Countless volunteers have contributed articles and opinion columns to the site, which has been backed by numerous local Christian organizations, charities and churches for whom the website helps provide a vital communications channel.

Over the past two decades, the site has published over 10,000 news articles, and 1,000 opinion columns. Also published have been hundreds of job and volunteer opportunities, church and project directory entries and adverts for local businesses and Christian organizations and thousands of diary dates.

The site and its team have also won several national Christian media awards.

Keith said: "When we launched the site back in 2005, I had no idea that it would be so popular and enduring. It has been a real hit with our loyal readers, many of whom have been following us for most of that time.

"In line with our mission as an organisation, we want our anniversary celebrations to both help equip the Norfolk Christian community to communicate more effectively and to highlight much of its great work.

"To this end we will be holding a series of free media training events right across Norfolk for our supporters and readers, giving them the opportunity to learn more about digital communications, writing news stories and press releases and some of the secrets of social media.

"To round off the year, in October 2025, we also plan to stage a second Norfolk Christian Communications Awards when we will invite entries in categories that give all of our readers and supporters the chance to both enter and to vote for those websites, videos, pictures, social media campaigns and communications champions who they think should be recognised," said Keith.

www.networknorfolk.co.uk

GOOD NEWS
FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

■ **Good News for Norwich & Norfolk is published by Network Norwich & Norfolk, part of the Christian Community Trust for Norwich and Norfolk Ltd.**
Registered charity no 1105340.

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

■ **The deadline for content for the Spring edition is Friday March 7. Distribution is from Wednesday March 26.**

■ **Editorial: 07712 787762 or e-mail stories to keith.morris@networknorwich.co.uk or send copy to Pear Tree Farmhouse, Wymondham Road, Wreningham, Norwich NR16 1AT.**

■ **Website: www.networknorfolk.co.uk**

■ We endeavour to adhere to the IMPRESS standards code. If you have a complaint you should, in the first instance, contact the editor keith.morris@networknorwich.co.uk with details. If you are still not satisfied you should contact Impress at: **www.impressorg.com**

impress publish with integrity | regulated member

GOOD NEWS
FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

Promote your church, charity, business services, care home, conference centre or events

Do you want to reach the Christian community across Norwich & Norfolk with your message at attractive advertising rates?

We distribute over 5,000 printed copies of every newspaper, direct to local churches, Christian bookshops and charities, plus 3,000 more read online.

For more information please email keith.morris@networknorwich.co.uk or ring 07712 787762

The Methodist Church in East Anglia has appointed a new senior leader who has a passion for caring for clergy, trying to find new ways to grow the church and addressing injustice. **Helen Baldry** reports.



New chair of the East Anglia Methodist Church Rev Helen Hollands, and her husband Roy.

Helen is new Methodist leader in East Anglia

Rev Helen Hollands recently took up her role as Chair of the East Anglia District of the Methodist Church, which includes around 200 churches in the region, covering Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.

Based in Norwich, Helen is responsible for governance, strategy, planning, clergy and mission for the Methodist Church in the region. Her role involves lots of travel, but, having come from the South East, she is used to working in a large area, albeit now having the novelty of being stuck behind a tractor rather than a tanker on the M25!

Helen, and husband Roy, have four daughters, two of whom studied at UEA and one has since settled in Norwich.

She has found it valuable to get to know the city as a student parent first rather than as a minister, coming from Ashford in Kent. She has noticed similarities between Kent and Norfolk in the coastal areas, rural expanses and market towns. A massive difference, however, is the density of population, East Anglia feels more spacious to her.

Helen says that she has arrived at a time of change for many churches, some are in decline, others are wondering what God has in store for them next, others are flourishing. Several are in partnership with other denominations and it is good to work together.

Growing up in Hampshire, Helen describes herself as a 'cradle Methodist' as her mother was a Methodist minister, which was unusual at the time. Her faith was sparked and nurtured at a youth group she belonged to at her local church, for which she is incredibly grateful. There is exciting and dynamic youth and children's work currently in many of the region's Methodist churches.

The Methodists are investing in a new initiative called 'New Places for New People' to create new Christian communities for people with questions about life and faith who struggle to connect with existing forms of church. There are many ways to 'do church differently', for example there are plans to establish a 'surfer church' in Mundesley, says Helen.

"A similar concept is already working well in Penzance. Forest Church is another way to encourage people to engage with nature, find meaning and explore their spirituality. The Hive at Great Cressingham is an existing community in Norfolk that uses poetry, music and creative ways to help people connect with God. It is a way of exploring spirituality without being confined by walls or traditions. In this way churches have the potential to become transformative communities and make themselves accessible to new people."

Addressing injustice and taking part in social action are important to Helen. Along with her husband, she was involved in developing homeless provision in Whitstable, Kent and advocacy remains something close to her heart. Helen trained as a solicitor before she was ordained and enjoyed teaching law at the University of Kent.

The experience of working with those who needed Legal Aid and speaking up for people who don't have a voice matters to Helen. She describes her calling to ministry as a 'persistent nudging' and found that her legal skills stand her in good stead as a minister.

Helen said: "I am really looking forward to getting to know the district and particularly looking forward to getting to know the people in our Methodist churches and those from other denominations and faith communities. It is good to be here and to have the privilege of serving the church here in this place and at this time."

Hebron reinvents itself as an award-winning housing charity

Norfolk women's charity **Hebron Housing** has reinvented itself as a supported housing charity, while maintaining its Christian ethos. The team have won national awards this year and have big plans for the future. **Helen Baldry** reports.



Pictured above: the team with some of the women they support, on a day out.

We're good at housing and have always been good at moving women on," says Chief Executive Emma Pawsey, who has been at the helm for ten years. The charity currently provides 15 beds plus support for women around Norwich and has plans to grow to support more women. The quality of the houses is exceptional.

Emma said: "We believe women should live in beautiful surroundings. Just because of their backgrounds it doesn't mean they don't deserve to live in beauty."

Hebron Housing receives referrals from professionals, including councils, probation and other charities.

For years, Hebron Trust was a registered care home providing rehab for ten women with addictions. The high level of care was unsustainable, so the organisation made the difficult decision to close the business as a national rehab facility and reopen as a local supported housing provider.

Emma said: "We sold half of the building and with that money we bought two houses in the city. We also have one move-on house that is rented to us by Norfolk Consolidated Charities and we turned upstairs at Hebron House into an independent five-bed flat.

"We have steadily filled our beds since April 23 and we are currently full."

The charity's goal is to grow by two houses a year and the next house will be ready in February 2025.

Hebron Housing offers a high level of support with a committed and experienced team focused on assisting women to achieve their full potential and move on to live independently.

Emma said: "We are very much about community. We bring the women together and have coffee mornings, activities, quizzes – it's about community rather than being isolated in their rooms. We encourage the women to eat together wherever possible."

The team have developed a course called 'living well together' which looks at the psychological aspects of living together. Emma said: "It's about getting to know each other in a safe space – and with humour – so they realise how much there is in common. There was one house where they weren't really speaking or even knowing each other's names. After the course they ate together, they broke some ground. Whenever we've done it has had an impact."

The progress the women make is achieved through a loving Christian ethos and values. The service is open to women of all faiths. Often women will pick a church, and the team will support them to do that and are very careful to allow them to make a choice. The charity enjoys close links with many local churches which offer physical donations and financial support.

Emma said: "We love them back to health. They are all amazing, brave women and deserve to realise their potential in life. They've had a bad card of hands dealt to them and we're there to help them realise their full potential. We're proud of them when they walk out of the door and we've helped them move on well.

Moving can be a challenge because landlords can be resistant to taking on tenants who are on benefits, yet the women are not eligible to work until they move on from supported housing.

Emma said: "It's frustrating. They are stuck between a rock and a hard place. The risk to landlords is actually very low. When they've been with us for two years the women are in a very good place. We can give them two years of referencing and ongoing support – even after they move they are always part of the Hebron family as a support network."

One way to gain skills and experience in readiness for moving on is by volunteering. Hebron Housing hopes to one day open a charity shop and cafe in the city which would provide these opportunities.

Plans for growth were bolstered this year by winning two national awards – the Inside Housing heroes awards for 'Best Team' and 'Inspirational Leader', plus one of the tenants was shortlisted for a 'tenant of the year' award.

Emma said: "It means a lot as we are such a young business and we were shocked. The standard of the applicants was amazing so it's incredible that we won."

The success of Hebron Housing is due to the enthusiasm, commitment and professionalism of the whole team.

How you can help

- **Landlords** – the charity is interested to hear from anyone looking to rent out one-bed flats, bedsits or shared houses.
- **Volunteering** – Hebron Housing is keen to hear from female volunteers who can drive and take women to appointments
- **Donate items**
  - ☐ Christmas can be difficult for residents. A Christmas gift that is not alcohol-related would be appreciated
  - ☐ Care package when they move in – shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, toothbrush.
  - ☐ James vacuum cleaners – lightweight and robust
  - ☐ Good furniture such as single beds
- **Donate** – www.justgiving.com/hebron-trust
- **Fundraising** – Support the team's fundraising challenge next summer as they travel from Hebron to Hebron (Norwich to Northumbria) by any means necessary
- **Charity Golf Day** Sept 19, 2025
- **Website:** hebronhousing.org

Horstead Centre
Residential Stays and Activity Days



Residential Stays, Retreats and Activity Days

The Horstead Centre is the perfect venue for your residential visit or activity day. Our professional, welcoming team will help you to plan a bespoke visit that caters for the specific needs of your group.

Whether you're considering a family celebration or a residential trip for your youth project or Church, we can tailor an affordable experience to suit your needs.

- Exclusive full-board and self-catering options from £19.50+VAT /person/night.
- Beautiful house and gardens which can accommodate up to 65.
- Over 20 exciting outdoor activities to choose from. From £9.50+VAT per person.
- Event hosting/venue hire
- Professional, friendly team

Please contact us for other options including accommodation only and activity days.

01603 737215
office@horsteadcentre.org.uk

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

Horstead Centre, Rectory Road, Horstead, Norwich NR12 7EP

Registered Charity 303986

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Norwich

Quality Badge awarded by Council for Learning Outside the Classroom

Follow our adventures on:



Embracing profound truths of Advent

Norwich writer and philosopher James Knight invites us to reflect on the depth of our beliefs and the richness of the Christmas story.

■ As we journey through Advent, the season of preparation and anticipation leading to Christmas, we are reminded of the profound truths that lie at the heart of our faith.

The wisdom of physicist Niels Bohr resonates deeply in this context, with one of my favourite quotes of all time: while the opposite of a correct statement is simply false, the opposite of a profound truth may be another profound truth. This duality invites us to reflect on the depth of our beliefs and the richness of the Christmas story.

During Advent, we celebrate the coming of Christ, the Light of the world, born into the humble surroundings of a stable. This truth stands in stark contrast to the expectation at the time of a powerful king arriving in glory to defeat the ruling powers. Yet, both realities – Christ's humility and His divine majesty – hold profound dual significance. The incarnation teaches us that true greatness often emerges in the most unexpected forms, inviting us to reconsider our own definitions of progress and success.

Moreover, the themes of hope and despair coexist in this season. As we await the celebration of Christ's birth, we also acknowledge the pain and suffering present in our world. The hope of Advent does not diminish the reality of our struggles; instead, it stands alongside them, proclaiming that light shines brightest in the darkest of times.

As we light the Advent candles, let us embrace these profound truths - the anticipation of Christ's eventual coming and the humility of His birth. Both truths enrich our faith and call us to a deeper understanding of God's love. In the complexity of these realities, we find the essence of Christmas: a celebration of profound truths that invite us to live with faith, joy, and compassion in a world longing for all three.

Night Shelter opening marks a milestone

When the **King's Lynn Night Shelter** reopened at the beginning of October, it did so with the good news that, going forward, St John's House will be open to guests all year round. **Peter Bending** reports.



Pictured is the King's Lynn Night Shelter at St John's House.

Established by Churches Together in King's Lynn, the shelter started out as a pilot project offering simple camp beds just two nights a week during the winter of 2017-18.

Initially, guests were only welcomed overnight, arriving at 7pm and leaving before 9.30am the following morning. Following the first lockdowns in early 2020, the decision was made to move to a new location and become a 24/7 service.

This year, after much planning and fundraising, the shelter reopened and will remain open to guests throughout the year.

Night Shelter director Lucy McKitterick said: "Our staff and volunteers have seen a lot of change and re-imagining as we've considered how best to support vulnerable people in post-Covid Britain, how to work with other organisations to achieve the best outcomes for our guests, and how to keep it all funded.

"Between November 2023 and June 2024, the Night Shelter accommodated 32 guests, out of 109 people who were referred or self-referred to us. This stark contrast between the need, and our capacity to help, continues to push us forward in our plans for development work."

Securing planning permission to remain open year-round is a significant milestone in the life of the shelter.

This coincided with the first phase of building development this summer, adapting the existing building to better serve the needs of the shelter. A second phase, consisting of an extension, is due to begin as soon as fundraising permits.

"The St John's House Project, once complete, will increase the Night Shelter's capacity by 50% so that year-round we can make a greater contribution to local homelessness provision. It will also help the Charity towards financial sustainability as dependency on one-off grant funding is reduced," said Lucy.

The shelter currently receives no national or local Government funding. It receives some income from Housing Benefits with the rest of its income sourced from grant funding, fundraising and donations.



Fundraising events and donations from groups and individuals are the Night Shelter's biggest source of income each year. This last year the fundraising team have run stalls, open days, a film screening, concerts, and one longstanding supporter took on the London Marathon in aid of the shelter, raising £4,000.

But the need is always great.

"We've lost 13 former guests within the last year, thankfully none of them while staying with us. The average age of death for people experiencing homelessness in the UK is just 42 for women, and 44 for men. Time can run out," explained Lucy.

The Night Shelter has around 60 volunteers who provide support to the staff team to welcome and care for its guests.

"We are especially grateful to our friends and benefactors who continue to make our work possible, as well as to our volunteers, staff team, trustees and the many organisations who work with us through the year. Thank you for your invaluable help.

"Over the last year our volunteers have given their time to cover an amazing 3,465 hours of shifts: in the morning on the breakfast shift, in the evenings preparing a hot meal for our guests, and (crucially for a Night Shelter!) overnight," said Lucy.

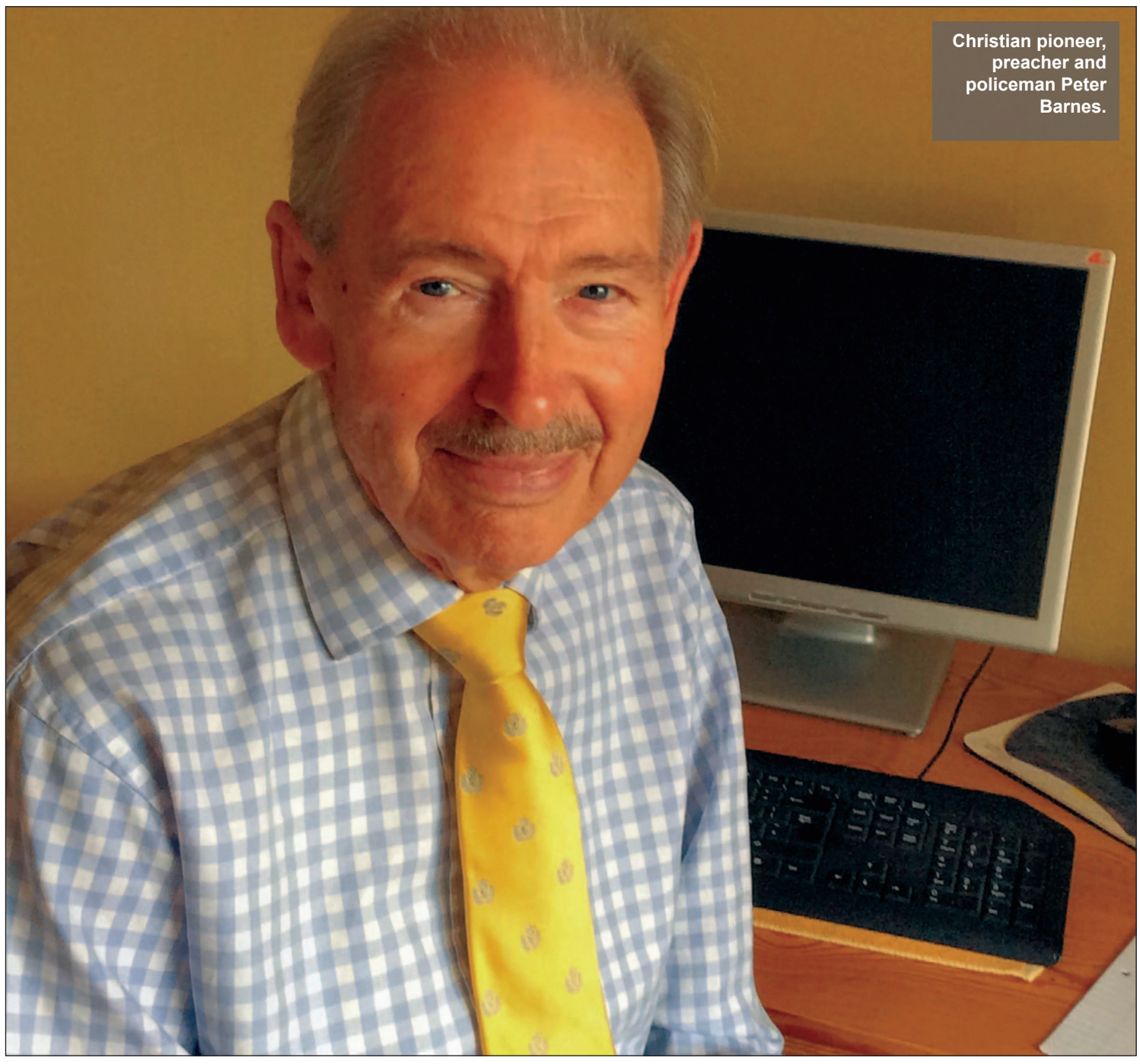
The Rev Canon James Nash, Chair of Trustees, said: "May I offer my own thanks to everyone who works at the Shelter, whether as an employee or volunteer. I am so grateful to those who give financial support, and to those who pray for the work of the Shelter and for the guests who stay with us."

As another winter fast approaches, the King's Lynn Night Shelter continues to provide vital help to those who need it most.

Find out more about the Night Shelter, donate, or volunteer at klnightshelter.org.uk

Tributes paid to Norfolk Christian pioneer, preacher and policeman

Tributes have been paid to former Norwich police superintendent, Christian youthwork champion, tireless social action organizer and **Good News** newspaper pioneer **Peter Barnes**, who has died at the age of 85. **Helen Baldry** reports.



Christian pioneer, preacher and policeman Peter Barnes.

Peter was born in January 1939 in the Thorpe area of Norwich. He was named John Peter Barnes and his elder sister who was five at the time didn't like the name John, so he was always known as Peter. During the war, at the age of three, Peter, along with his sister, was evacuated to a Lancashire town.

Peter returned to Norwich in 1944 to attend the City of Norwich School before joining the Police in 1958 at the age of 19. Peter reached the rank of Superintendent and was selected for a special course at Bramshill Training College where he received the Bramshill scholarship.

During his time with the police, he was the Chair of the Norfolk Christian Police Association and the Vice Chair of the Christian Police Association in Britain. Peter loved playing sport, and represented the police in most sports throughout his career.

His Christian faith was central to Peter's life. He became a Christian while at a youth group – where he met his wife Wendy. They married in 1960 at Chapel Field Road Methodist Church and had three children – Stephanie, Ginnie and Ashley. Peter was grandad to eight and great-grandad to five.

Peter was a local methodist preacher, and later moved to Dereham Road Baptist Church, which then merged with St Mary's to become Norwich Central Baptist Church.

Peter was always open to new experiences and expanding his knowledge. He completed a BA Honours in economics and mathematics at UEA as well as a diploma in management studies. He used his positions of responsibility to benefit others; he was heavily involved in setting up the Norwich night shelter to house people experiencing homelessness. He was involved in the 'down to earth' mission with Eric Delve, setting up a property on Rose Lane to use for evangelism to introduce young people to Jesus.

Peter's daughter Ginnie said: "Dad was passionate about exposing people to different things. If there was a new Christian conference or camp we would go – we went to Greenbelt the first or second year it ran, and to Spring Harvest right from the start.

"He was always showing us that God was bigger than what happened inside a church. Mum and Dad loved hosting and they shared their house with everyone and anyone. We always had people staying."

In 1988, Peter retired from his position in the police and took up an unpaid role as the Eastern European link for Christian charity Saltmine, where he set up orphanages in Russia, Albania and Bulgaria. Peter led many mission trips to Bulgarian orphanages throughout the 1990s to offer support and encouragement to the staff and children.

The desire to nurture the faith of young people was a passion for Peter. He became a qualified youth leader and was on the board of British Youth for Christ and Norwich Youth For Christ. Peter, along with Wendy, actively supported young people in the church, running the TROGs (The Rather Older Group) while at Dereham Road Baptist Church. He was also Chair of Trustees of YMCA Norfolk during the leadership of John Drake.

Another of Peter's achievements was to be the founder and driving force behind the very successful Good News for Norwich & Norfolk newspaper project back in 1992, along with editor Keith Morris. It has since published over 100 editions over 32 years, printing around 2 million copies.

Editor, Keith Morris, said: "Peter was the rock on which the Good News was first established and then flourished over some 22 years. It simply would not have been possible to continue over all that time, and reach that many people with so many stories from a vibrant Christian community, without his efforts. For that I and the rest of the team and readers are forever grateful."

A thanksgiving service for Peter Barnes was held at Norwich Central Baptist Church, on September 23.

Kevin Cobbold Funeral Services

Christian Funeral Directors
Family owned

109 Cromer Road, Norwich,
NR6 6XW
www.cobboldfunerals.co.uk
Tel: 01603 528800



Chance to have charity donation doubled



■ Norfolk-based drugs, alcohol and mental health recovery charity, the Matthew Project, is getting ready for this year's Big Give Christmas Challenge and is aiming to raise £60k during the campaign week from December 3 to December 10.

The funding generated through the Big Give Christmas Challenge will go towards The Matthew Project, Next Steps Recovery Support Centre, which is at the heart of the support the Matthew Project provides.

Charity CEO, Rachel Chapman, said: "Next Steps is the only centre in Norfolk dedicated to providing a unique space for adults in recovery from substance misuse to access specialist support, help and guidance. Alongside this we deliver peer led groups, 1:1 support, parent groups, affected others support and positive activities for children, young people, and veterans. Outreach support services are provided across Norfolk and Suffolk."

You can help the Matthew Project in two ways:

1. Donate

During the campaign week (Tuesday, December 3, 12pm to Tuesday, December 10, 12pm), every donation made will be doubled. Would you consider donating and helping to make a difference this Christmas to so many vulnerable children, young people, and adults in our communities.

2. Share the campaign

In just one week The Matthew Project plans to raise £60k and need help in spreading the word. Please follow The Matthew Project on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn and share the posts they put out about the campaign. Please also consider sharing the web link with friends, family, and contacts via email, What's App and Text Message.

Rachel said: "The more support the campaign receives the more successful The Matthew Project will be in securing the vital funds needed. Please consider how you could support us this Christmas time."

■ Visit matthewproject.org to donate and to find out more



Stories of hop



CEO Rachel Chapman (right) with Matthew Project co-founder Margaret Farley at the anniversary celebrations.

Norfolk-based drugs, alcohol and mental health recovery charity **the Matthew Project** (TMP) celebrated its 40th anniversary in September, and it has created a '40 Stories' exhibition to showcase the real stories behind four decades of life-changing work. **Keith Morris** reports.

■ Charity CEO Rachel Chapman said: "Over the course of 2024 we have been reflecting on our work over 40 years and what it means to have been working with people struggling with drug, alcohol and mental health issues across Norfolk. What we want to share is the impact of our work on some of the most stigmatized and disadvantaged people in our community.

"So, we chose 40 stories; stories of the people we have supported, stories of staff, trustees and of volunteers but all of them stories of hope. Bringing this collection of stories together has been a humbling experience. There are so many stories of lives transformed."

The 40 Stories exhibition has been giving the public a chance to journey around TMP's Recovery Support Hub in Norwich, reading and reflecting on over 40 different stories in different formats – from written and visual, to audio and video. From past and present programme members, to volunteers, supporters and family members – this is a chance to hear from them all, in their own words. The exhibition is now looking for churches across Norfolk to host it for a few days each.

To enquire, please contact Gemma Ames, gemma.ames@matthewproject.org

Norwich artist **Sarah** suffered with addiction and bad mental health until she had a life-changing encounter with the Matthew Project. This is her story.

I have suffered with addiction and bad mental health all of my adult life. It's made me lose jobs, have unhealthy attachments, and crippling self-esteem. I also had undiagnosed ADHD, which caused more impulsivity. As a women, this put me in vulnerable situations where some traumatic experiences happened.

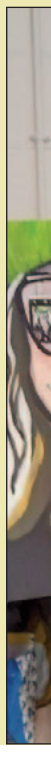
"I felt lost and was given various medications. I tried different agencies for support, yet nothing helped. Why am I not getting it? What is wrong with me? Am I too damaged? This can't be all my life is.

"Just before lockdown during Covid, I got very unwell. I was having panic attacks and felt physically unwell, so my support worker suggested going to the Matthew Project.

"I did the recovery course, and finally started to see that my problem was with my thinking. I had to restructure my entire belief system. I grew more in those couple of months than I had in two decades. It wasn't only the recovery course, it was the 'family-feel' and a safe environment. I felt heard and understood.

"As part of the course, we had an art session which reignited my passion for art. I kept going to the art drop-ins, which then led me to apply for the role of a volunteer art facilitator. I have been doing this for over a year now, and I absolutely love it. I truly believe that creativity helps with mental health. My intention is to apply for art school. I am totally self-taught and my art I would definitely define as pop art and a hint of realism."

"If I hadn't engaged with The Matthew Project, I wouldn't be on this journey. It sounds cliche, but it really was life-changing," said Sarah.



e over 40 years

Navy veteran **Martin** lost his family because of an alcohol addiction which ended with him being thrown out of his home, attempting suicide and being placed in a hospice and given just two days to live. Thanks in part to the Matthew Project's Outside the Wire project he lived to now tell his story.



Veteran Martin. www.matthewproject.org/40-stories

Martin served in the Royal Navy in various locations across the world.

"In 2010, various events in my life led to me drinking heavily. I began to get very depressed and my drinking spiralled. I lost all respect for myself both as a man and as a husband. I tried Alcoholics Anonymous and also the Alcohol and Drug Awareness Council, but nothing worked. My wife tried to make me stop. My youngest daughter disowned me as a lost cause. I don't blame her.

"In October 2012, my wife and her mother decided that I should leave our home. I had a nervous breakdown. I had lots of time off work and was eventually dismissed. I was being sick frequently and suffering terrible paranoia. I was living in a horrible bedsit which didn't help so my drinking increased further.

"It was at this point that I attempted suicide. I didn't want to kill myself, I just wanted somebody to help me. My strength had gone, to the extent that I struggled to stand up and had become largely incontinent. In June 2014, I was taken into a hospice for end-of-life care. My liver failed and I was put into a medical coma for six weeks. My family were told there was no more that they could do, so they woke me up for my daughters to have their last hug with me. They discharged me with two days to live.

"Somehow, I survived, so I started giving myself small tasks as I had to keep mentally active. I also started to take small steps in my room. Over the following weeks I pushed myself as far as it was possible through pain, heartache and many tears but I wouldn't give up. Then one day in December 2014 I decided to leave my room and venture to the other end of the building. Four months later I played a full round of golf (very badly) but I made it all the way round.

"A year later, I moved out of the care home and began my recovery journey. It had many ups and downs, but I knew I had to stay off the drink or I would die. I took up meditation which was extremely useful. I rediscovered the determination that had been missing for so long and began to engage with everything that was available, including veteran support service, Outside The Wire, from the Matthew Project.

"My veteran support worker Justin became really important to me and I studied over 150 online courses during lockdown. This led to me getting volunteering positions with local organisations, ranging from being an appropriate adult for West Norfolk Police to becoming a mentor to young people with addiction issues.

"I have to say, as I write this, that I have never in my life been as strong both mentally and emotionally as I am now. I believe that I have a great future in front of me with my support network through Outside The Wire. The other veterans have become so important to me. There are still dark times, but with what I have learned I can get through things, knowing that I have people to speak with if I need to."



Artist Sarah.

Gorleston youth minister learns how to be patient

South African youth worker **Gabi Groenewald-Simmons** has started work as a Youth Minister for **Identity Youth Project** in Gorleston, after finally receiving a work visa. **Anna Heydon** reports.

■ Gabi was appointed over a year ago and the long wait came about as a result of difficulties getting her visa sorted to come over from South Africa to work in the UK. Having completed a theological course in Bristol, Gabi felt called to stay in England.

Gabi began exploring job options in the UK, but it was only when the job with Identity Youth Project came up that she really felt convinced that she had found the right one. She reports that her now-husband James had recognised a fresh excitement in her when she came out of the interview for the role.

Gabi says: "One of the things that really stood out was that it wasn't just one church. When I was back working with youth in South Africa, I always wanted the churches to do something together and we could only ever do one thing with one other church every year and that was it. No one else was really interested and so I really loved the idea of being in an environment where the churches have partnered together in the past and so it's not a new thing for them to partner together."

Getting a visa for Gabi wasn't straightforward for Identity, and a 13-month wait ensued. "It's a weird way to live," explains Gabi, "because any day you can get news that changes your life in a month from now. But at the same time, I think it teaches you to live in the present: you can't plan months ahead, because you just don't know." She describes having to trust God for the future as becoming a necessity for her. She says she came to a place of: "trusting God in all the situations and trusting that even if it fell apart, it would be OK because He's got me."

Gabi finally arrived in the UK in September and started work for Identity in October as their full-time Youth Minister supporting and uniting churches across Gorleston and beyond in reaching young people for Christ.

Gabi is eager to begin relationships in the area. "I'm looking forward to engaging with the youth that are around and getting a feel for where they're at. I guess also just their general sense about God and His involvement in their lives."

She is particularly excited about getting involved with some small group work in the area: "just being able to hold that space for people to open up, I think, is just really, really nice."

Anna Price, Chair of Trustees for Identity Youth Project says: "We are so thankful to the Lord for his timing in this long-awaited appointment. Gabi brings a great deal of experience, alongside her theological training, to the role and we pray she will be a source of encouragement to our local churches as we endeavour to reach young people for Christ. We trust she will be warmly welcomed by the fantastic Christian community in Norfolk."

Gabi and Anna encourage anyone who is interested in getting involved with Identity, either as a young person wanting to grow in faith, or an adult wanting to partner with the project, to get in touch via info@identityyouth.co.uk



New youth minister Gabi Groenewald-Simmons.

Green Pastures Christian Bookshop, based in mid-Norfolk, is developing its offering across the region by providing pop-up shops where the service is needed. Regular stalls are already operating in Bury St Edmunds and King's Lynn, with a new one about to start in Norwich. **Tony Rothe** reports.



The two Green Pastures managers, (L-R) Irene Humphrey and Helen Cockburn, with trustee and volunteer Peter Andrews.

Dereham Christian bookshop branches out with pop-up shops

Can you help the Good News reach its readers?

Volunteer distributors

are needed to deliver this paper to churches across Norfolk.
We particularly need distributors in all parts of Greater Norwich and in Wymondham.
You need access to a car and the time to spend a couple of hours, three times a year, delivering paper bundles.
For more information please email alan.lusher@live.co.uk or ring 07743 926884

Green Pastures in Dereham is one of the very few Christian bookshops left in East Anglia. Its Dereham shop stocks Christian books, Bibles, Bible notes, and many resource materials for Christian ministry, church life and personal use, in addition to gifts and cards for most occasions. They are a registered charity, run by an interdenominational Christian Trust, that is committed to providing churches, schools, individuals and groups with the best in resources, books, gifts and stationery, as well as a Christian support service.

Chairman of trustees, Lance Birks, said: "We have been trading in Dereham for over 20 years, building on the vision of others before us. Our aim is to be a welcoming, inclusive presence in the centre of the town and a valuable resource to individuals, churches, and Christian groups in the region.

"We stock a comprehensive range of Christian books and Bibles for children, youth and adults, Bible reading notes and Sunday school materials. We also stock a range of beautiful cards and gifts suitable for general use and all the Christian celebrations. We are committed to serving the Christian community in Norfolk and Suffolk."

For some time, Green Pastures has offered to provide staffed bookstalls - 'pop-up shops' – with Bibles, books, cards and gifts etc, at events hosted by churches and groups in Norfolk and Suffolk. They already operate a pop-up shop on the first Wednesday of every month at St Mary's Church in Bury St Edmunds, and on the third Wednesday of the month at King's Lynn Baptist Church.

The latest venture is at the Salvation Army Citadel in Norwich, which will run on the last Thursday of every month starting on January 30, 2025. There will be a special Christmas stall on Thursday November 28, between 10am and 2pm, so that visitors can come along and buy some Christmas presents. Catherine's Coffee Lounge will also be open serving home-made cakes and hot meals.

Lance explained: "When invited by churches, groups or special events, we bring a selection of Bibles, books, gifts, cards and other relevant items from our Dereham shop to set up and staff a display at the venue. Customers can view, order and purchase products, and if the book or product you want is not in stock, we can order it in for collection or post on to you, usually within a few days.

"Our aim is to be a Christian presence across Norfolk and Suffolk, but we are there partly to publicise our main shop in the heart of Dereham and with the closure of the Revelation Christian Resource Centre in Norwich, we will be almost the last Christian bookshop remaining in Norfolk and Suffolk."

Back in 2022, Green Pastures won a national award for providing boxes of Christian books to 21 local schools through grants from the Speaking Volumes charity. Green Pastures processed the highest number of these grants in the UK in 2022.

The Green Pastures shop is on Norwich Street, a short walk off the High Street, and is part of the Green Pastures Community Hub, adjoining Dereham Baptist Church. The Hub also contains the community fridge, Love Dereham, and the local CAP branch. There is plenty of free parking nearby. It is managed by Irene Humphrey and Helen Cockburn, along with a team of friendly volunteers.

Helen said: "People tell us that as they enter Green Pastures, they feel a sense of peace – we hope so! We try to put books and gifts in the window which have messages of love and encouragement, as well as quotes from the Bible to help people and to make them think as they walk past."

The shop is open from 9.30am – 4pm Monday to Friday and from 10am to 4pm on Saturday. The staff are always ready to help customers with enquiries in the shop or over the phone (01362 697953). The bookshop also sells and redeems National Book Tokens.

For more details about Green Pastures, visit greenpasturesdereham.org.uk

CARDS N THINGS EST. 1984
Independent specialist card shop and Thornton's stockist
Follow us on @cardsnthingsnorwich
193 Reepham Road, Hellesdon, Norwich NR6 5NZ
01603 485832 www.cardsnthings.co.uk #shoplocal
Dogs welcome
Free parking

Tears as Madeline bids farewell to Norwich church

St Stephen's Norwich was packed for the farewell service of **Rev Madeline Light** on Sunday October 20, after 15 years as its first ever female vicar. **Eldred Willey** reports.

The service encapsulated so much of what the church has become over Madeline's 15-year tenure: music, colour, celebration, bustle, feasting, encounters between friends and strangers, laughter and not a few tears. Joy and woe were woven together as the congregation paid their parting tributes.

Madeline preached "what would have been my first sermon if I started again". It focussed on two things which have come to mean much to her – the Word and the Light.

First, the Bible, which she held on the flat of her hand and presented as "full of riddles, about the physical and the unseen… but ones to be solved, not to bring confusion". And then, as she lifted forward a standard lamp complete with dimmer switch – the light, so easily dimmed by our disobedience, or by the swirl of evil around us, yet still able to painfully illuminate our true selves or to burst through chronic depression in a conquering flash, as it had done in the final hours of her father's life.

"If I had my time again," Madeline had said previously, "I would be clearer about Jesus. As a child in a convent school, I could talk easily about him, but as I got older, I became self-conscious. It's so easy to lose the simplicity of faith."

The tributes which followed recalled dramatic moments: how the church building had split from bottom to top with a great bang on the afternoon of her installation, turning her from resident priest to leader of a band of exiles, which doubled in number while she completed a £1.5m building project; then her return as an "incredibly generous, outward-looking risk taker" to create an entrepreneurial mission to the homeless and friendless, the convicted and addicted of the city.

So what was Madeline's vision when she first came to St Stephen's 15 years ago? "It was no different here as it would be anywhere else," she said. "It was to bring people to faith. It's crucial for people to believe in Jesus and to know the love of the Father."

Into that standard-colour bringing people to faith, however, Madeline mixed a strong tint of including people in need, which grew out of the experiences of her own family, and particularly the way in which her father became disabled through polio.

"Through Dad's sickness my parents became destitute," she said. "But Christians from different churches helped them spiritually, psychologically and physically. They were able to move across the world, from New Zealand to England, and to establish a home of their own."

Madeline determined to offer that same generous care at St Stephen's, and one of her first decisions was to have a flat floor so that the building was accessible to people with a physical disability. About the same time, she reopened a café which "made it inevitable that people in need would come in looking for food".

Becky Ward came back from missionary work in Brazil just as St Stephen's was reopening its café. "She had the poor people of the favella in mind, was a trained caterer, and wanted to give food to people who had no money," explained Madeline. "We enabled that."

As well as providing warm hospitality, St Stephen's soon developed the reputation of being a 'vicar factory', with an extraordinary number going on to ordained ministry. One stimulus was her visionary decision to appoint a worker for youth when there were none in the church, an initiative which attracted young adults. About half of those who have gone on to train as vicars have been in their late twenties or early thirties.

Spiritually St Stephen's became not just a place of sending but also of sanctuary. "We've had a lot of people who have had difficult experiences in other churches and needed a place to recover. Some have recovered and moved on, and some have recovered and stayed. We've welcomed some people from very different church backgrounds and have never tried to resolve differences. People simply accept each other and look after each other."

Madeline can say without hesitation that for her St Stephen's is a dream fulfilled: "Everything is in place now for the congregation to grow more."

Ian Fifield, who will be leading St Stephen's in its next chapter, sought a faculty to erect a plaque to Madeline in the church, but had to acknowledge one interconvertible obstacle: she is not dead yet. So he has placed the plaque under an Indian Bean tree outside: "Much loved by all, she inspired us to be the church we are today: open doors, open hands, open heart."

Emotion broke through as Madeline blessed the congregation for the last time as vicar, and as the congregation in turn sang the blessing song over her while she walked from the altar down the aisle.

And evoking the camper van in which Madeline and Paul Light will be departing from Norwich, we join Ian to say: "May the road rise to meet you, and the wind be always at your back."



Retiring: Rev Madeline Light.



BRIGHT QUALITY PLUMBING

No job too small
One year warranty on all work
Available weekends and evenings
Repairs and upgrades undertaken
Free estimates. No extra call-out charge
Handyman services also available

Please phone Greg Bright
Home: 01603 479216 Mobile: 07814182940

Charity stalwart gives the cred

Rollesby village stalwart **Glenda Tooke** has raised an incredible £150,000 for charitable causes – receiving a British Empire Medal for her efforts – but gives all the credit to the God she has followed her whole life. **Anna Heydon** reports.

Glenda is known in and beyond the small village of Rollesby, north of Great Yarmouth, for her fundraising ability. This is hardly surprising as she has managed to raise over £150,000 for charitable causes over her lifetime, and received a BEM as a result.

It was a passion which started from necessity, as she explains that she grew up belonging to a small Methodist chapel in the village, where fundraising was essential to keep the church going. In the early days of running coffee mornings at her house she used to raise around £70. Thirty years later she was still going and raising over £2,000 each time. Over the years she has raised money in many different ways, but remembers her Christmas tree festivals most fondly. Glenda amassed a collection which grew to around 1,700 Christmas trees, which came out every other December for the enjoyment of the community and to raise money for good causes.

However, Glenda's contribution to the community goes beyond raising money. In a deep sense her life seems bound up with the life of the village. She uses the farmland which has been in her family for generations to bless the local community in various ways, including allowing land to be used as a local woodland area, and organising metal-detecting visits. During their metal-detecting hunts, they have uncovered various treasures including an Austrian shilling from 1700, a Scottish sixpence from 1600 and a sword pommel from 1400 which was in the shape of an animal, which were put on display at a local exhibition.

Glenda also continues the family tradition, initiated by her grandfather, of giving every child in the local school an orange at Christmas time. Although she has offered to replace the fruit with money, there has been a strong desire to maintain the original custom.

Glenda's profound association with the village of Rollesby is less surprising when considering her family history. Her family have lived in the same village for seven generations, and the most recent five generations have lived in the same house. Glenda has followed in the footsteps of both her grandfather and father in serving as a parish councillor for decades. She reports that she has occasionally been described as being "parochial" but for her having deep roots in the area is precious: "people know me… people trust me" she explains.

However Glenda's family history isn't the only reason for her community efforts. She attributes the primary motivation for what she does to her faith. She says that she can't remember a time when she wasn't a Christian, and that it is an "in-built" part of who she is. She jokes that "if they cut me in half, it would be half Methodism and half Rollesby." All seven generations of her family attended the Methodist church in Rollesby until it closed in 2001. But for Glenda her faith is about far more than a particular church, and so she immediately established herself in another church nearby and continues to help the Methodist circuit. "The people are the church" she explains.

Although she was awarded a



Rollesby stalwart and charity fund-raiser Glenda Tooke.

Norwich homeless drop in centre m

If anyone has slept rough in Norwich in the last 25 years it is very likely that they will have benefited from the Salvation Army run 'Arc', which is celebrating its anniversary this year. **Helen Baldry** reports.

The Arc is a drop-in service located on Pottergate in Norwich for people sleeping rough. Men and women over the age of 16 can get a hot meal, a cup of tea, have a shower, use the laundry facilities, and above all receive a warm, genuine and non-judgmental welcome.

The Arc – which stands for Advice and Refreshment Centre has remained true to its vision first conceived in 1999 when Salvation Army officer Barry Willson imagined a place where rough sleepers' needs could be met not just in a basic way, but from a holistic point of view involving other agencies and referrals.

In the late 90s, an elderly church member called Edna used to serve sandwiches and tea from the Citadel to rough sleepers. It grew too big – a long line used to form all the way down St Giles for the soup and sandwiches from Edna. This problem, linked with Barry's desire to do more for people, started off the Arc, which was established in the building on Pottergate, owned by the Quakers.

Funded by the Salvation Army centrally, the Arc maintains a strong link with the local Salvation Army on St Giles, where volunteers prepare home-made sandwiches a couple of times a week. Service manager Nikki Darkins works with a committed team, which includes Salvation Army Chaplain Debbie Pearson.

When a person comes to the Arc, they receive a genuine, warm welcome. There is never any judgment, simply the desire to help. Nikki said, "All they have to do is give us a nickname. They don't have to give us any more information if they don't want to. I think that's another reason why they like it here because they don't have to keep telling their story over and over again. A lot of the staff have been here a long time, so they know them anyway. We are that consistency for people, that familiar face. One of the nice things someone said was 'I was told to come here because they never forget your name'."

Nikki has worked at the Arc for ten years. In the last six years over 3,000 individuals have used the service. She said, "We might see people once for five minutes, others have been coming for 25 years on and off." While the warm welcome has never changed, Nikki has noticed the needs of the clients changing over time, often due to poor mental health.

"Nothing compares to the numbers and needs we see now. People used to come in because they were hungry. People aren't hungry in Norwich any more. Food isn't an issue. They need support. They need good friends and good people around them."

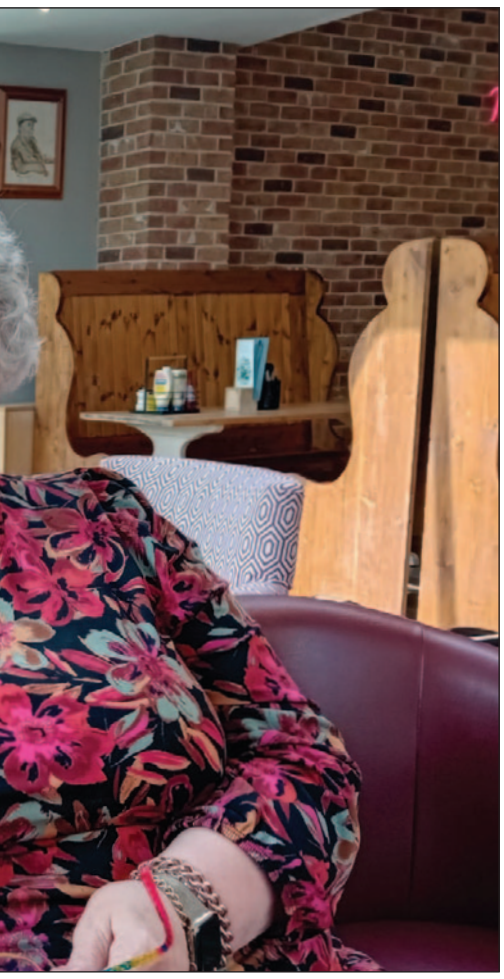
Some of the challenges people face used to be addressed by social services, but this isn't the case any longer as they don't meet the threshold to receive care. The team are also seeing a huge increase in the number of refugees who arrive at the Arc. Nikki said, "One of the challenges is managing the expectations of everyone and allowing this to be a welcoming space for everybody. There are certainly challenges when there are language barriers, but it's been lovely to see clients translating for each other."

There's no such thing as a typical day at the Arc, because anyone can buzz on the doorbell with a variety of needs, which means the space can become chaotic and unpredictable at times. Nikki says there is a rhythm to the day, with people sleeping rough coming in first at 8am so they get a quiet hour before others drop in from 9am. They might play pool, make phone calls and talk to the support workers. People of all faiths come to the Arc and Chaplain Debbie is available to pray with people if they wish. She said, "It's more about being a positive presence and being positive to people, smiling at them, asking how they and offering hope. It's what Jesus would do."

The team can see anything from 40 people a day to 120 a day.

The Arc has stayed true to the original vision. Over the years, it has become a base for several services, some of which have since developed and moved offsite, such as NHS services. Currently professionals from Pathways, Employment Plus, the Big Issue, Nourish, Shelter, CGL, Mental Health Team and Social Services use the Arc to support clients and offer

it all to God



BEM in 2017 for her efforts, Glenda is very clear that she doesn't want to take any glory for what she has achieved: "My mother used to say, 'don't say anything about yourself, just talk about God.'"

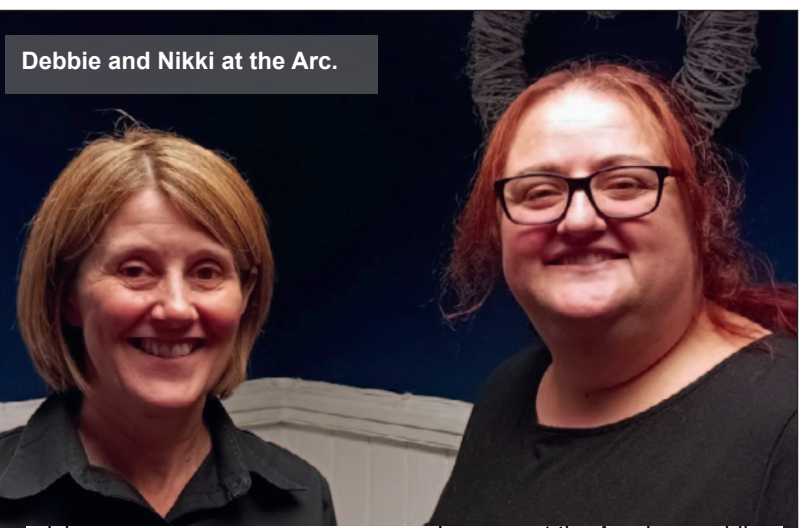
She is humble about her own giftings saying "I wouldn't preach a sermon, and I'm no good at theology… I failed English literature twice at O level."

However she recognises that she has other gifts which have allowed her to serve God: as well as her obvious fundraising skills, she has also sung in church and in choirs, has been a treasurer for six organisations, leads services and extensively practises her skills of generosity and hospitality.

Glenda cannot talk about her fundraising success without mentioning all the people who have helped her along the way, in particular her daughter who used to help her with running the games, and her husband, who she explains has filled and emptied hundreds of cars to support the events she has organised.

When asked what she would like her legacy in Rollesby to be, Glenda says that she would like to be remembered for having done the best she could, and refers to her favourite verse in the Bible: "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

arks 25 years



Debbie and Nikki at the Arc.

advice.

The Arc has formed a good relationship with the Salvation Army charity shop on Lower Goat Lane, just a stone's throw away. They give out clothing vouchers and help people to choose the items they are in need of.

Nikki would like to extend her thanks to all the local churches who support the Arc, by providing financial donations, Harvest donations and food. All are welcome to celebrate the anniversary of a service that offers consistent kindness, endless chances and genuine friendship.

Donate to the work of the Arc online at www.justgiving.com /fundraising/PottergateARC

Norfolk missionaries in war-torn Myanmar

Andrew Goodman was a Dereham-based quarry manager before sensing the call to become a missionary to the Shan people in Thailand almost 30 years ago. He is now the Field Director of the **OMF Myanmar** Team, but is currently back in the UK with his wife **Shona** on furlough. He has updated Good News on his work in that war-torn country.



Norfolk missionaries Andrew and Shona Goodman.

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him.' Lamentations 3.23.

The familiar passage above is used by Christians the world over to bring encouragement. It was written at a desperate time in Israel's history.

One war that is ongoing but that has dropped out of the headlines is in Myanmar (Burma). This past year has been particularly difficult. Millions of people have been displaced and families have been torn apart. Hopelessness, depression and trauma fill people's lives. There is so much to lament, and many have learned that to lament and cry out to God is, in itself, an act of faith. God sees all and his Spirit is active.

Some 29 years ago, Shona and I left Norfolk to serve God in Thailand amongst an unreached people group called the Shan. The Shan are a bit like the Kurds in that they have a strong sense of identity and a rich culture, but they don't have their own country. Instead, they are spread across Shan State of Myanmar and spill over into South-West China and North Thailand.

Over that 29 years we have seen God at work in many ways. In the past few months, the situation in Myanmar has deteriorated, and in June larger scale evacuations took place.

Recently a friend wrote, "We finally, after weeks of not knowing if they are still alive, got a report back from the church members in the village on the edge of Lashio. (A city the size of Norwich in the Northern Shan State of Myanmar.)

This young guy, who has been part of pastoring a church, went back to Lashio to see if he could get to them and bring them food. The trip and city situation were terrible, but he was bubbling over with joy at the state of the believers there. Everyone was safe, God had provided food and, he said, 'it's like their faith has multiplied.'

They continued to meet for worship, prayer, and outreach even when bombs were falling all around. One couple ended up sheltering in a home that was cut off from the rest of the group by a checkpoint. So, they started sharing with family and friends. Now there's a new group of 13 people meeting for worship regularly and wanting to become a church! Praise the Lord for protecting and sustaining them physically and spirituality.

Prayer pointers

■ Pray for the civil war in Myanmar to cease and for a "good" peace.

■ Millions of people have been displaced to neighbouring Thailand. Pray that they will be safe there and that they will find faith in Jesus.

■ The drug trade is booming. Myanmar is now the world's number one producer of opium and methamphetamines. Pray that light would shine in the darkness and that there would be a harvest for the Lord.

OMF groups in Dereham, Cromer and Heacham currently support us, and I'd be glad to speak with other people who are interested in doing so. In terms of prayer, I'd like to praise God for the way He has been softening the hearts of the Shan, and I would ask people to pray for the ongoing work of the Spirit and the maturing of the Shan leaders. Our heart is to see a movement among the Shan – that salvation would spring up among them.

You can contact Andrew Goodman on aungsa@yahoo.com

Transform young lives *this Christmas*



Scan here to donate

Find out more at www.ymcanorfolk.org





BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

21ST, 22ND, 23RD, 24TH DECEMBER

£17.50 PER PERSON

Includes soft play, all-you-can-eat breakfast, and a visit and gift from Santa for the kids

SCAN TO BOOK





Join us for Christmas Lunch

2 COURSES FOR £15
ADD ANOTHER COURSE FOR £2

Available 12pm-2pm on weekdays from 2nd-20th December 2024

YMCA Norfolk, 61a Aylsham Road,
Norwich, NR2 3HF

Register charity no. 801606

YMCA

Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you