

LifeNews

Issue number 13 2017



JustOne

— with J. John —

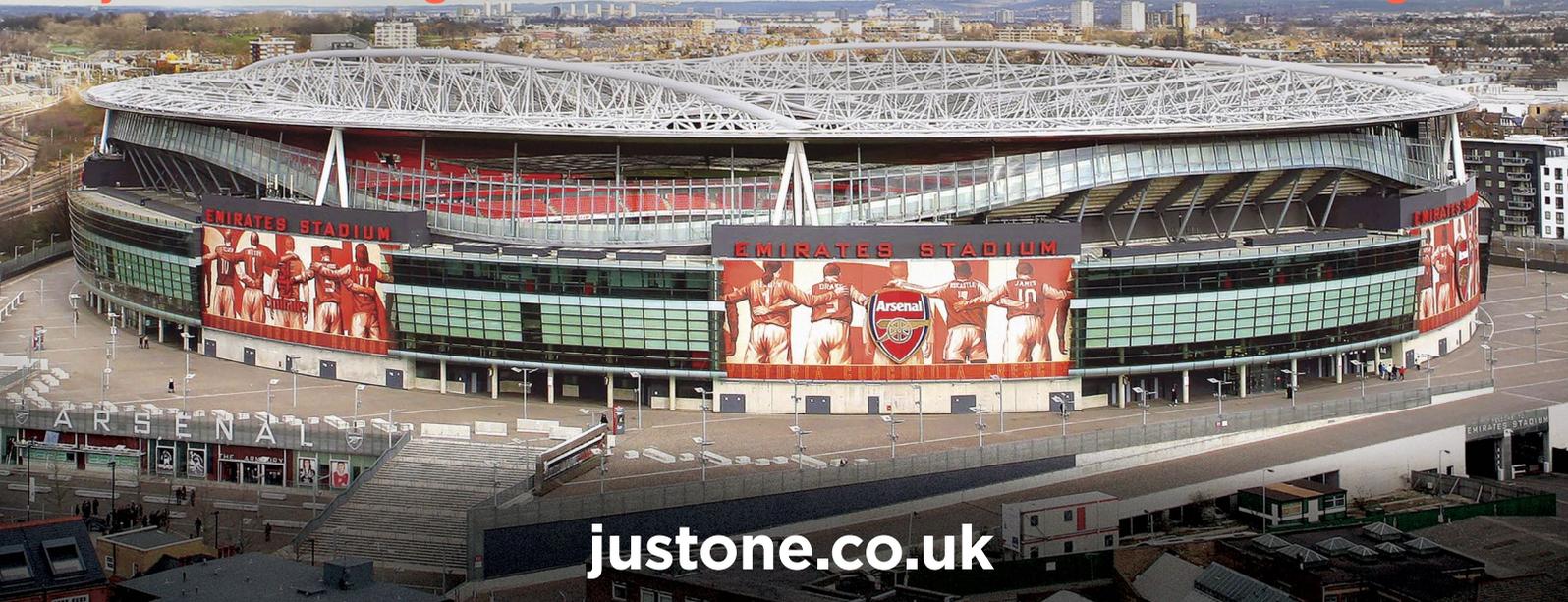
at Emirates Stadium

Saturday 8th July 2017

We shall be running coaches from River of Life Church. To book tickets and transport at £25 per person, visit our website www.riveroflifechurch.net, contact the Church Office on 01394 273700 or email to mail@riveroflifechurch.net

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RIVER OF LIFE CHURCH

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Terry & Juanita Baker
(Emeritus Pastors)
Sean Englefield (Assistant Pastor)
David Cope (Elder)
Raj S.V (Prayer Team Leader)
John Goldring
(Eldership Co-ordinator)
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Full details available on
Church Notice Board

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Full details available on
Church Notice Board

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LifeNews

Editor: Richard Cornwell

**Member of the
Evangelical Alliance**

Reg Charity No:
1092998

River of Life Church meets at **10.30am every Sunday** at the Christian Life Centre, Carr Road, Felixstowe – everyone is welcome to come along and join the meeting for worship and fellowship together.

A **Prayer Meeting** takes place every Sunday morning at 10am before the start of the morning meeting at 10.30am. This is held in the meeting room – all welcome.

Usually every second and fourth Sunday evening a **Prayer Meeting** takes place in the coffee area of the Christian Life Centre – all welcome.

Prayer for healing is available every Sunday morning. Additionally three to four times a year in the evening a meeting specifically designed to pray for healing takes place.

Throughout the year Membership Courses take place entitled **Commit and Connect**. The **Word of Life Bible School** is held twice or three times per year.

Marriage Courses are available plus there is a **Finance Course**.

Life Groups function within the Church fellowship and they meet weekly for fellowship in people's homes.

There is a **Younger Church**, a **Creche**, a **Toddler Group** and **Stargazers Youth Club**.

Regular events take place for Men and for Women.

Large outreach events also take place on a regular basis in the Christian Life Centre and it is anticipated that some new initiatives will soon be launched which will encourage outreach, evangelism and fellowship.

Please check the River of Life Church website for full details – www.riveroflifechurch.net

Alternatively please phone the Church office on 01394 273700.

Do you know Jesus?

As you are reading this copy of **LifeNews**, if you do not know Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, simply pray the following prayer in faith and Jesus will come into your heart and be your Lord!

**“Heavenly Father, I come to you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Your Word says: ‘If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you will be saved.’ (Romans 10:9) Thank you Lord Jesus for dying on the cross, shedding your blood to set me free from the law of sin and death. I repent of my past life and want to live for you. Please fill me with your Holy Spirit to guide me, lead me and direct me for the rest of my earthly life.
I pray this in Jesus Name. Amen.”**

If you have prayed this prayer, please contact the Church Office and let them know you have decided to make the Lord Jesus your Lord and Saviour. Following this one of the Pastors will contact you as we would like to give you a Bible and literature to help you as you start upon your journey as a Christian.



Children singing at Christmas

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Statement of Doctrine

1. The Unity of the Godhead and the divine co-equality of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; the Sovereignty of God in creation, providence and redemption.
2. The true and proper Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ; His Virgin Birth: His real and perfect manhood; the authority of His teaching and the infallibility of all His utterances; His work of atonement for sinners of mankind by His vicarious sufferings, His death, His bodily resurrection and His ascension into Heaven; His present priestly intercession for His people.
3. The full inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; their authority and sufficiency as not only containing but being in themselves the Word of God; the reliability of the New Testament in its testimony to the character and authorship of the Old Testament; and the need of the teaching of the Holy Spirit to a true and spiritual understanding of the whole.
4. The reality of original sin in consequence of the fall and the necessity of regeneration.
5. The justification of the sinner solely by faith through the atoning merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
6. The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion and sanctification; also in ministry in worship and in the exercising of spiritual gifts through the body of believers.

A new chapter begins

Lead Pastor Trevor Harris looks back on a year of change and new developments and ahead to an exciting future for River of Life Church

Hello everyone and welcome to this Spring 2017 edition of **LifeNews**.

One of the things that is a continual blessing and challenge to me as a Christian is that God is constantly on the move. Psalm 121:4 says: “He who watches over Israel never slumbers nor sleeps”, meaning that God is never inactive or not doing anything. To put it in everyday language, “God is always on the go!” Indeed the Creator of our vast universe is also the maintainer of it, “sustaining all things by His powerful word...” the Bible says (Hebrews 1:3).

We can certainly identify with that at River of Life as we have seen a number of changes and developments in the life of our church Fellowship this past year.

At the end of 2015 we saw our beloved founding pastors, Terry and Juanita Baker, express their desire to ease up on their heavy workload of leading the church after 14 years from inception, and to ask the Leadership to nominate a new lead pastor to co-ordinate the vision and direction of the church for the foreseeable future. As a church, we place on record our gratitude to Pastors Terry and Juanita for their vision and energy and spiritual care throughout 14 years here at RoL. So much has been accomplished under their ministry and so many lives transformed by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which they have always faithfully proclaimed.

There would not be a River of Life Church without Terry and Juanita Baker.

“He who watches over Israel never slumbers nor sleeps”, meaning that God is never inactive or not doing anything

We are delighted that the Leadership has honoured each of them with the title of “Emeritus Pastor” and they continue in ministry and pastoral care amongst us – without the daily burden of administration that accompanied their former roles as senior pastors of the



Lead Pastor Trevor Harris

church. We wish them a long and happy “retirement” continuing to do what they have always done – sharing Jesus with everyone!

I was appointed as transitional Lead Pastor in January 2016 and it is an enormous privilege to lead River of Life for the foreseeable future.

As part of this restructuring, this year we have also seen the transition of our Leadership Team into Elders and Deacons, and into what we see as the New Testament model for the church. We have been grateful for the input and support of our apostolic link, Maurice Nightingale, in this regard.

To roll the new structure out to the church Fellowship, our theme for last year’s Family Fellowship Night in January was “Diversifying for Growth in 2016”, and given the changes and developments within the church which have occurred this year, I am thankful to God that He has enabled us to diversify for growth as we envisioned.

So many new spiritual initiatives have blossomed at River of Life this year. Our First Steps course for new Christians on Monday nights has been a resounding success with so many benefitting from the foundational course that it is, with the

for River of Life Church

added blessings of praising God powerfully together. Our Commit and Connect course for those contemplating church membership saw new members being added to the church. Always a great joy are our baptismal services throughout the year when we baptise new Christians by total immersion in water in exactly the same way as the first Christians did in the early Church. And then there is the 10-week Alpha Course, which we have just completed again last December, and what a joy to see people coming to know Christ through that ministry.

We have a brand new website which comprehensively tells the story of River of Life Church and its activities for the kingdom of God in our town. What we believe and what we seek to do for the glory of God. In many ways, the website is our “shop window” and we have seen so many comment on how helpful and informative it is to them.

This year we also saw our Entrance Foyer transformed into a “Coffee Foyer” with the old 1980s style welcome desk being removed and the whole area refurbished and redecorated in a contemporary style with new flooring, and café style tables and chairs. The work was largely completed by church members who rose to the challenge to sponsor a table or chair! What a fantastic response we had!

Below: Father’s Day

This year the church supported members’ visits to Ghana and India for Mission in addition to the many other mission outreaches and initiatives which River of Life supports on a monthly basis both at home and overseas.

As you leaf through the pages of this edition of **LifeNews** you will read of ordinary people who have been transformed by the power of the Gospel; of people who have come to a real and living faith in Jesus Christ; of testimonies of healing and deliverance; of dramatic changes in lifestyle and habits that go beyond the natural and into the supernatural – that only faith in God could have brought about. I hope you will be inspired by reading of the many instances of God’s love and power being revealed in this present day.

I should like to thank all those who are part of our spiritual family here at River of Life Church who have contributed to this edition of **LifeNews** and to all our members and friends who faithfully support the work and ministry of our church to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a needy world.

Let’s keep moving forward with God!
May God bless you all.

Trevor Harris
Lead Pastor





First Steps proves so much more than a course for new Christians

First Steps? Not really! Brian Oakley explains what an exciting new Christian development programme at River of Life Church is all about.

Where next when the Alpha course finishes? This was the question asked by guests of Alpha 2015; a question which didn't really have a clear answer. After some thought and research, a 15 week bible study course designed by John Robertshaw was adopted and adapted to satisfy a need in the church.

The first group study was expanded to include sessions on "Creation" and "The Fall" but Pastor Sean and Angela really built this into something much more exciting than a new Christian's development programme.

Sure, Robertshaw's book was used as a guide but guests bonded in a special way, interaction between guests and teachers flourished but even more special were the worship, praise and prayer periods which concluded each meeting. Sometimes it seemed like the Holy Spirit filled the whole space, magnifying voices tenfold as praises were lifted up to Jesus. Monday became a night to look forward to each week; although the teachings addressed basic Christian topics, so much additional interest was added by way of video, current events and discussion content.

The course title, First Steps for Everyone, doesn't really convey the purpose of the study; this is a course which any Christian at any level of maturity could enjoy. We all need to grow in our faith but it's also great to revisit basic teachings and ask questions in a friendly environment without the fear of embarrassment and enjoy the support of Christian fellowship.

First Steps for Everyone is now run throughout the summer months starting 7pm each Monday night with free tea/coffee and biscuits followed by two hours of uplifting interchange.

Pastor Sean & his wife Angela lead the course helped by Brian & Del whenever support is needed. The sessions are open to everyone, we especially welcome visitors who may be with us in Felixstowe for holiday, business or just passing through. See the website for more details and sign-up form.

“ The course title, First Steps for Everyone, doesn't really convey the purpose of the study; this is a course which any Christian at any level of maturity could enjoy

One man, one guitar, one drum... it must be Godfrey

By Ray Harvey

On the evening Friday October 22, 2016, we joined together for a Unity Worship event held at River Of Life Church. Our guest for the evening was international worship leader Godfrey Birtill, his second visit to River of Life Church, and as the headline suggests that's all that he brought with him - himself, his guitar and a drum - along with the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

We had a fantastic time of praise and worship and an atmosphere of joy and thankfulness where people were invited to come up close to Godfrey so he could minister to needs in word and song. People took up that offer and soon there were groups of worshipers dancing together in unity to a Spirit-filled chorus in time with a rhythm.

Godfrey was anxious to let us know that indeed we were loved by God and not forgotten in whatever situation we found ourselves in, and encouraged us to sing and know from one of the lyrics penned by Godfrey, "I am not disappointed in you" and "I think you're amazing".

People came to the event from all places and nations including a man who purposely travelled from Denmark to speak to Godfrey that evening, knowing we were holding the event.

Below: Godfrey Birtill



This man who had been suffering from mental health issues and through listening to Godfrey with his ministry of music was now free of that and personally met Godfrey and they were able to spend some time together prior to the meeting over coffee.

“Godfrey was anxious to let us know that indeed we were loved by God and not forgotten in whatever situation we found ourselves

The man thanked Godfrey and he gave a draft of his life story and they were both very encouraged.

We had an invitation at the end for people to come forward to share, and several people came forward to say how the night had helped them in their own situations.

The great news is that Godfrey wants to return next year, Praise God!

Unity Worship

Daughters connecting in a variety of ways to share together God's goodness and love

Eunice Mayhew reflects on an exciting year for Daughters Connect, the Women's Ministry at River of Life Church.

God is our Father and that makes us his daughters ... and He delights in us.

Throughout the year we connect in various ways: on Sundays, midweek, having a cup of coffee with a friend or taking the time to listen, encourage and support when someone is in need. At various times in the year we have events where we connect by sharing food, being creative, dancing, watching inspirational DVDs, or listening to women who have a story to tell.

This year an event was held where we invited younger daughters. It was great to include them, they are the future of the Church and the more mature amongst us have a responsibility to nurture and mentor them. We can learn so much from them; their ideas are fresh and enable us to stay connected and relevant.



Dance workshop

We had a festive and fun evening. It was a relaxed and joyful time with much laughter and tasty food. It was a beautiful summer evening and we shared delicious food and chatted. We then watched a Joyce Meyer DVD which was powerful, encouraging us to think about the kind of influence we were having and the power of maintaining a positive attitude.

Past ... Present ... Future ... we are all daughters, we're all on life's journey

A dance movement workshop with Debbie Watkins-Jones. This workshop was all about the joy of our own personal praise in dance. Just as God delights in our singing praise to Him, we are set free to dance for Him – just for Him. He is our audience of one in these moments. We do not have to be trained or taught specific movements...we all have a dancer in us.

We may all wish we could do some things over again. We may wish we knew then what we know now. Yet the reason we



Summer Supper at Great Bealings

are who we are, where we are now is because of the journey we have been on. Some of the parts were lovely and some tough – but we get here from there. There may be things we'd love to change about our story but God is in all of our stories. We are surrounded by grace and we can learn, begin again each day.

We can remember but not dwell – we can step forward and become daughters we are meant to be. Our temptation may be to look back with regret but God's eyes see clearly and they are filled with mercy.

A group of ladies met for a dance and movement workshop. What a lovely time we all had, full of laughter and fun. After warming up Debbie asked us to quietly work on our own to fill in a questionnaire to produce our personal set of words. We were encouraged to use those words to create movements and a dance for the Lord.

“ We then shared our dance with each other. The Holy Spirit was with us and we were blessed. Angela Englefield

From Rebecca, aged 11, Angela's daughter: I hope Debbie does another one so we are able to feel the Lord's presence again.



Right: Summer Supper at Great Bealings



Special offering for Emergency Food Store

Helping the needy in our Felixstowe community with two food ministries

Pete Howe writes about two projects at River of Life to serve people facing tough times.

Emergency Food Store

Our Emergency Food Store is run by volunteers; we seek to serve in whatever way we can.

We find that the need is getting greater. More phone calls from the homeless at Genesis Housing requesting bags of food mainly, and toiletries.

Most people housed in supported housing units turn up there with a few belongings in a plastic bag. They may have to wait up to six weeks before they receive financial help.

As well as food we help them with other items like TV sets, bicycles, garden tools, and cutlery and kitchenware.

We have been able to collect and deliver 200 litres of paint.



This has helped some of the residents get motivated to paint their rooms, or on one occasion decorate the entrance stairs to their flats.

Some of this paint has also helped Level 2, the youth project in town.

Bread Run

On a Thursday we collect fresh bread from a local bakery – this is shared with mainly three homes. As one is not overseen by staff, so we cannot gain access with the bread.

This regular delivery is enabling us to have more contact with the residents. They know our faces and are becoming more engaging with us.

We are always so grateful to our church family who give regularly to our emergency food store; several times a year as a church we make donations to the food store, which helps boost our stocks.

Along with this, as a church, we donate up to £150 on food to restock our food store. This comes from our regular church giving.

It is very rewarding to be part of this great mission to the needy.

Matthew 25 v35 "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink."



Bread Run

A place to bring friends, chat, unwind and relax

By Pete Howe

Change can be exciting or shattering. Oh, I liked the look before, oh dear, that colour etc.

When I worked for IKEA back in the late mid 90s the designers would show me the room colours and I may say ‘Oh, I don’t like that colour, or ‘That’s not the right place for the door’.

We have created a new area – to make our church entrance look warm and inviting and friendly. Some have said: “We have a coffee area.” My dream is that we use this area to reach people that do not come through our doors at this moment.

A place to relax and chat, a place to bring friends for a chat, and to unwind and relax.



We are reaching more people from the sheltered housing units we visit; we would like them to feel free to come in for a coffee, and a chat.

It’s time to think outside the box, a time to make our church building a place where people are comfortable mid-week as well as on a Sunday.

My experience is these new ideas take time; we have to stay focused, to not lose sight of our goal, in reaching and extending a hand to people around us.

They may be lonely-sad, have no hope in life, or simply would love a coffee. We are here for people, and to share God’s love in practice, too.

We would like to say a big thank you, to all those who generously sponsored tables and chairs. Also to all the volunteers who gave time to work on the painting and refurbishment.

Festive appeal brings Christmas spirit to the homeless of our town

Each year we ask our church family to contribute to our homeless, by giving small gifts.

We contact the homes to find out the amount of male and female residents living in each home at the end of that year. We are now gifting to five homes, as of a few weeks ago. We were asked to support a new home. This houses 12 young people aged from 16 to 24.

One home we support has a few mothers and babies living there, so we are able to give gifts for the babies, as well as the mums.

This year we were able to give 61 gifts in all, which has been amazing – thank you all for giving so generously to this need.

We wish you all could see their faces as they receive your gifts: they feel loved and cared for. Some find it hard to say very much, but we know it means a lot to them.

Picture: Christmas Tree Appeal



An adventure under African skies

Matt Chenery visits Ghana to work with the charity Fihankra.

Crocodiles, giant insects, fried chicken, and making a difference to the lives of homeless children are a few of the special memories Matt Chenery shared after an eight-day trip to Ghana, West Africa, earlier this year.

Matt went as part of a larger team of eight people, travelling around in a mini-bus, visiting New Tafo, Koforidua and Accra, supporting Christian activities in partnership with local churches. The activities included roadside church services, crusades, visiting people living rough, praying and witnessing to people on the streets, showing films, and teaching in a school.

As far as life experiences go, travelling to Ghana to support a project aiming to help homeless children was a unique one. Matt smiles as he describes his experiences of typical church services in Africa: "The Ghanaians don't do quiet in their church services. They play vibrant worship music and the preacher doesn't hold back even though his voice is coming through six ft speakers! But the congregation love it – moving to the music and really getting into the spirit of worship. I couldn't believe it when I saw babies were strapped to their mothers, asleep through all the noise! If they stirred, they simply looked around and then went back to sleep. Amazing!"

Culturally, the team got to experience first-hand the many different communities that make up the population of Ghana. Meeting with both Christian and Muslim communities through street projects was a real privilege, especially witnessing the responses when handing out food and clothing parcels to local people. Matt explained: "We had to listen to conversations and presentations in Ghanaian, Twi (a regional language spoken by about seven million people!) and English. People were so welcoming in every community we visited."

The trip was made under the aegis of a charity called Fihankra. The charity has been gifted 23 acres of land near New Tafo, Ghana, specifically to develop a village consisting of foster homes, resources and facilities for children that want to leave their life of living rough on the streets of large cities like Accra and Kumasi. With the support of local

Digging foundations
at Fihankra village



Matt with school children

churches and builders, the land is gradually being cleared and developed to provide long term accommodation, remedial schooling and social infrastructure for the children who would otherwise be trying to survive on their own. Some time was spent during the trip supporting the building work, helping to create the foundations for new buildings that will become homes for children.

The trip wasn't all work, as the team experienced local markets, as well as tourist areas such as the Kakum National Park and Cape Coast towards the end of the trip, where they trekked along a Canopy Walk through the rain forest and visited a slave castle. Accommodation varied a lot by location, but the final hotel had crocodiles wandering in the grounds.

Reflecting on his African Adventure, Matt said: "We were grateful for the hospitality of local people and to experience local culture, food and communities first hand. I have to say though, I was really glad when we found a KFC in Accra! We

were served by amazing people with the best names – Knowledge and Wisdom."

If you would like further information about the charity Fihankra and its work please visit www.fihankra.org



God is good and forever faithful ...as we handed over our finances to Him

Baras and Caroline Mast-Ingle share a testimony of tithing and God's love

Back in 2013, a failed business venture resulted in us not only losing our life savings, but also getting into tremendous debt. The substance of a man is measured by the faith found in his heart, and we are not proud to say, that we didn't measure up as well as we thought we would!

Thankfully we had been attending River of Life Fellowship on our periodic visits to Felixstowe, so had the great pleasure of becoming acquainted with Pastors Terry and Juanita. It was during this extremely difficult time in our lives, that we sought counsel from them.

Not only did they stand in agreement with us in prayer, but they also helped us with the practicalities of financial plan-



Baras and Caroline Mast-Ingle

“He truly is the redeemer; the one who crowned us with loving kindness and tender mercies.

ning – budgeting, debt repayment – and of course, the importance of being consis-

tent with our tithes and offerings. It was a God moment!

Within a fairly short period of time, we were able to pay off the banking institutions (interest free), financially support family members and sponsor ministry events. Even on the job front, doors of opportunity opened up. He truly is the redeemer; the one who crowned us with loving kindness and tender mercies. He satisfied our mouths with good things.

The following really helped bring re-alignment to our lives and deliver us from the snare of debt. We trust they will bless you too...

- **Get alone with God** – each and every day. If it means that you “just pitch up” in the beginning, then do it! Before long, this will become your very special time alone with Him; a time where He recharges and equips you for the mandate at hand. Plug in! (Isaiah 55:6)
- **Forgive one another** – unconditionally! Often, over time, hurts and failures of the past stop us up and block the blessing of God to overflow into our lives. We encourage you to confess your sins to one another that you may be healed (James 5:16). Protect your heart at all times and take responsibility for the debt.
- **Get into agreement** – especially about money. It's a trust issue that needs to be bridged! Can two walk together unless they agree (Amos 3:3) and remember where there is unity, God commands His blessing (Psalm 133:1-3). This is applicable to your giving as well. Declare God's Word over your finances together.

- **Be a cheerful giver** – an intentional act with a grateful heart (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). “Giving” obviously includes the likes of hospitality and time, but doesn't remove the act of financial giving (tithes and offerings). Something supernatural takes place in the heavenlies when you do so. Physical and spiritual loopholes are blocked through this simple act of worship alone.
- **Start budgeting** – as a family! Do this on a monthly basis and work towards becoming debt free. If you don't have the cash for that “something special”, then save up until you do. Make a decision not to get into debt (cut up that credit card if you have to). Put your trust out there onto Him for He is the supplier of all your needs; your security in the wilderness. We need to remind ourselves that one of the attributes of our God is Jehovah-Jireh (all-providing One); a God of more than enough.

It's amazing what can be achieved when you come together and stand on His ever faithful Word. We are still being overwhelmed by His goodness! How great is our God!



Alpha's message for all of mankind: God Loves You

By Brian and Del Oakley

Alpha 2016 brought a completely new and refreshing "Film Series" of videos having a global perspective but still carrying a very clear message, "God Loves You", throughout each weekly session. This message so frequently becomes lost in our busy lives with so many responsibilities, pressures and demands on our time but can be so comforting in times of need. Thankfully, during 2016 there were many willing to take the time to learn about Jesus Christ and to receive His love which is so freely available to us all.

Alpha is a lovely way to understand the basics of the Christian faith; Nicky Gumbel, Vicar of Holy Trinity Brompton Church, and for many years the leader of the Alpha movement from his London base, has taken the experience to new heights with this new series of creative and informative videos. The setting is no longer a church background but a much friendlier global viewpoint, so fitting for God's church, which is growing so quickly within Asia and Africa.

This year we also came to know Nicky's wife, Pippa, much better. She played a far greater role in the presentations, as did the famous adventurer Bear Grylls, stepping out in faith to declare and profess his love of Jesus Christ. It's so encouraging to hear testimonies from others and we were blessed to hear of so many whose lives have been turned around for the better through Alpha. And yet, we often find it difficult to declare our own faith, to speak out to others as the Holy Spirit prompts our hearts.

I don't know whether it's the changing environment in the world in which we live, a fear of upsetting others, perhaps

personal rejection, or just a concern about being politically correct. For some reason Christians often withdraw from witnessing to others. And so it was earlier this year, with only three weeks to go before the start of a new Alpha season we were without a single guest enrolled! But God reminded us that prayer is powerful; as Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 22, "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." The church prayed and the guests came... we give glory to the Lord.

We are thankful for all those who played their part in making Alpha 2016 so successful in bringing people to Christ and encouraging others to be bold in His name. To the leaders and helpers thanks for your patience and thoughtfulness in guiding group discussions; to the catering team, thanks for serving so willingly and diligently throughout the season and, this year, we give a very special thanks to a praying church who made such a difference.

We can all be thankful for the blessings which our God bestows upon us and our families in this broken world; to know Him is the reason we exist and, thanks in part to Alpha, many more have come to know him during this past year. We can confidently spread the word that God loves us!

“It's so encouraging to hear testimonies from others and we were blessed to hear of so many whose lives have been turned around for the better through Alpha

Emeritus Pastor Juanita Baker looks back at an evening with Canon J John at the Christian Life Centre - and forward to this year's JustOne event at the Emirates Stadium in London.

The name Felixstowe when translated means "Happy/Blessed Place". "Felix" is the Roman Latin for "Happy" and "Stowe" the Anglo-Saxon for "Place" and what a blessed place Felixstowe is to relax away from the rigours of everyday life in the summer time.

This year Felixstowe enjoyed a beautiful, warm, sunny, summer season but on Friday, 16 September, the rain came in torrents. This did not dampen the enthusiasm of people that evening to take the opportunity to come and hear international evangelist Canon J. John. People came with enthusiasm, excitement and expectancy. Christian and non-Christian sat enthralled as the motivational Christian speaker J. John taught with an emphasis on how to share our faith with other people.

Firstly he shared his own faith with great humour and expertise encouraging those who did not know Christ to open their hearts and allow the Lord to touch them His humour, storytelling and integrity stimulated people to really listen and take notice. He encouraged people to take a step of faith to the Lord which many did.

As the evening progressed J. John then proceeded to teach and instruct on how to reconnect imaginatively with people of the twenty first century. We need to take Jesus command seriously when told in the Bible to "Go" to Jerusalem, Samaria and the ends of the world. "Go" means "go" and our Jerusalem means our family, our friends, our neighbours, our work colleagues and the people we meet on a daily basis.

He re-emphasised that a missionary is not someone who crosses the sea but a missionary is someone who sees the cross. He was encouraging all of us to think outside of our



Get Connected



Canon J John

own four walls – to lift the roof off our thinking to get people to Jesus. In the Gospels four friends actually lifted the roof off a house to get a paralysed man down to Jesus for healing. There was no other way as the crowds were so great. These four men genuinely cared for the paralysed man whom Jesus then proceeded to heal.

J. John's humour and skill at making us laugh was always followed by a nugget of valuable information to aid each one of us reach the lost. We were told that we need to live by three principles – the practice of praying, caring and sharing our faith with others. We must be intentional with our prayers for the lost and we must take an interest in people with genuine caring attitudes. People do not

care how much we as individuals know until we show them how much we care. Evangelism will not always be convenient for us so we need to watch our own attitudes. We all live busy lives but we live in a world of miracles and mystery and our God can handle everything. We do not have to understand all things but we must be faithful and available for the Lord. Each person who loves the Lord is a carrier of the Presence of Jesus.

We were challenged on our expectancy levels - do we truly expect and anticipate great things from God? Soul searching issues for each one of us. We were encouraged to leave fears behind us and see the bigger picture.

“We need to take Jesus’ command seriously when told in the Bible to “Go” to Jerusalem, Samaria and the ends of the world





Concert raises £800 for work of Bible Society



By Linda Tuffs, secretary of the Felixstowe Action Group of the Bible Society.

Our church hosted the major fundraising event of the year for the Felixstowe Action Group of Bible Society on 13 May 2016 when over 300 people were entertained by 70 talented musicians during the evening.

Our Chairman, Rev. John Andrews welcomed the audience along with the new Mayor Jan Garfield and her Consort, her husband Jon, as well as the retiring Mayor Doreen Savage.

Roger Jones conducted the orchestra, which played music from the Shows and light classics. The orchestra was supported by the choir, Tutti Frutti, who sang a range of songs under the direction of Chandra Grover. Cold drinks and biscuits were served during the interval with thanks to the River of Life refreshment team.



The Action Group are very thankful to all from the church who gave their time and talents with the result that almost £800 was raised at the retiring collection providing Bibles in other languages for men, women and children, in Austria especially. As a group of fundraisers we are most grateful to all at River of Life for their help and support as well as all who attended and gave so generously to the work of The Bible Society and of course to the wonderful Community Light Orchestra who made the evening such a great success.

An opportunity to invite family, friends and neighbours to discover the Good News of Jesus

... From page 16 ... J. John then shared about an exciting new venture planned for the UK - "JustOne" to be held at the Emirates Stadium, the home of the Arsenal Football Club. This event will be on Saturday 8th July 2017. It is "Just One Day with Just One Message and Just One Invitation" River of Life Church is one of the partner churches with J. John and the Philo Trust for this venture and it promises to be a fruitful time for the Lord.

Who are we going to invite to come to the Emirates Stadium on 8 July, 2017? Let's seize the opportunity now to reach



people to invite. Natural friendship evangelism works!

Churches will have the opportunity on 8 July to invite family, friends and neighbours to the

Emirates Stadium to discover the Good News of Jesus Christ in a truly inspiring way with J. John. Coaches will be going up to the Emirates Stadium from Felixstowe that day and it will be a time of welcoming new believers into the Kingdom of God whilst others reaffirm their faith in the Lord.

We were encouraged to get ready for harvest by praying, caring and sharing and inviting people to join us on 8 July, 2017. As a partner church we need to be preparing with training and resources Friday, 16 September was certainly a training and motivational evening. What blessings we received.

Already wonderful fruit has come from J. John's visit in that two of our young people gave their lives to the Lord that evening and have since been baptised. We give all the praise and glory to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We serve an awesome God.

From Manor End to Peppa Pig World . . .

One little girl's dream comes true

Jonathan Laker reports

Skye Biggs is beautiful and full of smiles, only five years old but in her short life Skye has been through open heart surgery, brain surgery and two strokes. Despite the odds stacked against her she has battled through every minute of every hour and spent a lot of her short time in hospital.

Skye unfortunately is terminally ill, there is no cure and doctors have told the family that the next seizure will or could be her last.

Skye didn't want the world, just to go to Peppa Pig World and a tablet on which to watch Peppa Pig. Skye's mum Lana is a single parent living in Felixstowe without transport and gets little help and no respite as she has no idea when she might lose her. Inevitably, this means that Skye's older sister and two brothers very often have to take a back seat in the family and are not able to go out much as a family as Skye is permanently on oxygen and her skin burns up very quickly as a result.

I set out to make Skye's dream come true and set up a Just Giving page as I knew I only had to tell her story and people would respond.

With the help of Felixstowe Volunteer Coast Patrol Rescue Service, I organised up a charity boat pull and we pulled a 8.5metre, 2,700kg rescue boat and Land Rover from Manor End to Cobbold's Point, raising money to help make this possible for Skye.

We soon raised the money and more to realise Skye's dream and lots of other nice things for the other children to have, including their first family holiday in Great Yarmouth.

My home church, River of Life Church was very supportive and took up a special collection for Skye. The response was fantastic and I should like to thank everyone for their kindness and generosity in contributing.

Last August, Skye realised her dream of going to Peppa Pig World and it was a wonderful two days in the presence of a truly special little girl who was mesmerised when we entered the park because this was the world she loved to be in. I wished I could have left her there because she was so happy. She could have spent the rest of her life eating ice cream and sweets in a world and characters she knows all about.



Skye

So a Big Peppa Pig Thank You to every one who donated money and gifts to this little girl they didn't even know to make her one dream come true, something I will cherish forever ...

For the full story see –
www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/Skyesbigdayout

Below left: The charity boat pull.
Below: Lana, Jonathan Laker and Skye



Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Ministry

What goes in the box is fun . . . what comes out is eternal

By Sally Verow

Once again River of Life Church has supported this ministry. In September a special collection raised over £500 enabling the Church to fill 70 boxes, individuals filled another 315 and 19 boxes arrived from us being a drop off point. A record number of 404 boxes left the centre on November 24, the start of a long journey across Europe - probably to Romania.

Since 1993 more than 124 million children in 150 countries have been blessed with the gift of a shoebox. These children have very little or even nothing, often have endured unimaginable hardships we cannot begin to understand.

Fun toys, teddies, dolls, cars, toiletries, stationary, balls, hats, gloves - bring a huge smile to their faces. Everyday things our children have and take for granted. These simple gifts packed with love and prayers deliver hope and joy to hurting children.



The OCC shoeboxes being collected



OCC shoeboxes ready for collection

Isaiah 52 v10b: "All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

Since 2010 more than 3.1 million children have completed *THE GREATEST JOURNEY*, a follow-up 12 lesson discipleship program developed especially for these children. The good news of Jesus Christ is shared by trained local Christians. Since 2010 over 2.1 million children have become believers enabling them to witness to their families and in turn their communities. New churches have been built. What an evangelistic strategy!

Communities transformed with the love of Jesus Christ, surely GOD'S GREATEST GIFT. By filling a shoebox you are helping fulfil the Great Commission. Matthew 28 v19: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations."

A huge thank you to all who either gave money and /or filled a shoebox.

Now please pray for the child who received your box, that through your gift they may know GOD LOVES THEM and someone cared enough to send them a box.

“The good news of Jesus Christ is shared by trained local Christians

God can take our offerings and change lives. Through a simple shoebox our God is able to change the life of the person who shops and fills the box, checks and processes the box, transports and hands out the box and not forgetting the child who receives the box. So please give again in 2017. If you have never filled a box I pray you will consider it.

Happy shopping! Be blessed and be a blessing to one of our world's needy children.

Matthew 25 v40 Jesus says: "I tell you the truth ,whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

Q&A

When I prayed, I felt there was an answer

Anita, married to Tsitsie, moved to the UK from Ghana about 10 years ago. She was raised as a Catholic, going to Mass before school very Wednesday and church on Sundays, praying to the Virgin Mary and going to confession. As a 17-year-old she began to question why she was having to pray through Mary and started going to other churches with friends.

Here she is in discussion with Pastor Trevor:

Trevor: So it was the fact that you started going to other churches, different type of service and different type of teaching?

Anita: When the music is playing, they are jumping and singing, praising the Lord and the first thing I thought was...I just went into a kind of shock. A friend of mine invited me to a church called The Christian Restoration Centre, CRC, It was very close to my house and that was the very first time that I saw 'praising God', people were worshiping God in tears and everything.

T: So you felt that their worship was heartfelt and real? and it was different to what you had experienced in the Catholic Church? Did you feel it was different because the Catholic Church was formal and cold and matter-of-fact whereas this new experience you were witnessing, these other Christians and these other Churches were somehow dynamic and living and real?

A: Yes, I think that is what I felt. That was the big difference. After going to that church, the next Sunday when I went to the 8am Mass, which I could not miss because my Dad made me go, I still went with my friend to church because that started at 10.30am. After going there three times I started asking myself loads of questions. Why do I have to pray through Mary, the Mother of God? Why do I have to ask Mary to ask God to forgive me my sins?

T: So in a theological way, you started to question the mediatorship of Mary? Why she had to be a mediator between you and God? So when did Jesus come into this, in your thinking? That He was less important than Mary?



A: Well if they are putting Mary first, then where is God? He is the creator of the universe. He created the world, He brought light into the world, He breathed into us and brought life, where is He? And why are we praying through Mary. If I want something from my Dad, I go straight to him, I don't go through my Mum! If I want to talk to my Father, I think that I should be able to talk to God straight away. Another childish thought was, what if Mary doesn't tell God, where do I stand? That is what I questioned and the questions when on and on and on and on. I was feeling lost. I was feeling sad. I was feeling left out. I'm in this church where we do everything the same. When I come on a Sunday I know what I am supposed to say, I know what I am supposed to do, I know when they are giving the Communion or the recitals.

T: Right....so what happened, there came a day when something happened?

A: About 6 months after I started going, I stopped the choir at the Catholic Church – it was a big blast! People were wondering 'Why have you stopped the choir?' 'Why are you not coming again?' My Dad asked me loads of times why I had stopped.

T: And had you made a public commitment to Christ by then?

A: No, I hadn't made a public commitment then.

T: But you felt that your heart was opening and you were becoming more enlightened.

A: Yes, and I was reading the Bible more.

T: So the Holy Spirit was doing a work wasn't He?

A: Yes, I was a stronger Christian, I was hearing the teaching, I was jotting down, I was going back home, I was reading it, I was adding it to my life, I felt that I was leading a good life, that I am on the right process, I felt that burdens were being lifted off me. When I prayed, I felt that there was an answer, even if it is not a very good answer, I felt that there will be an answer. I had a feeling that I was 'in the spirit'.

T: But you didn't understand much about the Holy Spirit?

A: No, it was when I got baptised that I really began to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in my life.

T: So you made a commitment and you got baptised.

A: I did make a public declaration, I'm going to be a Christian, my life was changed and I was going to be a real Christian not just someone who attended a church.

T: And how did you feel that night when you made that commitment? Was it emotional, did you feel emotional, like it had touched you, tell me how you felt?

A: After the public declaration, I felt something sweet in my spirit, and I felt something telling me that I was on the right path now and everything was going to be OK. I wasn't very well at the time and I felt better. I felt that God was healing me, I was in the healing process, God had not forgotten about me.

“When I got baptised I really began to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in my life

T: So you felt that God had become real to you.

A: Yes, and I felt that I am wonderfully and fearfully made – Psalm 139.

T: So you were baptised as an adult, under the water and back out again, signifying that you had died, the old life has gone when you

are under the water and then you rise out of the water, you were raised as a new life in Christ.

A: Yes, my new life had begun.

T: And we know that that is what baptism means, it's a public declaration of the ending of the old life and the beginning of the new. Well Anita, I would like to thank you very much for joining us today and telling us your story. God Bless you.

Never be afraid to speak up for God

By Maryann Byrne



On Thursday, 25 February, I discovered a

large growth extending out of the side of my lower abdomen. It was so large that it made my stomach look lopsided. I felt very frightened but carried on with the day, hoping it would disappear.

However after a few hours, I decided to contact the doctor and make an appointment. After that the thought crossed my mind to pray – however, instead I decided to look on the internet for information. As soon as I did this my internet went down. So I thought, OK is God wanting me to pray? So as I prayed I felt a sense of peace, my fear abated and I heard the words 'no weapon formed against you shall prosper'. I then felt a presence in the room followed by a feeling of energy, or a type of vibration which went from the top of my head through my body to my feet. The room also seemed brighter as if a light had been turned on. A short time after I re-examined myself and the growth had gone.

In that moment my mind went back to the November before when I had been referred to hospital to have tests for breast cancer. Again during this time I felt that God assured me during my prayer time that everything would be fine.

During one of the tests the consultant asked me if I was in denial as I was so upbeat, and even though I took my Bible with me and read it in between tests, I did not once give God the glory. Not to the ladies who were in the waiting room looking like they were about to receive bad news, not to the various consultants or nurses, I only said that I know I am going to be alright.

So the reason for my testimony today is this, please don't be embarrassed or afraid to speak up for God as I was, because He just might be using your experience to help someone in need, and bring them back to Him.



Amazing testimony and worship on a blessed night at the Christian Life Centre

By Dave Hunt

Since River Of Life started these events in 2015 we have successfully brought Godfrey Birtill, Noel Robinson and Martin Smith to Felixstowe.

Noel Robinson and his band came to River Of Life in March 2016 blessing us with his exuberant style of worship, who will forget the earth moving chorus from one of the singers with “Saviour he will move the mountains our God is mighty to save” and also the no-holds-barred testimony from Toni Kelly, telling the Church how her life has been changed from sickness and an addiction of drink and drugs to now being a successful Christian Radio DJ and motivational Speaker.

Since giving her life to Jesus Toni's life has completely been turned around and the future is looking very exciting indeed. I would personally like to thank Toni for being so open and honest on the night.

Toni also pointed to a lady from the audience and said “I don't know you but God brought you here tonight for a reason”. The lady in question came all the way from Yorkshire to see Noel Robinson! After the testimony Noel gave an option for the congregation to stand in that gap for friends, sons, daughters and relatives so there will be testimonies from others I am sure.

River Of Life was filled with numerous churches from the area all coming together as one for worship Noel and the band played songs from his award winning album “Outrageous Love”, and others like Rain, Mighty to Save, Freedom, and an awesome version of Great are You Lord by All Sons and Daughters.

The evening was a great success a night of worship and praise and Unity amongst our local churches with us all standing together to praise Jesus the King of Kings.



“ Toni also pointed to a lady from the audience and said: “I don't know you but God brought you here tonight for a reason.”





Centre is alive with praise and worship

By Dave Hunt

It was a special Unity Worship Event evening for all the churches in Felixstowe at River of Life on Friday 18 November when one international worship leader and a room full of history makers got together and turned our auditorium into one of God's Great Dance floors!

Martin Smith who was the front man for Delirious came to Felixstowe with his Worship Band. Martin, complete with sound and lighting, certainly set the River of Life alight with songs like *Rain Down*, *Song of Solomon*, *Back to the Start*, *Waiting Here For You*, *Safe In Your Arms*, and more.

Debbie Watkins-Jones from River of Life danced creatively to *Safe in your Arms* to celebrate and praise God for her healing from cancer. For me and many others this was a moving and very emotional moment to show the amazing healing power of Jesus today.

The whole night just seemed to be alive with praise and worship and such an amazing buzz with everybody. There was even one lady on crutches and she could not be stopped from worshipping. She said to me the crutches were not going to stop her and they didn't!

At the end of the night all the congregation cheered for one more song and Martin came back on stage and we ended with God's Great Dance Floor. I will never forget the image of the whole church bouncing together in unity and praise.

Well that was the last in our Unity events for 2016 and what a way to end!

I would personally like to thank everyone involved for all you hard work and the church leadership for their support. I wonder what God has in store for us in 2017?



Above: Martin Smith



Unity Worship

Over the last couple of years we have been holding Healing Gospel Meetings at the Church, roughly every quarter.

The meetings have been well attended, with a number of people coming from other churches and with non-Christians also coming along for prayer for healing.

We have advertised the meetings in the local press and have also had the opportunity to go on Felixstowe Radio and Radio Suffolk to talk about this ministry.

The meetings came about after the Street Outreach Team felt there was a need to have a place that we could invite people to come for prayer and for healing and also to hear the gospel of which includes the provision of physical healing. During his ministry on earth, Jesus trained his disciples to minister healing as they shared the Gospel (eg. Luke 10:8-9). We believe that this still applies today and Jesus' final instruction to his disciples was to "*make disciples of all nations... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...*" *Matthew 28:19-20*. One of Jesus' commands to his disciples was to heal the sick.

We have had some great testimonies from people who have come along and I would encourage you to bring along anyone you know who is in need of healing or who needs to hear the gospel.

The meetings are also an opportunity to learn together about what the Bible says about healing so that we can apply what it says for both our own benefit and for those who we come



A place for people to hear the gospel and be healed

By Outreach Pastor David Cope

in contact with. We often show encouraging videos of healing testimonies or of people ministering healing during street outreach work.

Details of the next meeting appear on the Church website and we would love to have you join us.

Waiting list for church's successful Friday morning Toddler group

By Linda Tuffs

Our Friday morning Toddler Group is very well attended with up to 50 adults and over 60 children some weeks so we are operating a waiting list at the time of writing.

I am most grateful to Sue Harris as well as the rest of the team – Mary Alexander, Julie Lummis, Derek Palmer and Sean Englefield – for all their help during the year, especially

when I visit my family in Australia; thanks also to all who make cakes when I am away, I know the adults appreciate homemade ones. Thanks also to Anita in the church office for updating our register periodically and printing out extra invitations to church events for our group.

You will see from the team photo we are a friendly and approachable bunch so do come and chat to us and if you have any prayer requests and we shall be happy to include

them in our personal daily prayer times, in the strictest confidence, of course. This year I have tried to make the craft a little easier for our tots, which obviously means it will not take so long. If there is a particular toy you would like me to purchase I shall be happy to discuss this with you and also hope to replace our well worn toy kitchens soon.

Again I take this opportunity to invite all who attend Toddlers to our Sunday morning services plus other church events held throughout the year and trust God will continue to bless our times spent together.



Toddler Group Team

God wants us all to have a 'different spirit' - are we up for that challenge?

By Pete Howe

Once a year we check our accounts, that's if we are in business, or even more regularly once a month, or even as a household.

But do we take a spiritual stock of our lives; I mean an honest look at our spiritual growth?

I shared a word a few weeks ago, about reminding ourselves of that God moment in our lives. That moment when we heard His voice. You are my son, in whom I am well pleased. I remember the first time I heard this said over me!

Sometimes we don't see ourselves fit to be called sons, or daughters. We are very special to Him; we are very unique and are a chosen people.

The word I gave in 2012 was about God wanting to do a new thing. We say, oh yes, we want, that but new things come at a cost. We may like new things, but sometimes new cars, the colour we have put on the wall in our home take time to adjust to.

In the plan of God, new paths, new walks can carry pain even grief. When we left our last position in leadership we experienced a grief journey. Really is that possible? Yes we can grieve or want the familiar things.

I believe Father wants us to have a Caleb spirit, that "different spirit". This is a time to be saying 'Lord I want to serve you, to forget the former things, to say I want to stir up those gifts that you gave me.' The Apostle Paul said to Timothy to fan into flame the gifts, through the laying on of my hands.

How can I make a contribution to the purposes of God in my church?

We sing a song: "There must be more than this", there is! Our walk should always be changing and growing. We can think I have all I need. I am born again; I am filled with Holy



Spirit. We can receive more; in Acts 4 the disciples had another encounter with Holy Spirit. The place shook with the Holy Spirit's presence. Our journey in God is an every day journey, just as the Bible says "New every morning is His love to us".

People who know me say: 'Oh Pete, you are always referring to Holy Spirit'. As John Arnott says: "I am spoiled for anything less. Holy Spirit wants us to be hooked on Him, to worship Him to be lovers of Him. In John 4 Jesus said *"A time will come when true worshippers will worship in Spirit and in truth."*

“We may like new things, but sometimes new cars, the colour we have put on the wall in our home take time to adjust to

Our worship should be full of His presence, not a boring experience; some would say, 'I don't like singing songs over and over.' Songs are a tool to lead us into His presence, and help us engage with Him.

So this year what are we aiming for? Let's be determined to have that different spirit, to change our minds. To walk tall in Him. To sense the flow of His Holy Spirit when we meet together to worship Him.

We all know that being a Christian isn't just about attending Church on Sundays.

It's not about religion, it's about a personal relationship with Father God, Jesus and Holy Spirit. Prayer isn't just saying 'grace' at mealtimes or a quick 'help me Lord' in times of trouble, it's a constant conversation, talking and listening-communicating. Holy Spirit is

living in us and desiring to work through us, if we will allow.

The Bible isn't for leaving on the coffee table to collect dust during the week, we should be delving into it on a daily basis. It's full of heavenly nuggets that God wants to reveal to us. We have everything available to us to live a full and victorious life, the question is 'do we recognise it and do we live it?'

Here at River of Life we encourage the Church family to live the abundant life Jesus came to give (John 10:10) and a good way to do that is to 'get connected' during the week through attending a Life Group.

Life groups meet in homes and are a great way of connecting together in a relaxed environment. They give an

Life Groups help church get connected,



A day in the life of a Life Group

Summer time is a wonderful time of year; the light of day starts early and the evenings don't seem to be as dark, after the sun goes down it's still t-shirt weather and children are off school. Our Life Group is a wonderful mix of young families with older members which provides a rich tapestry. So as a Life Group we like to take advantage of the long Summer days, sun cream, ice-cream, helping children to use up all that energy they seem to have in abundance.

In the Summer months, Life Group tends to have a more social element with BBQ's, sandpits, also perhaps to the beach, and as we have not left the British Isles for warmer climes, copious amounts of cold Felixstowe sea "Brrr"!

However, the children love it and those of us who have some degree of sense and sensibility laugh along with the shrills and shrieks but with ourselves firmly planted in the deckchair!

I will mention one particular event recently which was a member's 70th birthday held on Sunday 21st August at her daughter's home! We had a fantastic day. As a Life Group we meet together on Tuesday evenings, yet on this special occasion we were invited to a family celebration with many others from our church family who enjoyed good fellowship and wonderful food.

It's hard to overdo good fellowship but we definitely have to be careful with all the lovely food or else waist-lines will expand!

The Lord has blessed us with joy, peace love and great fellowship at Life Group so we give Him praise for what He is doing in our midst.

opportunity to form friendships, worship together, delve into the Word together, pray together and 'do life' together and build each other up in our faith.

The Bible shows that, as well as meeting in the 'temple courts', both Jesus and the early Church made extensive use of small groups, often meeting in people's homes. These groups form the ideal

context for most of the day-to-day activity of Church life. He preached to a crowd in his house in Capernaum, healing a paralytic (Mark 2:1). He taught another crowd in somebody else's house (Mark 7:17). He requisitioned another person's guest room for the Passover meal (Mark 14:14).

If it worked for Jesus, then it's a good example for us to follow.

We currently have nine groups that meet from Tuesday to Thursday and we are looking to launch more throughout this coming year. Most groups meet in the evening and are based in Felixstowe and Ipswich and we have one currently running in the daytime. Here are a few snippets of what's been happening in life groups during the past year:

worship and delve into Word together



Pictures: Facing page - Top: Anita Chenery and Jackie Hopkins' Life Group's Christmas Dinner. Centre: Sean and Angela Englefield's Life Group celebrating Sue Edwards' special birthday. Bottom: Jennifer Monk and Ros Rudd's Life Group celebrating Ros' special birthday. This page - Above: Ivan and Pam's Life Group's Christmas Dinner. Below: Trevor Harris playing guitar and a birthday celebration cake.



'We pray for each other and take care of each other's needs'

Anita Chenery and Jackie Hopkins run a Life Group on Tuesday evenings for around 12 people. We meet in each others' homes and share fellowship in many different ways. We love to worship and encourage people to bring along their favourite choruses and worship songs and we also take turns in sharing the word of God.

We sometimes meet up with other Life Groups to fellowship together and encourage one another.

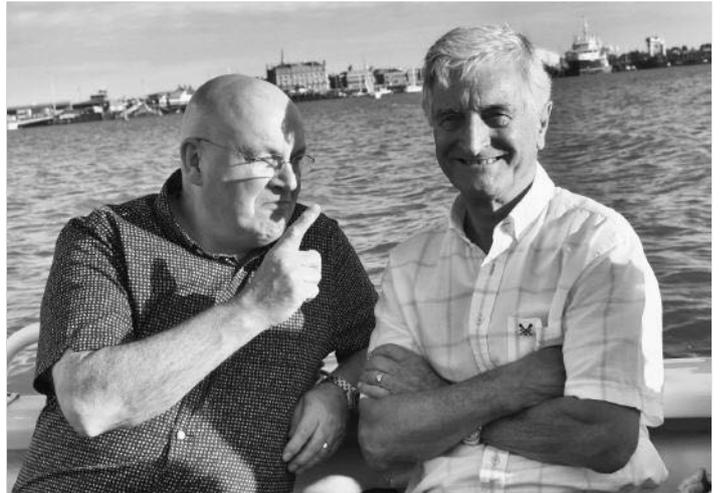
We arrange walks and fellowship meals at different venues which are always a great success. We have even been involved in organising a Church Quiz Night this year and take our turn in catering for the "Lunches for those on their own", which is held at the centre on the second Sunday of each month.

We have bonded together as a group and we pray for each other and take care of each other's needs. Our Life Group is full of fun, laughter and praise and worship to our Great God.

If you are interested in being part of a Life Group get in contact with our Life Group Overseer, Assistant Pastor Sean Englefield.

You can email: seanenglefield@riveroflifechurch.net or contact the Church Office on 01394 273700.

It's time to 'Get connected with the heartbeat of the Church'!



Messing about on the river with a meal to round off a wonderful evening of fellowship

By Mary Alexander

This year our Life Group decided that August would be a social month and it was my turn to organise something for us on the last Wednesday.

As I spend all of August living in a beach hut my thoughts naturally turned to the river and boats. I did a bit of research and found out that the Harwich Harbour Foot Ferry, owned by the very sociable Christian, can be hired in the evening, to cruise the Stour or the Orwell, once it has finished its scheduled runs.

I stepped out in faith and booked it and invited the church to join us. People were slow to book but three days before the trip I received an answer to prayer and finally had the required number to cover the cost.



On Wednesday, 31 August, 25 of us boarded the ferry at Shotley and went for a very enjoyable 90-

minute cruise on the Orwell. We were blessed with a beautiful warm, sunny evening with little wind and were able to get to Pin Mill and back in the allotted time. It was a lovely evening of fellowship with lots of chat and laughter. We ended the evening with a meal at the Bristol Arms.

The Orwell was chosen this time because the banks are closer and it was thought more could be seen but following the success of this trip I have been asked by several people to organise a trip on the Stour in 2017, so watch this space!



Pictures show Life Group boat trip up and down the River Orwell

A year of new beginnings, new chapters and new opportunities

By Anita Chenery

On New Year's Eve 2015 as I sat in the hospice at my Mum's bedside thinking back over 2015 and contemplating what 2016 could possibly hold, God spoke to me very clearly and said: "This coming year will be a year of new beginnings, new chapters and new opportunities. Embrace it and TRUST ME!" Things had to change, they couldn't continue as they were and in that moment I believe God was preparing me for what was to come.

1am New Year's Day my precious Mum passed from earth to heaven to be with Daddy God. My Mum, my best friend, had gone. What a start to the year, yet those words from my Heavenly Father mulled over in my head throughout the days that followed. Trust me!

My dad soon decided to put our family home on the market in Bury St Edmunds and we both assumed he would move to or near Felixstowe, but one email changed all of that and within a short space of time he was making plans to move to Lincolnshire, near my sister! Although gutted for him to be moving away, I had complete peace. I knew he has made the right decision and would be very happy.

“I gave it to God and trusted He would guide me.

Questions were then asked as to whether I would move up there, too? That was a big one. Should I move to be near family? Would a change help my eldest son, Ross in his recovery from

M.E.? He has been virtually housebound for three years and was not in a good place. Matt, my youngest was leaving school in June and this could be the right time to move before he started college. All of these were valid reasons to go but I knew if it was the right thing then God would have to make it very clear. He had called us to Felixstowe in 2008, to River of Life Church, so if He wanted us to move on, He was going to have to make it plain and make a way. I gave it to God and trusted He would guide me. God had already prepared the answer for me as I received a letter asking me to become a Deacon here at River of Life Church. Although I felt completely inadequate to take on such a position, I knew this was God confirming my place and keeping me rooted where He wanted me to be. I was able to make a decision to stay put and had peace that I was where I was



Anita Chenery

supposed to be, doing what I was supposed to be doing, in the Church God wanted me to be in.

Over the next few months, God got to work in many areas of my life to ensure that the new changes, chapters and opportunities He has promised would come to fruition. A financial situation which, to me, was impossible got completely turned on its head, securing me and my children's financial future. Alongside that, the opportunity arose, I was accepted and my position as Church Administrator became full-time from 1 June. This coincided with my Dad moving in with us whilst the house sale went through, Ross' health suddenly and dramatically improving and Matt taking his GCSE exams and leaving school! That was a lot of change in a very short period of time BUT none of it was bad. God was being faithful to His word and true to a His promises.

As I write this, Dad is about to move into his lodge in Lincolnshire, Matt is about to start college, Ross' health continues to improve and he is seeing that there is a bright and positive future ahead. I am growing in confidence by the day as I see God at work both in my life, in my family's lives and in the lives of my Church family at River of Life.

God declared this to be a year of new beginnings, new chapters and new opportunities. He is faithful and true and very much able to do more that we could ever ask or imagine. Let go and let God, He will NEVER let you down.

And finally, Mum, we miss you but know you are in heaven looking down and would be proud that we are embracing change. The best is yet to come (1 Corinthians 2:9).



412 launch; below, the group's logo

'By their fruits you shall know them' - rejuvenated River of Life youth group sets out on its mission

By Ian Hallwood

2016 saw the Surfers Youth Group have a complete makeover and change of purpose. The group were asked to create a new identity and needs that applied to today's youth, and themselves. Thus, the group called 412 was created.

Ephesians 4:11

And he gave some [to be] apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

Ephesians 4:12

For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:13

Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

All three verses interlink so we centred on 4:12 as that is the point where the ongoing work is learnt and put into action by God's people.

The fact that Peter was probably the oldest disciple at the time Jesus called them and the rest were probably very young men raised the question of how do we as a Church, make

disciples of Jesus from our young people?

So together with Trevor Harris and John Goldring, a meeting was held to discuss the way forward. During the build up to the launch of this group, the youth came up with a logo, an identity and a Charter to follow.

The Church blessed and supported the refurbishment of the room and special thanks go out to Angela Ashford, Jevan Watkins-Jones, and Jade Englefield for designing the back wall murals.

The 412 logo designed by Rebekah Englefield, and God is Greater than our ups and downs came from Matt Chenery. Anna Darznieks then drew a prophetic sign and gave an explanation of her drawing of the 412 door sign.

So in June the Group was launched with Pastor Trevor officially cutting the ribbon! This was followed up with a pizza) which the group really enjoyed.





Above: paintballing. Below: wall; and below, left: prophetic sign

We started to cover subjects to which the youth of the 412 wanted answers. Who is Jesus? What did He do? Who is God and the Holy Spirit? What is friendship? Why is orange jam called Marmalade? Who Am I in Christ? What is Communion? Why do I need to be baptised? Why is Matt's hair so shiny and well conditioned? How do I become a Christian? How does Sophia make such yummy cakes? How do we support one another? How do you receive the Holy Spirit?

There are many more subjects to cover, including Worship, What Jesus wants us to do re the Great Commission, Healing Prayer and the Power of Prayer. It is so exciting to see a youth with a hunger for the truth that will set them free indeed.

Within the group we have a wide variety of youth. Some are not Christians, some have been Christians a while. It was a privilege to see Reece lead Charlie to becoming a Christian during one of our morning sessions and also after the J John evening, Jade became a Christian.



We also baptised Reece and Jade, with more of the 412 to follow soon. God is preparing the youth and training them in the five fold ministries.

As part of their ongoing development we have

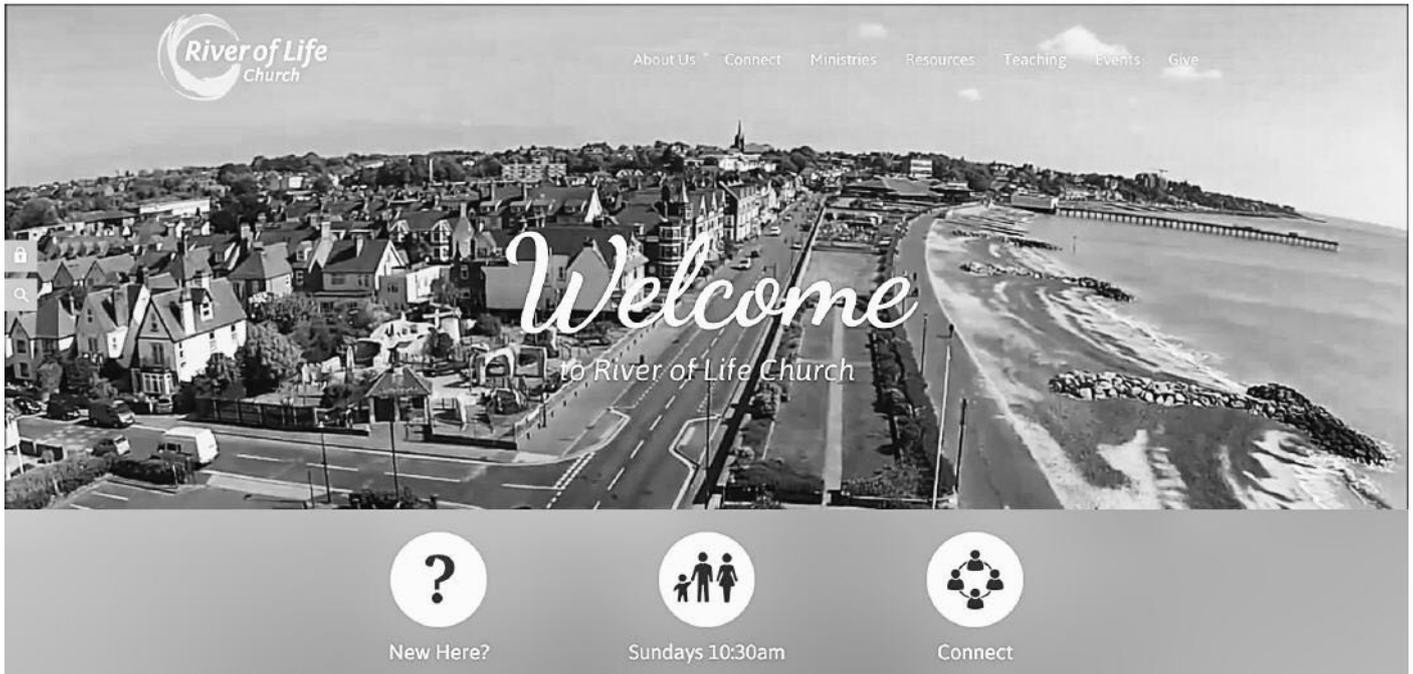
gone out on two occasions so far.

On Sept 9 we had an excellent time at the 412 Beach BBQ and much fun was had trying to light a fire on the beach! There was much frivolity and camaraderie eating hot dogs, burgers and brownies.



Then in October the 412 and Pastor Sean Englefield went to Delta Force Paintballing in Upminster. The group excelled themselves, all well behaved and so many lessons came out of the event – it was a strong bonding session with surprising outcomes. For example, Pastor Sean becoming a Terminator and excellent leader of the “Battle Group”. Despite minor injuries and overeating of pizza, 412 had a great time. On our return back to River of Life we debriefed at our Sunday session and related our experiences to Ephesians 6:10 (Armour of God). We even shared the Gospel with the employees! God just blesses and blesses these young adults. “By their fruits you shall know them.” Matthew 7v16.

If you feel you would like to join in for a session or support 412 please call Ian Hallwood on 07765 500740.



Our shop window to the world

What's it For?

Our Website is like a shop window. As you stroll down the high street you are attracted to a brightly lit window displaying all sorts of attractive goods. So, you go to investigate and perhaps see something you need and enter the shop... Like that shop window, our website should display something attractive, something that people need, and tempt them to want to find out more and perhaps enter the "shop".

History

For many years, River of Life Church has had a presence on the WorldWideWeb. The website has always been a useful tool for publicising the Church and Church Events and as such reaches out to the community - both near and far. However, things change, and this is particularly true for website design. People increasingly make use of mobile devices (phones and tablets) and older websites were not good when viewed on such devices. This required a new type of design, in the jargon of website design, it's called **Responsive Design**. What that means is that the website adapts to a number of different devices and attempts to tailor

Harman Hopkins explains how the new River of Life website came about, and who and what it is for.

the presentation of information to the size of screen that is being used.

During the latter half of 2015 it was evident that the website then in use was not really up to the job as it was not a responsive design and also used technology that was being phased out for use on many mobiles. Clearly, it was time for a rethink.

A New Design

So, the church embarked on the quest for a new website design. An initial design by a local entrepreneur was brought online during the first quarter of 2016. In many respects it was a great improvement, especially as it was a responsive design. There were however some issues raised about the design and its scope going forward and important lessons were learned. After an appraisal of the situation and a review of some other church websites, it was decided to employ Church Insight (CI), a company

specialising in developing church websites.

The A Team

Some pretty obvious lessons were learned from the first stab at a new website:

- It's necessary to specify clearly what's wanted;
- It's much better to have a small team work together to define and agree the scope and content;
- It's preferable to have the backing of a dedicated design team for the design and ongoing support of the site.



Website team

No need to fret with Steve on your side!

Guitarist Steve Bloomfield writes about his monthly Fretting and Fun evening.

Over the course of the year we have been meeting, once a month, for a guitar workshop.

We have two groups with the first being for people who are new to the guitar and wanting to learn some basics. The second is for those who are looking to build on their existing guitar playing ability.

In both sessions we have a great time with lots of fun and friendship. The sessions are based around Christian music although we have been known to try out an occasional Beatles or Bob Dylan number!

It has been great to see a number of young people wanting to learn the guitar and we are looking forward to seeing them develop over the coming months.

We normally meet, at the Christian Life Centre, on the last Friday of each month starting at 7pm for the new learners and 7.45pm for the second session. More details available from the church office.



Steve Bloomfield and Pelumi Dosumu

Website needs constant updating to stay relevant and interesting

Continued from page 32

So, a number of us got together to research and progress the design. We researched other church websites, formed some ideas and got together with Church Insight (CI) to plan the way forward. It has proved to be a very successful collaboration. Working with Adam Johannes (Director) and Melissa Cullen (Account & Project Executive), both born-again Christians has been delightful. Progress to a design specification, including new branding and logo quickly ensued.

The Scope

Although a primary emphasis for the website is to be outward looking to the community, it quickly became obvious that the (CI) system also had a number of advantages for the Church Family and Church Administration. Moving church members' details from an ageing office database gives church members the opportunity ensure their contact info. (e.g. phone numbers and email) are up to date. Other features

such as Rota Management can be phased in as members are registered and offers automatic emails of rota duties and a reminder three days beforehand.

Launching

The build-up to launching the new site was accompanied by fruitful collaboration with various heads of Ministries who provided written material for their various areas. A very big Thank You to all who helped make this venture a success. Then, after several meetings/queries with CI and learning how to upload various types of information, the website was finally launched on 1 October 2016.

Keeping relevant & Interesting

Having launched, our website is only relevant if people look at it. And that requires interesting and constantly updated material and news. Several Ministry Heads have expressed an interest in being able to upload new and relevant information to their

website pages. To this end, the **Web Team** with administrative help from Anita Chenery, will be producing training materials and help. For those Ministry Heads who prefer a less hands-on approach, the Web Team will step in and upload new material to the site.

Finally

A big **Thank You** to everyone who contributed to make the new website a success. Thanks to Trevor Harris for his input, vision and faith in the venture. To Adam, Melissa and the team at Church Insight for their friendly and responsive support. To Ivan, Brian and Harman for their various inputs and to Anita for arranging meetings and keeping us on track.

May River of Life Church go from Strength to Strength in proclaiming the Good News in Jesus Christ and may our new website be part of that proclamation.

One shed . . . but many men!

By Andy Mayhew

Our own monthly 'Men in Sheds' meetings have been a real blessing, attracting a full shed on many occasions. Not only with ROL members, but with guests, many of whom would not attend a Church on a Sunday or a Friday evening quite so readily.



Men in Sheds

During the Summer Craig Lister joined us for a BBQ and then told us his powerful testimony. As a young family man he was given just a few short months to live after a diagnosis of prostate cancer that spread all over his body.



Nathan Blackaby

After prayer with his wife and family, he decided to trust his faith in God for his healing. He gave up his stressful job as an investment banker in the City and changed his diet and exercise regime. God did his miracle of complete healing. Praise God.

We had to move into a bigger shed when Nathan Blackaby paid us a re-visit. Nathan, now an old friend, is CEO of the National Organisation CVM [Christian Vision

for Men]. He looked quite the part as he got off his shiny Harley Davidson wearing all the cool gear.

Nathan never fails to inspire and encourage us all in our Faith –challenge us too!! Come and see us again, Nat.

Our evenings usually start at 7pm with Fish and Chips or a BBQ, followed by a short inspirational DVD or a speaker. Then we enjoy a valuable time of discussion, sharing 'bloke stuff' and prayer. We finish with a hearty song, so hearty in fact that there is talk of a Male Voice Choir.

Thanks to all our helpers, particularly Derek, Ivan, Gareth and Mike, who are always there to serve and sometimes stand in the gap. Also to Eunice for keeping us well supplied with coffee and ketchup. Tempted to join us? See you there!



Lunches for those on their own relaunched

By Jennifer Monk

On October 9 we relaunched the Single Lunches and were able to use the new cafe area in the foyer of the church. This is much appreciated by those who otherwise may lunch on their own following the service on a Sunday. This time the Life Groups are hosting and providing a light lunch. They will take place on the second Sunday in the month and look forward to our fellowship times together.



Radio show has been an ‘amazing journey’

About five years ago I walked into Felixstowe Radio armed with a Delirious CD and asked “Do you play Christian Music?”. The response was “No, we don't - so when do you want to start?”

Since that day it been an amazing journey meeting listeners and making many new friends, also discovering new music and bands like Kutless, All Sons And Daughters, Santus Real, Kirk Franklin, Noel Robinson and so much more.

Then a few weeks ago the radio went under new management and a drastic change was happening to the daytime shows, all the presenters were advised we would lose our daytime shows but could re-apply for evening slots, so this looked like the end.

Godfey Birtill came to River of Life last year to lead worship and also gave a message and in it was “change your mind set”. I have always remembered this, so I ignored how grim it looked and I put my trust in Jesus and instead looked at it like this: if it finishes then something better will come my way; if it is saved, then the Radio will get stronger and better along with the Sunday Morning Show. A meeting was held on a Wednesday evening and unfortunately presenters and friends did lose there shows, however a decision was made to keep my show and also keep the same time 8-10 am on a Sunday Morning. I was advised they felt the show was a



Dave Hunt

benefit to the community and they were pleased with the way it was going.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the listeners for their support, texts, prayers and the CDs I am often given to give away on the Radio, you all know who you are so thank you so much.

I am looking forward to the future on the radio and spreading the good news of Jesus through music it has been an amazing fun filled journey and a pleasure to do each Sunday Morning. I hope you can listen in one morning or be a guest on the show

Dave Hunt 07875616664
Felixstoweradio.org.uk
107.5fm

More leaders would enable more children to come along

By David Cope

Stargazers youth club has been running at River of Life Church for many years now. The children who attend are five to 11 year olds and we usually have around 20 to 30 attending on a Thursday evening during term time.

We do crafts with the children such as model making, cooking and painting/colouring. There are also games such as football, hockey which the children enjoy.

We have praise music on in the background and at the end of the evening we have a short talk. We try to link the crafts we do with the talk where we can and our talks usually cover themes for each term such as the Armour of God or Bible heroes. We really want the children to understand the good news of the Bible, the

gospel message and God’s love for them and include this in the talk whenever we can.

The evening finishes with tuck and we have a good selection of items which the children always enjoy! They usually also take home something they have made or cooked.

The picture here was recently drawn at home and brought in by one of the Stargazers children.

We have a great team of leaders at the club, both from the River of Life and from other churches but could always use more help. The more leaders we have the more children we are able to have come along.

If you are interested in joining the team please let me know either directly or through the Church Office.



Baptisms bring wonderful testimony and celebrations

By Sophia Byrne

On Easter Sunday of this year I was baptised. When asked to think of how I knew it was the time, I remembered the day my grandmother died. I remember going to my bedroom that night and feeling distraught, however I wasn't just upset I was angry. I was angry with my grandma for leaving me, but mostly I was angry with God. I didn't understand why He would take her away from me, why He wouldn't heal her?

Suddenly I felt this overwhelming sense of warmth and comfort come across me. I no longer felt angry or upset but warm and comforted. I knew that my grandma was safe and in heaven with God. The anger was gone and comfort replaced it. I was at peace. That is when I knew that God was there and I needed Him in my life, I always believed in Him but I wanted to know him in a deeper way.



Sophia Byrne



Baptisms at River of Life Church during 2016.

Top left, Reece Lee, and top right, Sophia Byrne. Centre left, Jade Englefield, and centre right, Henry Burnett. Bottom left, Janice Burnett, and bottom right, Julie Bradwell.



Pastor Bill tells of a miracle God provided for a small boy in need

By Assistant Pastor Sean Englefield

We were extremely privileged in November to have the visit of Pastor Bill Wilson of Metro World Child Ministries. Pastor Bill established Metro World Child (formerly Metro Ministries) in 1980 in what was one of Brooklyn's roughest neighbourhoods, the Bushwick community, most commonly known for its history of gang violence, crime, drugs, and poverty.

Since that time, he has seen the organisation grow to the point where today some 400,000 children and young people are attending Sunday Schools throughout the world and benefitting from Christian education facilities through this ministry.

In the district of New York where he ministers, violence is a way of life and a constant threat. Pastor Bill has been beaten, stabbed and shot in the face. Yet, he perseveres and refuses to leave the area or give up on the children growing up in such an environment. Because of that, his efforts have made a difference, not only in the lives of children but in the community as well.

He told us about a little boy who was left on the road outside the orphanage in Haiti, as nobody wanted him. The little boy was suffering from the most unimaginable facial deformity which had left barely a small hole for a mouth so much so that he was barely able to feed.

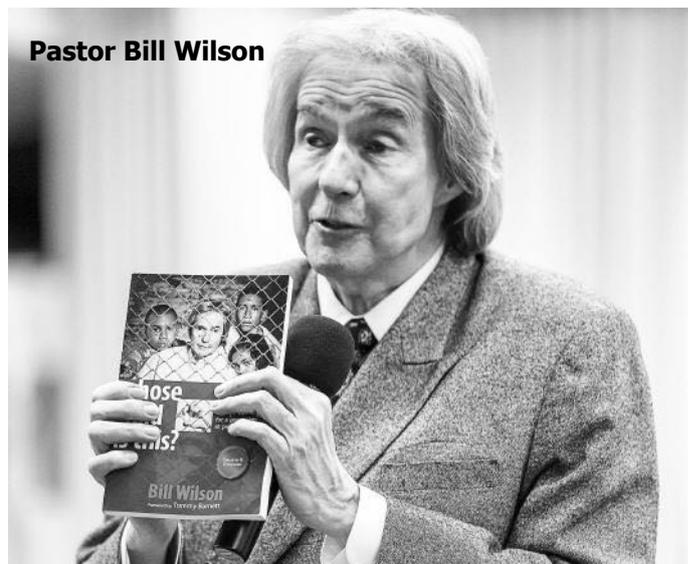
They sent Bill his picture and Bill replied saying the only chance was to get this little boy to the States as he knew a

“ He put his head against the wall and reminded God what he had said ... that he would live and not die

Christian surgeon who might be prepared to operate on him to save his life. He got this boy to America, thinking that because he knows quite a few Christian doctors, that he could be saved. But no-one was prepared to do the operation because it was risky and they were worried about a lawsuit as they thought there was little chance of success and that

the boy would die anyway.

Eventually, Pastor Bill found a surgeon at the Miami Children's Hospital who to his complete shock said he would do the operation for nothing! He said “We won't charge you



anything but we'll bring some interns in to watch, to observe, and to learn. But you are going to have to sign a waiver! Gonna have to sign a release form, because the boy is going to die! You need to know that upfront! So you sign the waiver, since he doesn't have parents, you are going to have to be the acting guardian!”

Pastor Bill asked the surgeon for one thing - that he would not give up on the boy. They were into the operation about seven half hours, a nurse came out to tell Bill that the little boy was dying; his lungs had collapsed, his kidneys had failed-he was literally dying on the table.

Pastor Bill told the meeting: “I said please go back in remind the Doc of our deal. What do you do when you have done everything you know to do! I did everything folks! I did everything! I prayed, I cried, have you cried till you have no more tears left?”

Pastor Bill was in the waiting room throughout the operation, and he walked over to the wall. He put his head against the wall and reminded God what he had said that he would live and not die.

He said: “You better give God a praise, you better give God a praise. You didn't know how that one was going to end did you! Ha ha yeah, I didn't either! Believe me, I didn't. That's a special little boy right there! I saw something, and yet! What do you see now! Yeah! What do you see now?”

On the screen in front of us, a large image is put up for us. We see a little boy with a perfectly formed new mouth, completely normal in every way. A tremendous miracle had occurred. God hadn't given up on this little boy.

Leadership Training Course is blessing those taking part

By John Goldring

In September 2010, I spent a week at Bethel Church, Redding, California on a course titled “The School of Transformation and Strategy”, led by Danny Silk and Paul Manwaring, with teaching from other Bethel leaders, including Bill Johnson and Kris Vallotton. I was very impressed with the teaching but also with the whole culture and vision of the Church.

I therefore decided to do a further course on-line, called the Leadership Development Programme. This was a year’s course, involving listening to CD talks by Bethel leaders and others, reading set books and completing homework.

I was so impressed with the Leadership Development Programme that I suggested to the Leadership Team that I introduce the course to River of Life Church for potential leaders.

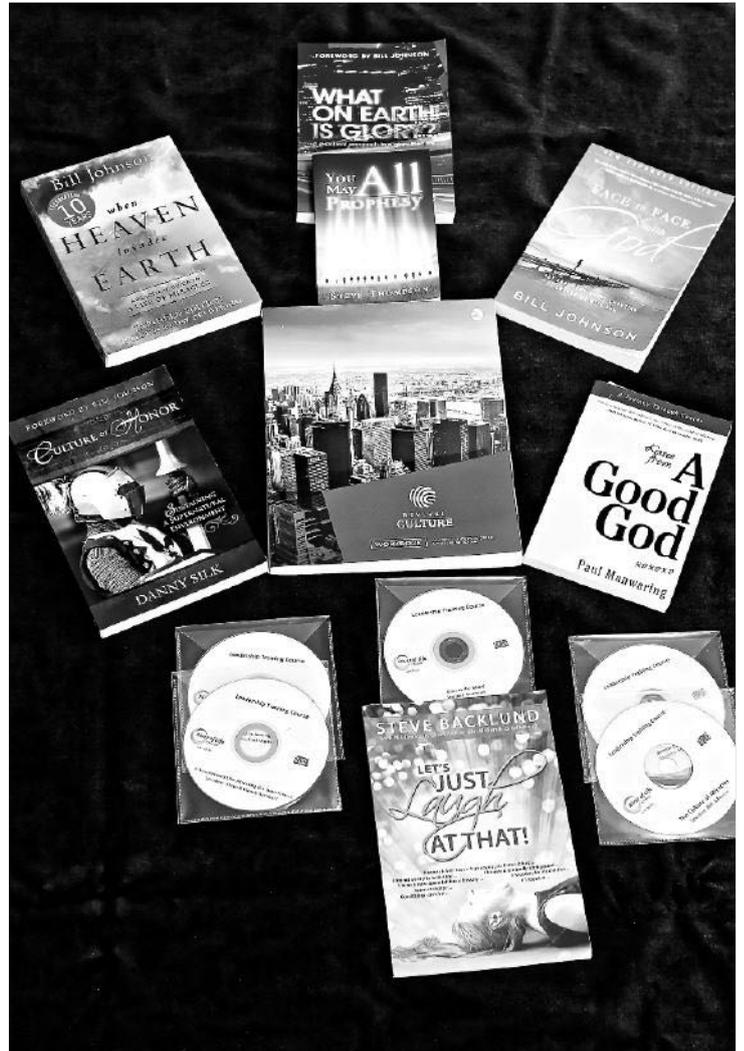
Therefore, with the permission of Bethel, we started the Leadership Training Course in January 2016, using the same material as on their Leadership Development Programme.

Although the Leadership Training Course is designed for those already in leadership, it was felt that the content was suitable for any established Christian and so it was opened up to anyone in the Church.

The subjects covered are:

- Family
- Goodness of God
- Joy and Hope
- Honour
- Risk and Faith
- Prophetic
- Grace and Empowerment
- Valuing His Presence
- Releasing the Supernatural
- Salvation and Righteousness
- Generosity
- Revelation and The Word

Once a month the Leadership Training Course members attend a feedback evening where they discuss what they have read and listened to over the previous month, as well as briefly look at the homework completed. There is also a time of worship and an opportunity for ministry.

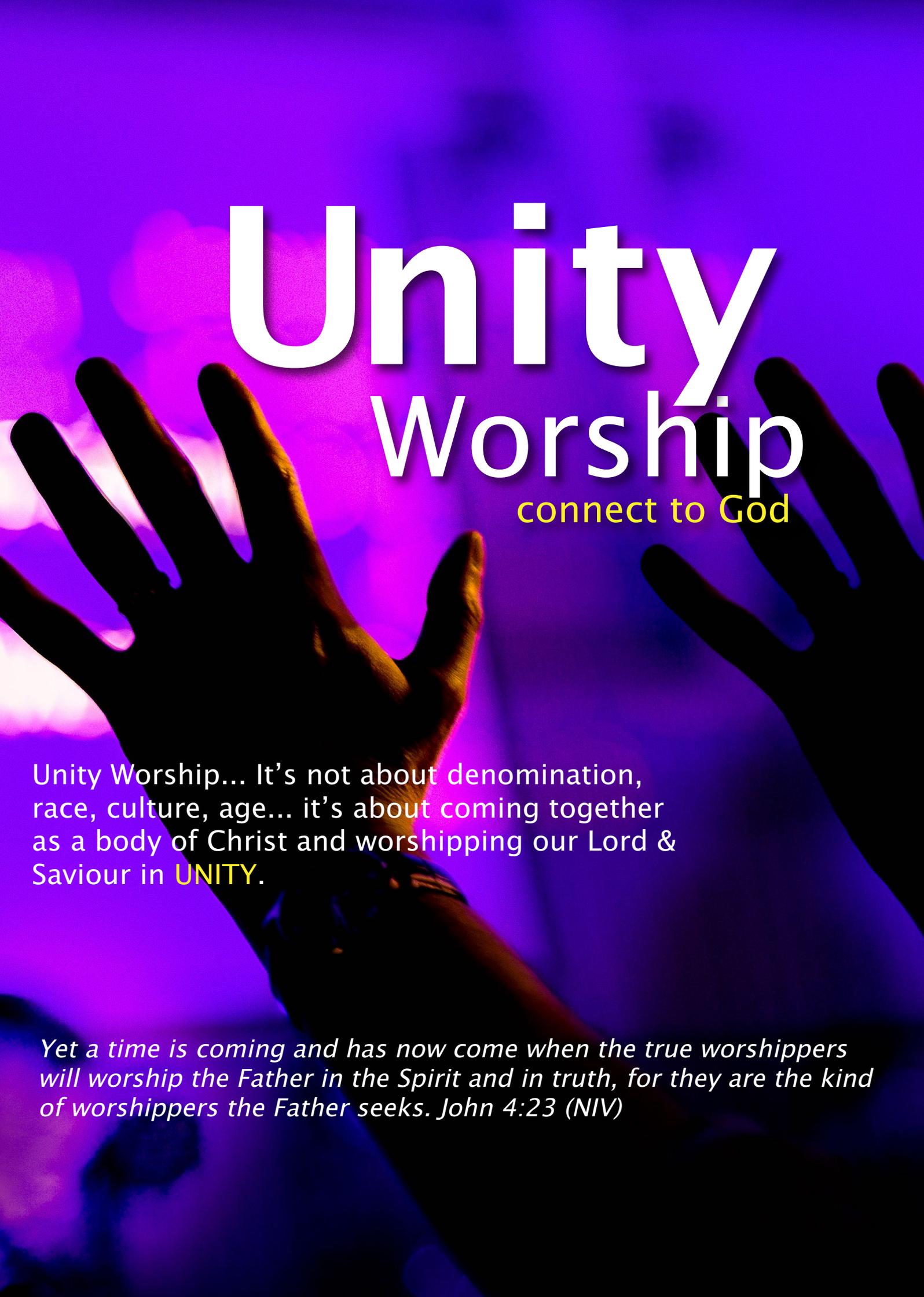


Leadership Training Course materials

The Leadership Training Course is led by Lead Pastor Trevor Harris and myself and is attended by 16 delegates, who often express how much they have been blessed by the course.

We would thoroughly recommend anyone to read any of the books used on the Leadership Training Course which include:

- 1 When Heaven Invades Earth by Bill Johnson
- 2 Culture of Honor by Danny Silk
- 3 Face to Face with God by Bill Johnson
- 4 You may all Prophecy by Steve Thompson
- 5 What on Earth is Glory by Paul Manwaring



Unity Worship

connect to God

Unity Worship... It's not about denomination, race, culture, age... it's about coming together as a body of Christ and worshipping our Lord & Saviour in **UNITY**.

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. John 4:23 (NIV)

My greatest adventure

Alpha 2017

Free Alpha Supper and Introductory Video
Friday 15th September, 7.00 pm. Course
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ask questions

For more information go to our
website: www.riveroflifechurch.net/alpha
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