

River
of
Life

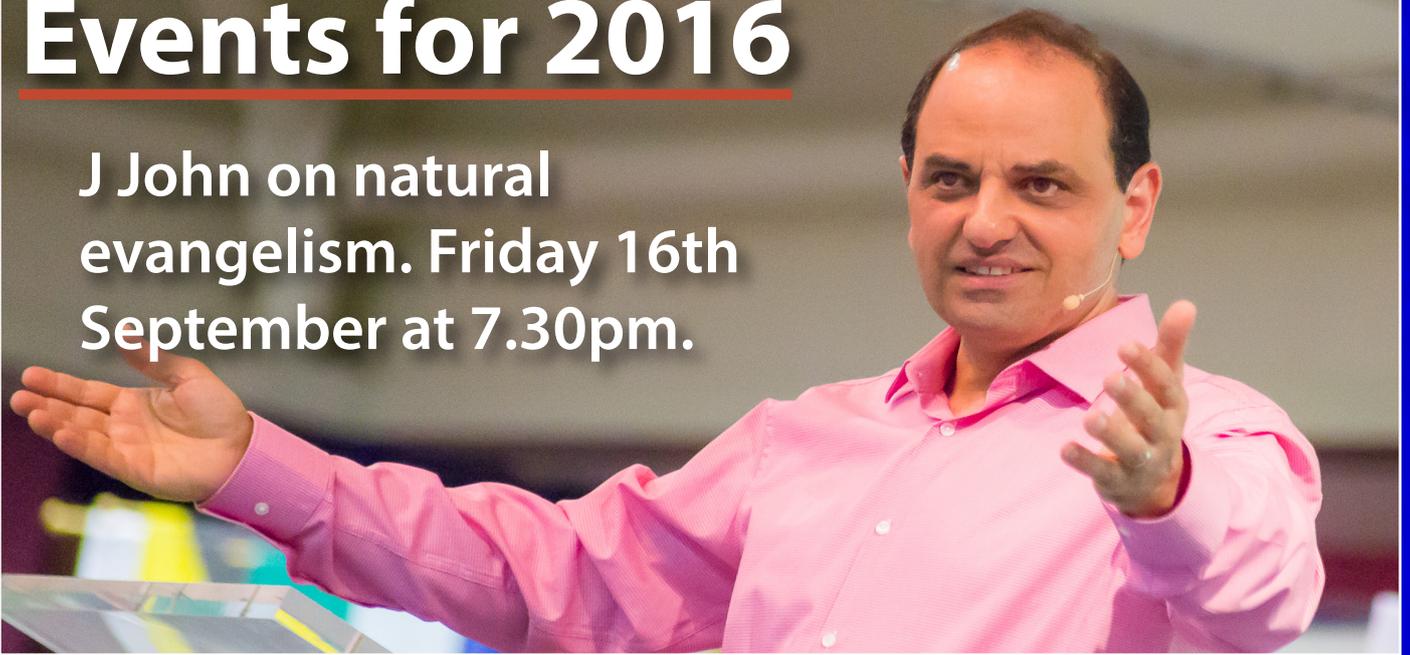
LifEnews

Issue number 12 2016



Events for 2016

J John on natural evangelism. Friday 16th September at 7.30pm.



Bill Wilson of Metro Ministries NY. Friday 4th November at 7.30pm.



Noel Robinson
Friday 15th April at
7.30pm.



Community Light Orchestra (in aid of the Bible Society). Friday 13th May at 7.30pm.





River of Life CHURCH

RIVER OF LIFE CHURCH

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www.riveroflifechurch.net

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Trevor Harris (Lead Pastor)
David Cope (Outreach Pastor)
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Raj S.V (Prayer Team Leader)
Gary Peverley (Worship Leader)
John Goldring
(Eldership Co-ordinator)

Trustees

Full details available on
Church Notice Board

Deacons and Department Heads

Full details available on
Church Notice Board

Treasurer

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LifeNews

Editor: Richard Cornwell

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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 Understanding Church Life. 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.



Walk at The Grove

contents

- Church urged to become a “seed sower” this year. 6-8
A message from Pastors Terry and Juanita Baker
- Godfrey Birtill brings a night to remember. 9
- Testimonies of Healing from SHOT, Sue Edwards and Harman Hopkins. 10
- Encouraging testimonies for the Church from Gill Gifford and Sarah Watkins. 11
- An appointment in India for Rennie and Dorothea Clarke. 12-13
- Life Groups picture special. 14-17
- Fun in the sun? Picnic has Plan B. 18
- Church’s mission to help the homeless of Felixstowe. 19
- Helping to save a rescue service. / Healing testimony. 20-21
- Facing cancer for the third time, Elizabeth Goldring experienced a miraculous healing. / Immersing yourself in God. 22-23
- Why Barbara Bairstow is praising her Saviour all day long. 24
- Noel Robinson brings a message of revival - and some great music, too! 25

Alpha Holy Spirit Day





Indigo-Sky and Ruby Tuesday.

Looking back at an exciting 2015 - the first of two picture specials. **26-27**

Children's groups are thriving at River of Life - the church's own and a toddler group run for the community. **28**

Safe in the arms of Jesus - Debbie Watkins-Jones tells how the Lord gave her the strength to fight cancer. **29**

Linda Tuffs tells how visiting the Holy Land made the events of the Bible come alive **30-31**

A busy year - part two of our look back at 2015. **32-33**

Ivan and Pam Thurlow reflect on the ministry of the Coffee Shop. / Catering Team vital for Church. **34**

Felixstowe Sings Out for charity. **30**

Church members ready to help others in need at times of medical emergency. / New website launch for 2016. **36**

"A wonderful way to discover spiritual truth" - reflections on the Alpha Course. **37**

Celebrating Christmas with a concert of carols at the Christian Life Centre. **38**

River of Life CHURCH

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.

Sowing seeds to bring

There are plenty of opportunities to spread the Gospel and reach people who do not know Jesus. Emeritus Pastors Terry and Juanita Baker look at the outreach work locally at River of Life and how the church is taking a prominent and active role in a major national event.

Take one look at the beautiful photograph of flowers on the front cover of this edition of Life News which Harman photographed so well and we can see our Lord's creative hand at work. The Creator of the Universe – our God – our all sufficient One who formed and crafted these flowers to perfection. We see here an array of fragrant, incredibly intricately formed, delicate blooms springing up through meadow grass. We can imagine the flower heads gently blowing in a breeze and not being broken as they sway gently to and fro and then we know there will be the buzz of bees and insects as they busily seek the nectar in the blooms themselves.

These flowers came about because of seeds and they in turn will drop seeds in due course. We are reminded of scripture – Matthew 13: 1 - 23 – where Jesus spoke about the parable of the sower. As the farmer scattered his seed (by hand in those days) some fell along the path, some fell on rocky places, some fell on thorns and thistles but some fell on good soil and came up and there was a mighty harvest. There was no proper harvest from the seed on the path, the rocky



places, the thorns and thistles but the harvest received from the seed on the good soil was mighty – thirty, sixty and a hundredfold. Jesus in this parable was trying to make his hearers and ourselves understand that seed on good soil represents those people who hear the Word of God and respond by faith and follow the Lord's direction and live by faith in their lives.

River of Life Church has endeavoured since the Lord birthed the Church in January 2002 to preach the undiluted Word of God in all its fullness as the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has gone forth. There has been growth over the years and there have been disappointments and sadness but the Lord continues to encourage us. We have been delighted to see growth in



“During the summer of 2015 River of Life was blessed with a surprise gift from J. John's ministry, the Philo Trust

people and recently to see the Lord adding to our number. This year has seen the appointment of several new staff and they are all a great asset, as our existing staff are. We have been blessed with new people the Lord has added to the fellowship and they are using their gifts and talents which have been needed at just the right time in the Church. The Lord wants to use everyone.

We take this opportunity to thank all who serve in the fellowship in such a variety of ways, in whatever capacity. You are a blessing and the Church could not function without you as you give of your time, love, finance and faithfulness – please be encouraged.

During the summer of 2015 River of Life were blessed with a surprise gift from J. John's ministry, the Philo Trust. Boxes of books arrived unexpectedly and certainly had not been ordered. We were blessed with a gift of 1,200 Christmas Connection booklets and one of the volunteers in the Church Office instantly started placing the River of Life sticker inside every book. These books were to be used as “seed” and were given out by hand together with an invitation to the Carol Service to homes in the area of the Christian Life Centre. The people delivering these invites and booklets endeavoured to knock on many of the 1,200 homes – a true labour of love for the Lord as they sowed “seed”.



in the Lord's harvest

The Lord had clearly re-emphasised that River of Life were to be "seed sowers" and so plans started to be come together as the Church always endeavours to be seed sowers.

Very early one morning on 8 October 2015 six River of Life Church leaders travelled by taxi from the Christian Life Centre to The Emirates Football Stadium in London. We had been invited to the launch of J. John's "Just One" event. This was an awesome day and incredibly inspiring for all the Christian Ministries and Churches represented who had been invited to attend as J. John, his team and Trustees unpacked the vision the Lord had given them for the UK. "Just One" will be held at the Emirates Stadium on Saturday 8 July 2017 at 3pm.

All of us came back to Felixstowe that day inspired, challenged and privileged that the Lord wanted to use River of Life Church and the Christian Life Centre in our area in preparation for the 2017 event. As leaders we are seeking ways of sharing with other evangelical Churches in Felixstowe, Ipswich and the surrounding areas so that the Gospel will be shared as we encourage them about this new J. John venture.

Whilst at The Emirates Stadium it was discerned that J. John should be invited to come to the Christian Life Centre the latter part of 2016 for a teaching event. It will be Friday, 16 September 2016 and the title for the evening is "Natural

Evangelism – How to Share Our Faith with Others". This promises to be enlightening, inspirational and extremely helpful to all and to other Churches and Ministries as we endeavour to reach people with the good news of Christ.

The 2017 Emirates "Just One" event will be wonderful and a privilege for River of Life Church to be involved in and our own large event of 2016 with J. John will also we believe herald in a move of God in this area.

Additionally several large Christian Ministries have approached River of Life to come during 2016. At this point of time we have arranged with Bill Wilson of Metro Ministries, New York to join us on Friday, 4 November.

“ This was an awesome day and incredibly inspiring for all the Christian Ministries and Churches represented who had been invited to attend as J. John, his team and Trustees unpacked the vision the Lord had given them for the UK

River of Life leadership set off for the Emirates Stadium.





Above, two views of Arsenal's Emirates Stadium, which will host the Just One event next year. Below right, J John and his wife Killy.

“ We have been delighted in the Church that Life Groups are growing in number, Alpha courses regularly flourish, and new ventures are starting to take place as men, women and young people rise up and take their place to bring the harvest in for the Lord

at River of Life during 2016 and onwards. We are encouraged with what the Lord is doing and will do in River of Life Church .

“Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back, lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left.” (Isaiah 54:2)

There have been many prophetic words and scriptures of encouragement given over the Church's life of 14 years – some of which have already come to fruition but we are still awaiting to see others. We believe what the Lord is now doing will herald in a move of God like we have never seen before and we are excited. “See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:19)

Therefore can we encourage you with these words – will you be a seed sower? Will you help with the harvest of souls? Will you help with the influx of new believers? The Lord needs you in this next phase of His work here at River of Life Church and in the wider community.

Shalom

Terry and Juanita

What an amazing ministry this is and how the Lord has blessed them. Our Events Team is busy planning for 2016 and we already have the Community Light Orchestra coming on 13 May for a concert with all proceeds going to the Bible Society. We know there will be many other large events and worship events take place in the Christian Life Centre during 2016.

We have been delighted in the Church that Life Groups are growing in number, Alpha courses regularly flourish, and new ventures are starting to take place as men, women and young people rise up and take their place to bring the harvest in for the Lord.

As this edition of Life News goes to print the current Leadership Team have been prayerfully seeking direction from the Lord over many months on a number of new spiritual initiatives including the restructuring of leadership to enable the fellowship to move forward into the next phase of growth and diversity that the Lord has for us. This was shared with the Church family at the Church Family Meeting in January to seek their blessing and support as we move forward for the Kingdom of God



Godfrey brings a message of God's love for everyone

By Dave Hunt

After the successful evening with Noel Robinson, I searched for other worship leaders and the name Godfrey Birtill was mentioned by a few people.

I had never seen Godfrey in person but was aware of his music. Awesome music and song titles such as Just One Touch from the King and When I look at the Blood and so many other wonderful tracks I had heard on his CDs. To me his song lyrics are spot-on – they are basic and relevant to everyone and to our everyday lives.

I decided to contact Godfrey via his web site and the conversation went something like this: “Hi Godfrey – can

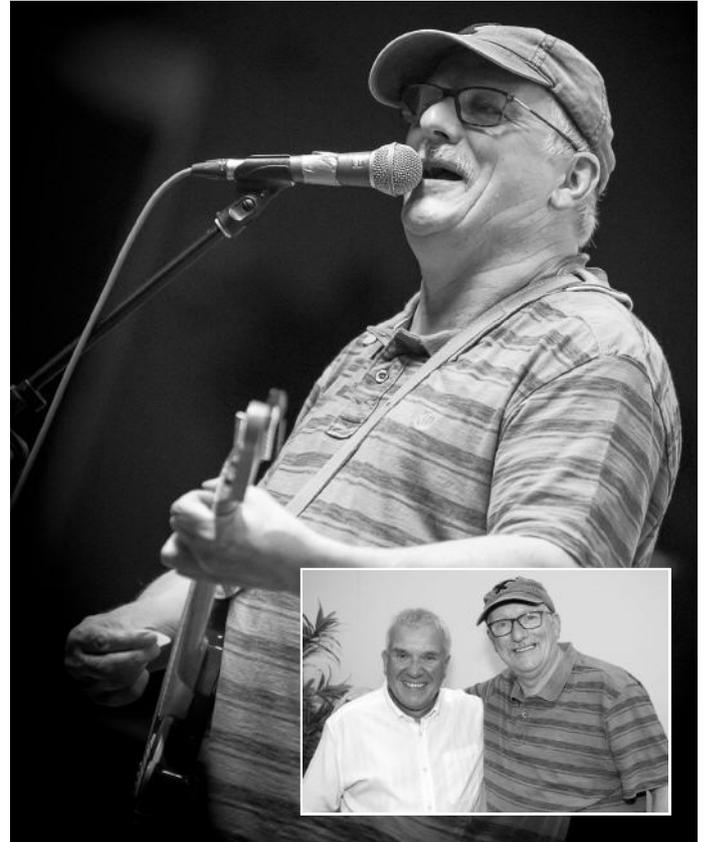
“The message was basic and simple but I know we all need to be reminded of this fact

you come to Felixstowe to lead a worship event?” His response was marvellous and I was delighted as he said, “I would love to!”

My next question was “How much will this cost?”, and his response was superb as a Christian – “There is no charge, have a collection or sell tickets, whatever you think best but all I need is to cover my travelling expenses as I know God will supply all my needs because I live by faith.”

Well, that was easy for us – I spoke to Church Leaders and it was decided that we would take up an offering for Godfrey's ministry on the evening. If we did not consider the offering that evening to be adequate then the Church would make up the money to be a suitable love offering. This in fact is what we did as the Church wanted to bless the ministry of Godfrey Birtill.

So Godfrey came to Felixstowe on October 16 and we had an amazing night of worship with Godfrey giving a superb short talk. The whole evening had been

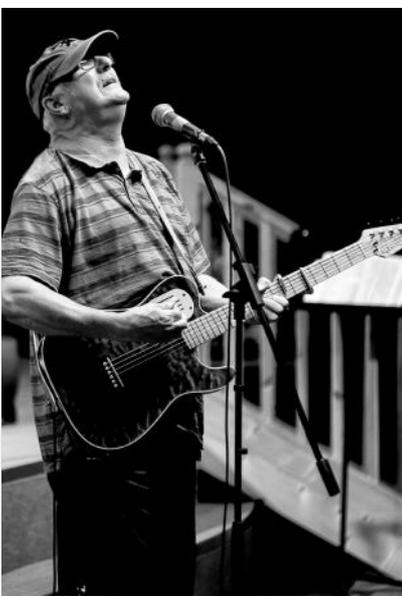


Godfrey Birtill and (inset) Godfrey with Dave Hunt during the worship concert.

based around God's love for us and that we need to change our mind set and realise that God loves us ALL the time. The message was basic and simple but I know we all need to be reminded of this fact and if non-Christians were present they certainly heard the Gospel of Christ from Godfrey's talk and his songs.

A lot of people have thanked me for arranging these events, but I am not alone with the support of Leadership and a huge dedicated team behind the scenes. I cannot mention everyone by name but you all know who you are and these events would certainly not happen without you – so thank you all for your support.

Event number three will be coming soon so watch for the notices. Maybe you are reading this and are not yet involved with River of Life Church and would like to be informed about future events. If so, please pass your details on to the Church Office and we will keep you updated. You will find the details of the Church Office at the beginning of this edition of **LifeNews**.



Seeing God's healing power at work

By David Cope

At the end of 2014 we started holding Gospel Healing meetings at the Christian Life Centre. These meetings are hosted by the SHOT group – Street Healing and Outreach Team – and have been held about once a quarter.

These meetings were started primarily as an evangelistic outreach, with a view to bringing people into the Church who need healing and to share with them the good news of the Gospel. We have also been able to use the meetings to examine together what the Bible says about healing.

The meeting is formatted primarily for any unbelievers and for that reason we have worship playing as people arrive but begin the meeting with testimonies followed by a talk or

video about healing in the Bible. At the end of the talk people are invited to come forward to receive prayer and we play worship music as they do.

We have promoted the meetings on the local radio and with ads in local publications and the meetings have been well attended.

There have been some great healings both during the meeting and in the days that have followed. One lady that came to the first meeting was virtually blind and her eyesight recovered as we were praying for her! She was amazed as she began seeing faces again for the first time in years.

We are looking forward to some more great testimonies at future meetings. Information on the work of SHOT and dates of next meetings are on the Church website and we would love to have you come along. Please join us.

Testimonies of healing . . .

Changing my attitude cured vision problems

By Harman Hopkins

FOR some months I had been experiencing a disturbance to my vision. It happened intermittently and produced a strange effect somewhat like people experience with migraine, but without any headache. It happened again one Sunday morning just after the 10am prayer meeting. I asked for prayer and after prayer and a few minutes rest my vision started to return to normal. I then had an opportunity to give testimony to the church that morning, thanking God for my healing.

Later I got to thinking about why I was having this trouble and what was triggering these episodes. The conclusion I reached was that wrong, stressful thinking was the trigger. And this thinking had arisen as a result of a critical attitude towards a situation that I could not control.



Having realised this and changed my attitude I believe that I am now free from this malady - as long as I keep my mind set on good things. As the Word says... You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in you. Isaiah 26:3.

Jesus healed me of eating disorder

By Sue Edwards

SINCE my teenage years I have lived with disordered eating and every attempt to rid myself of this debilitating condition failed. It consumed so much wasted time and energy



As a family we have spent many holidays at Spring Harvest, France, and every year we have experienced miracles of answered prayer. 2015 was no exception.

Tucked away behind other books was a very used book that I knew Jesus wanted me to read. The title was How to Stop Dieting and start Living, by Sue Prosser. God used this book to speak so clearly to me about how He was going to heal me. The condition of disordered eating is with the sufferer all day, every day. Through this book and through faith and most of all through the love of Jesus I was healed, freed and no longer a slave to this condition.

I praise you, my Jesus. You too can have healing through my wonderful Jesus. Ask Him into your life and trust Him for your future. He will never let you down.

Gill and Sarah so encouraging with their testimonies



Gill Gifford

By Margaret Beith

At our morning meeting Gill Gifford, from Cutting Edge Ministries, accompanied by Skippy, shared openly and powerfully how ill her granddaughter Beth was at that point of time. Beth is a believer and loves to dance for the Lord.

However, at this stage in her life she was in a Special Unit for 6 months and at her lowest point weighed only three and a half stone and near death.



Sarah Watkins

Gill blessed us with an amazing talk on how the Lord took her into “the secret place” and asked her if she would still love Him if He took Beth home? Gill had to think hard about this but said, “Yes, if that was the plan” – things we treasure don’t belong to us but to Him. “What can I do?” she asked? Jesus said: “Go

back to the cross.” Remember that Passover was a feast of freedom and Jesus took our place. He won us the freedom on the cross to go through our hurts, whatever they are. We need to let the cross work in our lives too.

There was so much more that Gill shared with us that morning, but this was the heart of her message. Listen to it in full on our website. It will truly bless you.

I can tell you that Beth made a wonderful recovery and travelled to Uganda with a youth group, gave her testimony and danced for the Lord. Now she is at a Dance College in Liverpool and loving it! We give God all the glory and praise.

Sarah Watkins from healing2thenations spoke at the evening meeting about our “Full Dependence on God, Believing His Word and Resting in Faith.” Sarah encouraged us, emphasising

how we need to feed on the Word of God and believe the Word and then live and trust the Word as we rest in faith on what Jesus bought and paid for on the cross at Calvary.

These lovely scriptures which Sarah gave during her talk are so encouraging:

✠ Matt 11: 27-30: We need to know the Father and the Son and take His rest.

✠ Psalm 23: Is all about depending and resting with the Good Shepherd - our Lord Jesus Christ.

✠ Revelation 3: 20-21: Hearing and listening plus fellowship and resting with the Lord as He feeds us through His Word. This is how we become overcomers. He wants to be involved in every area of our lives.

✠ Luke 10: 38-42: Mary putting the Word first and resting with Jesus.

✠ Exodus 16: God fed them, led them and gave them rest.

Many people were blessed and healed through the ministry that followed that evening.

It truly was a wonderful Sunday both morning and evening as Gill and Sarah shared their hearts with us and the Word of the Lord.

We have been mightily blessed in the past as a fellowship whenever Gill and Sarah have visited us and we know that at some time in the future they will return when we will be blessed with more of their dynamic faith talks.



God's appointment

Rennie and Dorothea Clarke open their diary of a journey of faith to Light of Hope in India.

**Cochin International Airport, Kerala State, India
04.40 Friday, 15 May, 2015**

We had arrived in India! We passed through passport control easily and found our luggage with no difficulty before pushing our bags through customs – no questions asked!

There was a sudden realisation that we really had arrived in India – a wave of colour, traditional dress, heat and an overriding aroma of rich spices. And then the thought struck us – this had not been a 22-hour journey, but one that had taken some nine and a half months, starting one Sunday at church in Felixstowe.

**River of Life Church, Felixstowe
11.45 Sunday, 3 August, 2014**

We were called by God!

When we watched Pappy Daniel, the Director of the Light of Hope Mission in India take to the platform, neither of us were expecting to be touched by God as we listened to this humble man speak about the Children's Home (orphanage) and Mission Station, followed by a simple yet compelling message on putting our trust in Jesus.

But much to our surprise, independently of one another, we had both felt a quickening in our hearts that we should go and see...go and experience all that he had been speaking about...all seemingly confirmed after the service when he spoke to Rennie and said, "I would love you to come and be with us".

As we drove home, we realised God had sprung one of His "suddenlies and surprises" on us and we had the choice – dismiss it, or trust God in it all!

**Ipswich – Felixstowe
December 2014**

We answered the call!

We confirmed with Pappy we would be visiting the Mission in May, and informed the Church Leadership of our intentions. We knew that we would require support from as many quarters as possible. Moreover we also knew that our spiritual preparation would not be a "five minute thing".

**Ipswich – Felixstowe
January – May 2015**

We were being prepared!



We were bowled over with the way that God prepared us. We knew we had to be bathed in prayer and our daily petitions and intercessions were joined by other voices in the Church – that our visit would be of one great spiritual blessing – for protection, guidance, provision (materially and financially) and that we would be able to supply Bibles to every child in the orphanage and to every adult in the Church.

It was a time of feverish activity – organising visas, booking air tickets, preparing the practical as well as the spiritual – we put our trust in God that He would guide us on the one hand and provide all the needs on the other, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

And so it proved. The Church gave most generously. There was sufficient money to purchase Bibles for everyone, a guitar was donated that we could take and give to the Mission, our luggage was packed solid with some 40kg of stationery and medical supplies – there was even money left over to give to the Mission for other urgent needs!

God is always true to His promises!

**Light of Hope Mission, Cheppad, Kerala State
Friday, 15 May, 2015**

Pappy and his team greeted us and the driver showed us to our accommodation – the top floor of the main building where a large room had been prepared for us. Despite the heat, we chose not to use the air-conditioning. We wanted to live as everyone else and this was to be our home for the next two weeks.



for us out in India



The Light of Hope Saturday, 16 May – Friday evening, 30 May

We entered into a routine and despite the day temperatures being 38/39C and evenings of 34/35C with 100% humidity, we managed to rest in between the work demands to enable us to deal with the rigours of working in such heat.

We had come to spend time with the children and they really did capture our hearts, as we knew they would with their dazzling smiles, flashing eyes, gentle demeanour and a hunger and desire to learn – a serious learning in all that was taught. We shared times of laughter, none more so when Rennie said that he would dress up in Dorothea's sari!

Our prayers are that each and every one of the children currently in the home will not only be equipped for life through the education they receive but will also be equipped for the Kingdom and eternity by the time they leave the home at the age of 16.

However, The Light of Hope is more than just a children's home.

Outreach to the community includes a toddlers group for working mothers in the community; there is a tailoring school to empower poor women with sewing skills and a computer school to help local teenagers with skills to find work. There are also counselling services to help families experiencing hardships and breakdowns through poverty, alcohol or other addictive substances. There are also three evangelists who go out into the high-ways and byways of this large village and beyond, proclaiming Jesus and the good news to the poor and the lost.



The Mission also reaches out to Hindu youth who meet on the beach and it holds Bible conferences every April/May which attract many hundreds of teenagers from the nearby towns.

Our departure from the Mission Station didn't come easily. We knew we must return but it tugged hard at our heart strings. However, we had been given a brief by Pappy Daniel on behalf of the Mission.

Ipswich – Felixstowe June 2015 onwards

We embarked upon our commission!

Our brief from the Light of Hope was to set up a structure to promote and support the Mission in India through prayer, practical and financial help. We are pleased to say the structure is now in place and we look forward to sharing all sorts of activities over the early months of 2016 to raise awareness of the physical, material, financial and spiritual needs of the Mission.

We intend to return in May to India and are praying there may be a few people who would like to join us – as participants in this wonderful Mission Station – a Mission that gives glory to God for all that it does and in its plans for the future.

We thank every person at River of Life and beyond who gave freely and willingly to our visit. The prayers were as important as the finance and supplies – God protected us health wise, travel wise, supplies wise, teaching wise and ministry wise. God is good, very good!

WEBSITES

www.lightofhopeindia.com

www.lightofhopetrust.com

Life Groups photo special

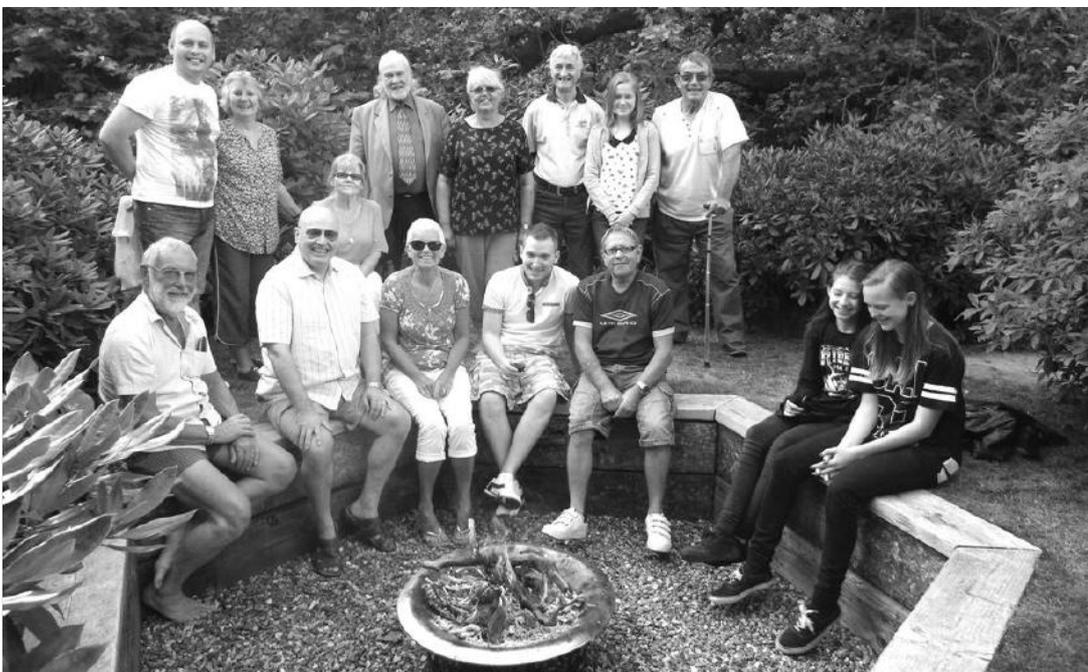
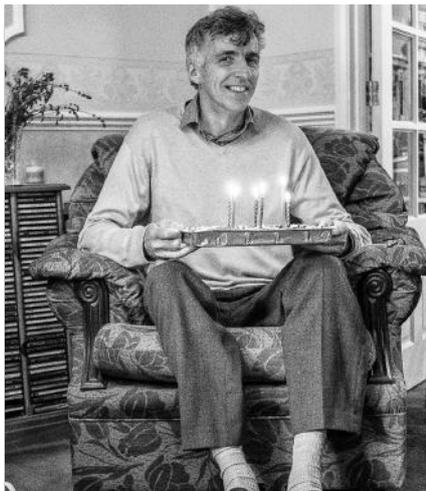


Special places for the Church family for fun and fellowship



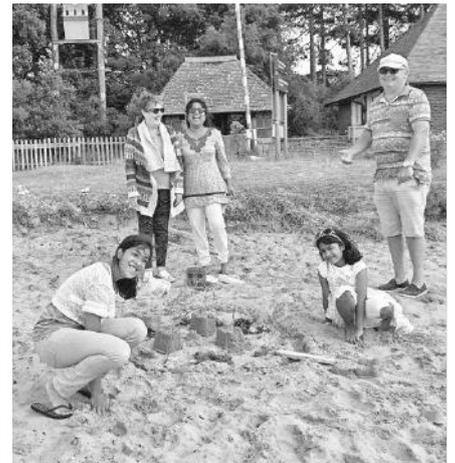
Our Life Groups are places where faith is strengthened and friendships grown. Above: Peter and Mary Howe's Life Group. Left and below: Sean and Angela Englefield's Life Group - a "girls' night out" and a day at the beach. Opposite page - above: Funmi and Anita's Life Group. Centre left and below: Trevor Harris and Mary Alexander's Life Group; and centre right: Michael Fitch celebrating his birthday at Anita Chenery and Jacqui Hopkins' Life Group.





Life Groups photo special

Life Groups photo special



As well as spending time together reading the Word and praying, Life Groups enjoy fun social activities, too. Above: John and Elizabeth Goldring's Life Group. Centre left: Anita Chenery and Jacqui Hopkins' Life Group enjoy a visit to the beach; and centre right: youngsters having fun at Raj and Abina's Life Group; and below the Thursday Night Life Group. Opposite page: Top, Raj and Abina's Life Group, and below, a Life Group visit to Rendlesham Forest. Centre right: Ros Rudd and Jennifer Monk's Life Group, and centre left and below, Life Group Leaders' Meal.



Life Groups photo special



Rain fails to stop play . . .

as Church puts plan B into action for picnic

Assistant Pastor Sean Englefield reports on an indoor picnic to beat the weather.

Monday 31 August was a Bank Holiday and River of Life Church had advertised this day for a picnic day out for Church and friends at Alton Water – weather permitting!

Well England is not called a green and pleasant land for nothing, for from the early hours that morning the Lord blessed the land with rain. Rain, rain and more rain – it was a good day for the ground, but I don't remember the rain letting up much throughout the entire day!

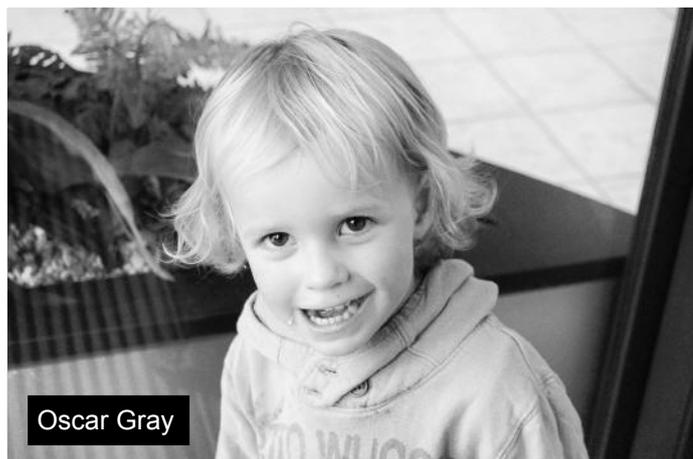
There was thankfully a plan B, which no one ever thought would need to be implemented.

We could hold our first ever plan B picnic in the Christian Life Centre, enabling all those who had planned to attend not to be disappointed.

As Angela and I have four children, we had been saying to our two youngest about a picnic to Alton Water. As old as they are, they don't always appreciate being told its wet

“ We were overjoyed to see others arrive and fight their way through the rain into the Church building some with happy excited children

outside so we won't do anything but stay at home indoors! However, mention to the children they can still have a picnic but it will be indoors somewhere else, and it's



Oscar Gray



Ruth Gray and Sarah Voller

"whoopaah way hay – let's go!" Consequently Angela and I arrived at the Christian Life Centre with Jade and Rebekah thinking maybe it's just our family which would chose an indoor picnic. We were overjoyed to see others arrive and fight their way through the rain into the Church building some with happy excited children. Anita came, Ruth turned up with Noah, Thomas and Oscar. Sarah and Mark came running in with Nate (Nathaniel) and Charlotte. Linda and Frank also arrived with grandchildren Katie and Lucy, and Jo came. Eventually a good number of people arrived for the indoor picnic.

Instead of picnic blankets we used indoor blankets or overthrows – we may not have had sunshine, but there were no wasps or ants or flies.

We set up the picnic area in the Church coffee area, enabling us to make drinks whenever the need arose. Then we set up indoor activities for the children, giving them ground rules and guidelines.

As a small group of adults, we had good fellowship while keeping an eye on and also joining in at times games with the children. Food, drink and fellowship in the presence of the Lord was precious and the time rapidly passed.

The day may have been a wet one but for those people who were still happy to meet together for fun, food and fellowship plus have a light diversion of a picnic and games for the children the day was certainly not wasted. On the contrary it worked very well and was enjoyable.

Plan B worked exceedingly well! In future we do not need to be nervous of having to divert some of our outdoor social events to the Christian Life Centre if the British weather lets us down. God never lets us down and when we gather in His Name there the blessings abound.

Church is reaching out with the love of Jesus to the homeless in our town

By Peter and Mary Howe

For some years now the River of Life Church has been seeking to serve the homeless in Felixstowe.

It started very small. I was invited to attend a meeting of local people who work in the community – housing officers, sheltered housing managers, and people from social housing.

We were then made aware of some of the cases in our town. The faith sector were asked what we were doing to help some of these needs. At that time not very much, was my thinking.

We then set about to see what help we could give these homes. River of Life gave a lovely hardwood seat to Sanctuary Housing for their new garden layout. They had just been received funding for an amazing wooden cabin so residents had a relaxing place to meet in the garden area. The seat was another place to sit in the summer months.

Sanctuary houses people of 18 years and over; sometimes a few single mums, too. Our Life Group tries to spend an evening once a year with the residents. This is usually fish and chips with them, their fish and chips are paid for by the Church. This year the managers were so encouraged because they had a full turn-out of residents for the evening. We were entertained by a young boy who talked about his rewarding time spent on a team-building day, constructing a raft. This event was funded by the local Rotary Club. He and another boy were presented with a certificate at the Orwell Hotel.

“Some have broken marriages, some have been involved in crime. They need our help, our love and support.”

In the summer, as a Life Group, we provided £70 towards food for those young people off on a sailing ship for seven days. This trip was inspired by Steve, one of the support workers at Sanctuary.

As a Church we are now supporting four sheltered housing providers – this being the provision of bags of food for those residents who may be without funding, or those people who have just moved into sheltered housing without little more than a carrier bag of personal things. The Emergency Food



Store is vital in helping in these circumstances, plus it helps Spring Waters Pregnancy Counselling and, of course, people in our own Church fellowship and wherever there is a need we can meet in the community.

We have been able to help people in sheltered housing by providing things like a bicycle, garden tools, plants and paint. The River of Life gave £99 for new bed linen and additionally much bed linen has been donated by Church members on an ongoing basis.

The whole area needs our prayers, so many people in need. We may ask why are they homeless? There is not a simple answer to this question, some have broken marriages, some have been involved in crime. They need our help, our love and support.

At Christmas again, as Church we gave presents to each homeless member. Things like socks for the men, toiletries, nice little luxuries, and some nice gift items for the ladies. It is wonderful to see the gift tags removed from the Christmas tree each year as people purchase the necessary gift stated on the tag and then we see the festive-wrapped packages placed under the tree with the same gift tag on. How rewarding that we can bless others in this way! We have been able to bless these homes each year now, for many years and we pray we will continue to be able to do so.

The Bible is very clear about looking after the poor and needy – Matthew 25v 35: “For I was hungry and you gave something to eat.”

We do thank all those who have given so generously to those in need.



The Felixstowe Volunteer Coast Patrol Rescue Service

Helping those in peril on our seas

Richard Cornwell reports on how the River of Life Church is linking up with the Felixstowe Volunteer Coast Patrol and Rescue Service to help keep it afloat.

It's been the toughest 12 months in its history for one of Felixstowe's most vital and precious services.

In the past 20 years the Felixstowe Volunteer Coast Patrol Rescue Service has saved the lives of around 70 people off our beaches and helped more than 1,400 others caught up in incidents and accidents.

It is part of the resort's network of emergency services – and is manned by a dedicated team of volunteers.

But last year – 2015 – saw its future in grave doubt. Chairman John Cresswell even went as far as announcing its closure.

The problems stemmed from the tidal surge of 2013 when the team was called to join the mission that night to rescue people stranded as rivers rose and the sea came over the top of defences all along the county's 47-mile coastline.

However, as the team was making its way towards the Gold Command centre in north Suffolk it was involved in an horrendous accident on the A12 at Foxhall, leaving its vehicles and boat a wreck in a crash in which team members were lucky to escape with their lives.

The huge bill for repairs and new equipment was then compounded by the loss of its storage facilities.

With finances running low – the service relies entirely on fundraising to keep it going – and not enough cash for fuel, the crew was forced off the sea but agreed to cover Felixstowe Carnival. The team was in the right place at the right time as two teenagers got into difficulty swimming near the pier and a large crowd watched as they were saved from drowning by the rescue service and brought to the safety of the shore.

That was when the community stepped in to help raise funds – including the River of Life Church, which has also offered help to overcome the storage problems.

Mr Cresswell said: “We consider it rare privilege to be able to help others in their time of need, especially if a life is saved.

“The incident on carnival day highlighted to both the public and the media our plight and hearing of this River of Life Church came to our assistance, with a donation from the congregation and an offer of help with our storage problems.

“After all our recent problems it is a feeling of immense relief and joy to be associated with a caring organisation such as the River of Life Church.

“We both share the same concerns over people's wellbeing but approach these concerns from different directions.

“ We consider it rare privilege to be able to help others in their time of need, especially if a life is saved

“This exciting project would entail the siting of smart converted 20ft shipping containers in the yard for storage, maintenance and training

“Talks are underway between the Church’s Trustees, Leadership Team and Coast Patrol regarding the possible long-term use of the Church’s old loading bay yard for a permanent operating base. This exciting project would entail the siting of smart converted 20ft shipping containers in the yard for storage, maintenance and training.”

The coast patrol and rescue service has also put a suggestion to the Leadership Team about exploring the possibility of the Church joining the Emergency Flood Plan and allowing the Church to be used as a short-term emergency evacuation holding area for flood victims to enable them to reach safety quickly – and await transfer to elsewhere – should there be another tidal surge.

Low-lying south Felixstowe had to be evacuated in the 2013 incident, and the Church, while located on the flood plain, is built at a height above the worst expected levels of any flood.



The rescue service was formed in 1996 after cutbacks in the Coastguard service saw the withdrawal of the Felixstowe Coastguard boat.

Today the service works closely with HM Coastguard, being tasked each summer to attend dozens of incidents off the resort’s coast – including swimmers, kitesurfers and sailboarders in difficulty; vessels running aground or in collision or suffering other catastrophes. Then team also work with the police on investigations, and UK Border Control; patrol the coast; give safety advice; and carry out many, many other activities and duties.

Below, the Volunteer craft and, above, the team’s Landrover



Finding comfort in the Lord in the darkest of days

By Kay Dinsdale

I would like to thank you all for your prayers and kindness over the last year.



Kay Dinsdale

I have suffered a back problem for many years and I have undergone several MRI scans. Each time I was in the scanner I would pray and talk to Jesus, the experience of being in one of these scanning machines is in fact quite claustrophobic and frightening – always I dealt with these feelings in prayer and I was comforted by the Lord.

I have had several injections into my spine for pain relief but unfortunately the effects only lasted a few weeks each time.

In April last year I underwent spine surgery. This was a success and all was going well until I developed a pulmonary thrombosis, which in turn gave me a heart problem.

The year progressed and I began to feel so much better – tests roved no long-term heart damage and I no longer needed to continue taking the Warfarin.

During July I had the misfortune to fall down concrete steps and sustained a broken wrist, severe bruising and yet again more pain. This really felt like the last straw and my inner strength to remain positive began to wilt. However, I again turned to Jesus and asked for his healing, comfort and love and in every darkest of dark moments my prayers were answered and I was surrounded by the warmth of the Holy Spirit.

I will close just by saying thank you so much to my Church family for the prayers, well wishes and loving care – which I feel each and every one of us at the River of Life are so fortunate to be part of . . . Praise the Lord and may we all be blessed.

'The growth had vanished - it was truly a miracle'



Facing cancer for the third time, Elizabeth Goldring put her faith totally in Jesus for her healing – and the power of prayer.

In January 2015 I was waiting for an appointment to arrive in the post for my six monthly check-up at the hospital. By February when it hadn't arrived I decided to go and see my GP Dr Ola Osubu (a member of our church) to ask for her to speak to the hospital on my behalf. She managed to get through and I was given March 2.

I always have to give a urine sample before the procedure but they came and told me that they couldn't continue with the camera because I had white blood cells in my urine. I was told to wait two to three months while they sent my sample away to the laboratory for testing.

“When the congregation were invited to come forward and pray over me, I would say 95% of the Church responded which was wonderful

By June I had not heard from the hospital so once again my GP Dr Ola managed to get me an appointment from the hospital. I was given July 2. I had many friends and family praying for me daily during this anxious time. People from Berkshire, Bristol, Cambridge, Northampton, Colchester, Ipswich, Norwich, and, of course, Felixstowe, so knowing I was covered in prayer was great!

It came as a shock therefore to me and my friend Frances (who was with me) as John (my husband) was away at a conference for five days in London, to hear the doctor tell me she was very worried because through the camera she could

see a growth in my bladder. She decided it would be right for me to have an operation asap under general anaesthetic to take a biopsy from the growth. She then explained that the biopsy would reveal whether this would prove to be a grade 1, 2 or 3 cancer. Grade 3 being the more serious. This would enable them to know the best treatment to give me afterwards. She also said that my previous operation three years beforehand to remove a kidney which was cancerous was shown to be a grade 3. I was shocked at this information also, because I had not been told this before!

During these anxious months I had been reading Psalm 91 from the Living Bible every day, out loud to myself with the word “I” replacing the word “You”. To me it was a declaration of God's promises to me and in this way I was rejecting the negative words that the doctor had spoken over me and trusting God even more for a miracle.

My friend Julie had been praying for me quietly in her home when she saw a vision of the whole of River of Life Church people gathered around me in a circle. She phoned John and told him and he then phoned our assistant pastor Sean who would be leading the service the following Sunday, to ask for this to happen. So when the congregation were invited to come forward and pray over me while I stood in the middle, I would say 95% of the Church responded, which was wonderful. Terry our pastor anointed my head with oil and everybody prayed. I was so pleased because I saw it as a response to what God was telling us to do.

The operation day came on July 23. This went very smoothly. When I was back in the ward with John by my side, the surgeon came and said he was very pleased how things had gone and was sure there was nothing sinister there with what he had seen. They had taken two biopsies anyway from my bladder and we were told that we had to wait another two weeks for results. They arrived two weeks and two days later. A letter confirming – “no growth and no cancer cells evident in my bladder”. I also had a full body scan and this was completely clear – Praise God. We believe a miracle had

taken place because on July 2 when Frances was with me, the admissions nurse showed the two of us the photograph taken from my bladder which was clearly showing a growth!

Having had cancer twice before, once in 1994 and again in 2011, I was not prepared to accept this news again. The Lord is amazing – He brought me through a cancer which had already spread (1994) and again it had spread (2011) but in both instances, miracles had happened. I knew He would do this again for me, but it was a battle of the mind. By declaring God’s written word daily and prayer but not speaking negative thoughts – He did it for me! When we speak out loud negatively, the enemy hears us but he doesn’t hear when we are thinking, so by not speaking out my fears but speaking only God’s words and promises to me I found peace in my heart.

“They had taken two biopsies anyway from my bladder and we were told that we had to wait another two weeks for results

This is the **Psalm**, and prayer, that I used every day:

I live within the shadow of the Almighty, sheltered by the God who is above all gods. This I declare, that He alone is my refuge, my place of safety, He is my God, and I am trusting Him. For He rescues me from every trap, and protects me from the fatal plague. He will shelter me with His wings! They will shelter me. His faithful promises are my armour. Now I don’t need to be afraid of the dark anymore, nor fear the dangers of the day, nor dread the plagues of darkness, not disasters in the morning. Though a thousand fall at my side, though ten thousand are dying around me, the evil will not touch me. I will see how the wicked are punished but I will not share it. For Jehovah is my refuge! I choose the God above all gods to shelter me. How then can evil overtake me or any plague come near? For He orders His angels to protect me wherever I go. They will steady me with their hands to keep me from stumbling against the rocks on the trail. For the Lord says: “Because I love Him, He will rescue me, He will make me great because I trust in His name. When I call on Him He will answer, He will be with me in trouble, and rescue me and honour me. He will satisfy me with a full life and give me my salvation.” **Psalm 91, Living Bible.**

Prayer ... “Heavenly Father, I thank you for your word. I choose to walk in your promises given to me. I confess Jesus Christ as Lord over my life. I have the power of God to make me whole and healed. Sickness I rebuke you. Sickness, disease, pain, I resist you in the Name of Jesus. You are not God’s will for my life. My days of sickness and disease are over! Jesus bore my sickness, weakness and pain. I am forever free! Father thank you for watching over your word to perform it on my behalf. I praise and bless You in Jesus’ Name!”

The other day I read about how the devil is always trying to keep believers from their God-given destiny. Offences, circumstances and temptations are some of the weapons he uses. But, as born-again believers, we have something greater within. That is the Holy Spirit and His Fruit. Developing that fruit will help us overcome those offences, circumstances and temptations.

What caught my attention was the idea that we should *develop* the Fruit of the Spirit. As a photographer, this brought to mind how photographs used to be made using film. A film camera exposes the film to light. The film, being sensitive to light records the image. But if you look at the film this image or picture can’t be seen. To all intents and purposes the film looks the same.



By Harman Hopkins

However, a change has taken place. When the light hit the surface of the film little grains of silver were affected by the light and an image or picture was formed. But because it can’t be seen it’s called a *Latent Image*. To see the image you must *develop* the film by immersing it in a chemical solution called a developer. Developing the film reveals the image that’s already there but has so far remained hidden.

Time to immerse yourself in the Word of God

Isn’t that just like us? If we are born of the Spirit and new creations in

Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Fruit dwell within our spirit. Just like that film although the image of Jesus lives within us it can’t be seen by our physical eyes. For people to see our true identity this image, like the film, must be developed. No, no, you don’t have to jump into a bath full of developing solution! Instead, get immersed in the Word of God. This Word will cause your true identity to become evident by the fruit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

I will leave you with a scripture that can help you develop this image. **Philemon 1:6 KJV says... That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.** As you acknowledge and confess all the good things that reside in your born-again spirit your true identity will be developed and become visible, just like the image on the film.

Jesus showed me that miracles do happen

By Barbara Bairstow

I came to the River of Life Church in 2008. My dear husband Jimmy had passed away. Before this he had been on a ventilator for six weeks at our home. It was important for us to have had this special time together. He was a lovely kind person to everyone who knew him.

Jimmy was a born again Christian from a Billy Graham Crusade at Wembley stadium. He truly loved our Lord. I did love our Lord but had found him not my favourite person! I could not see where I was going in life and at that point of time life with our Lord was not easy.

After I began attending River of Life Church, I found I loved singing the hymns and songs and one Sunday as I was worshipping found my arm and hand go up to the Lord automatically. I felt Him take my hand and grip it. This was the first time I had felt loved by the Lord.

My next step on my journey was the Alpha course. Yes, I heard a lot more about Jesus and it was all very interesting as we learnt about the cross. We learnt about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and we were explained to about speaking in tongues. I felt tongues would never be for me. However, not very long ago I found myself speaking in tongues! It was an easy thing for me to do and I never wanted it to end.



My next adventure was the Bible School. By this time I was hungering for more and more of the Lord's Word.

When J John came to the Church I bought a book titled "Jesus is Calling". It helped me to understand that while I was talking to the Lord, most importantly, the Lord was talking to me. I will not go anywhere today without that book.

I started attending the prayer group before the Sunday morning service. I have learnt a lot more about prayer and how important it is. Previously I had picked up my palm cross and thought about how the cross had come about and I had tears in my eyes as I thought: "Lord you died on that cross of shame for me. You died for me, you were in agony and then you arose. You paid the price to set me free and now I can live eternally."

The Lord has shown me that miracles really do happen. Over a year ago my daughter had become very ill. The

“Last year my consultant told me he could do nothing for me as my bones had gone too far due to Lupus ... this year he said he would operate on my hands because he believed he could do an operation.

doctor told us there was nothing else they could do to help her. We received awful news as she said that Julie would be dead before the weekend. The church had been praying and standing with me for Julie's healing. Thank you for praying for her. I felt your prayers and that you were praying with us for her and the Lord restored her and brought her through.

Last year my consultant had told me that he could do nothing for me as my bones had gone too far due to Lupus. However, this year he said he would operate on my hands because he believed he could do an operation. By September I had had the operation and was having physiotherapy. The physiotherapist was amazed as I had only had two treatments and did not need to come again. I said that maybe the operation was not as bad as I had believed it to be, and she replied that it was very serious indeed but that I had made a miraculous recovery! In the physiotherapist's opinion it was all to do with my state of mind, and I replied that it was all due to the Lord as I spoke to Him about the operation and the recovery all the time. I was told people normally need six weeks physio and I had only had two weeks. The stitches had been taken out and you could not even see the marks – it was a miracle. I was then told by the physiotherapist that I could start using knives and scissors again and I responded, "I have been doing so for two weeks," – and she was utterly amazed.

I no longer feel the left hand needs operating on. I now believe with the right hand functioning so well, plus I am right handed, the left hand is getting less use and is improving

I'm guided daily by the Lord and I am now starting to make cards which the church shop/library will sell and the funds will go into church ministry, and I love filling Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes. One shoebox enables one child somewhere in the world to have a few small gifts on Christmas Day. It is a joy and privilege to help in this way.

I no longer get fed up. I believe the Lord has calmed me down as I am reading His Word throughout the day. I am truly blessed.

This is my story, this is my song, praising my Saviour all the day long.



Working with God to fulfil his vision

By Dave Hunt

It all started with God giving me a picture of a room or hall full of people worshipping Jesus, hands raised and excited. This vision told me to bring worship leaders to Felixstowe.

Immediately I started to think small – who can I bring, who is local, what can I do, how do I do it and what about the cost? I kept all this to myself – I didn't even tell my wife Julie, and we always share everything! The reason I kept quiet was I wanted more confirmation from the Lord. Was this a Dave Hunt thing rather than a God thing, so I waited – silly I know, but that's me.

Discussions happened in my life over a few months, until one Sunday Juanita preached at Church and I knew that was it – spot on – thank you Lord – 100% confirmation that my vision was definitely not a Dave thing!

It was around this time the Big Church Day Out took place and the line-up of Christian artists included Noel Robinson. I was aware of two of his songs – Rain and Freedom, both requests on the radio show I host. I really felt led to see Noel lead worship and wow, what an amazing guy. Noel's heart for Jesus and the unity among Christians came across in abundance. Afterwards I spoke to Noel and he gave me his card and his mobile number.

Now this is the point I want to get across. I sent Noel a text when I got home and said I was blessed by the way he led worship and

would he consider coming to Felixstowe to the River of Life Church one day. This is the text I received back “OK Dave, lets make it happen.” Now that was confirmation for me that the vision God gave me was starting to appear. I had been thinking which worship leader do I know locally, and God gave me direct contact with Noel Robinson – an international and award-winning worship leader.

Noel's worship concert was the first event based around the vision God gave me. It was a great success and Noel had a theme of revival throughout the evening. Noel said: “Don't wait for others – revival starts with you.”

I would like to thank everyone behind the scenes for their encouragement, support and hard work. I thank the Leadership for their support and encouragement, plus I want to thank God for the excitement and fire in my heart He has given me to run with this vision. Last but certainly not least, I want to thank Noel Robinson and his band for an amazing Spirit-filled evening.

Watch this space – my picture will come true and the auditorium will be full to overflowing. “It's just around the corner.”



A busy year of events





Opposite page, Dedications - clockwise - Anita and Tsitsie bring Roland for Dedication; Andy and Steph bring Isabelle for Dedication; David and Louise bring Ariana for Dedication; and Jo and Rupert bring Indigo-Sky and Ruby Tuesday for Dedication.

This page, above: Coffee Shop Meal. Far right, Suffolk Historic Churches Trust Cycle Ride, and left, Terry Law. Below: Ian and Tracy Hallwood's wedding blessing; and Beth Roberts who took part in Race for Life.



at River of Life Church

Children's groups thriving



Tiny Tadpoles brings big benefits for mums, dads and carers, too

By Elizabeth Goldring

Tiny Tadpoles crèche was set up four years ago when I realised many mums, dads and carers were missing out on being able to listen to the word of God preached on a Sunday morning.

As a mum and grandparent myself, I was aware of how important this need was. I felt I wanted to start this ministry. The first six months was difficult for some small children to experience being left without their parents, but they soon settled in and enjoyed their times with us. We have a great team of volunteers (men and women, mums and dads, all DBS checked) who work together in the crèche caring for the little ones and because we have 18 people on the rota – each person only takes their turn once every nine weeks. Wonderful!

We have a large selection of toys available for 0-3 years. Our toddlers especially like the swing, the cooker, the house, the trampoline and the balls. Each child has their photograph on the wall above their own coat peg. Aah! Also plenty of books to read and some leaders sing songs ... which always bring a smile to their little faces.

Thank you to all who serve and are involved. You are all such a blessing not only to me but to all the lovely parents/carers who can spend eight weeks in the whole service – without distractions!

Weekly Toddlers session now nine years old

By Linda Tuffs

Was it really 2007 that the Toddler Group at River of Life Church first started?

I am amazed where the time has gone, but praise God the Toddler Group is still operating with enough staff. However, we can always do with more help.

Sue Harris is wonderfully organised and such a blessing to us all. Thankfully she does the registration (remembering names is not my forte). Sue also organises the kitchen and is a whizz at putting everything in its proper place in the cupboard at the end of the session! At the time of writing, autumn 2015, we have Derek Palmer, Julie Lummis and Mary Alexander helping in addition to Sean Englefield, our Trainee Pastor. Sue and I are most grateful for their practical and spiritual skills as we have a large number of toddlers with their adult family or carers attend each week. Toddlers love to play and adults like to chat so it is always good to have enough helpers from the Church.

The area we use in the Christian Life Centre is so spacious and we have plenty of equipment for the toddlers to use, including a small bouncy castle which goes down well with those who like to climb and jump!

Toddler Group takes place on Friday mornings in school term-time from 10am to 11.30am. At around 10.45am the craft, table toys, books and puzzles are cleared away ready for a sit down snack with tea/coffee and cake for the adults and squash, biscuits and bananas for the tots.

The morning closes with a nursery rhyme sing-song and musical instruments while we tidy up. A £1 donation is requested at registration whether you have one child or six but we stress youngsters are the responsibility of those who bring them and we do our best to provide a safe and healthy environment for all to enjoy themselves. If you are interested in joining us you will be made most welcome and those attending are always invited to any events being held in the Church building throughout the year.

Here are a few comments from those who attend regularly:

Alison, Colin and Linda: "The River of life is our favourite toddler group, very friendly, well organised and you are always made to feel very welcome."

Alaina: "We enjoy the River of Life toddler group and there is plenty for all ages, from 0 to 5 years old. There is floor play for the non walking children and table top activities for older children. For adults there is cake and conversation."

Wen: "This toddler group is lovely – people are very kind and my baby loves it so much."

Safe in His loving arms

By Debbie Watkins-Jones

We have been singing these words in church:

**“How high, how wide
How deep, how strong
Now by Your grace I stand
Healing is in Your hands”**

Additionally, I have been listening to a song by Martin Smith and Chris Tomlin, “I am Safe in Your Arms”. I for one know that it really **is** by His Grace that I stand and that healing really **is** in His hands.

We have had a pretty challenging year or two by most people’s standards and I am so thankful to have had Jevan, my husband, by my side, endlessly patient and loving, along with our daughter Rose.

My Mum who had moved from London to Suffolk in 2012 to be close to us after my Dad had died was in declining health and became very unwell indeed in the summer of last year. It was wonderful and humbling when she eagerly agreed to Trevor Harris praying with her in hospital during the last few days of her life. Mum opened up like a smiling flower as he gently led her to the Lord. In November last year mum died and went to be with the Lord and we had a sad but peaceful Christmas.

During those last few intensive months with mum I knew that I needed to seek medical attention myself. On 6 January, 2015, I was given a diagnosis of cancer after which followed tests and scans to determine the extent and to plan treatment. I was told that my type of cancer usually responded well to radiotherapy backed up with chemotherapy but that my treatment would need to be radical as I had left it a while and the cancer was aggressive.

This was unquestionably a scary and shocking time during which I learnt with massive support from Terry and Juanita to press into God and to use my faith. I learnt to tell the devil where to go during the wee small hours night after night as he tried to undermine my faith with fear. Using scriptures to calm and reassure yourself of God’s love and His plan for you really does work!

Once the treatment began we were surrounded by love and support from the few people we had told. Terry and Juanita were constantly there with phone calls, visits when necessary and plenty of tissues. Eunice was on hand to help with appointments when Jevan was unable to come (there is love and healing in her fish pies!) Trevor was stalwart in prayer



and told me that I had an angel encompassing me with a burning sword. He told us that we were being buttressed in prayer and we felt it.

I wanted to carry on as normally as possible and not be defined by cancer but I had to come clean when I lost my hair! At this point I told Veronica that God had told me to dance under her flag and that is where I was to be found, dancing for joy and surrounded by the power of the Holy Spirit at the very time I had been warned that I may need morphine and be in hospital!

I wondered if God was fed up with my repeating endlessly the scriptures I was standing on and said silently during one daily radiotherapy session: “Lord I would just like to see your face,” to which I had the immediate response: “You ARE seeing My face.” This was a moment I will never forget.

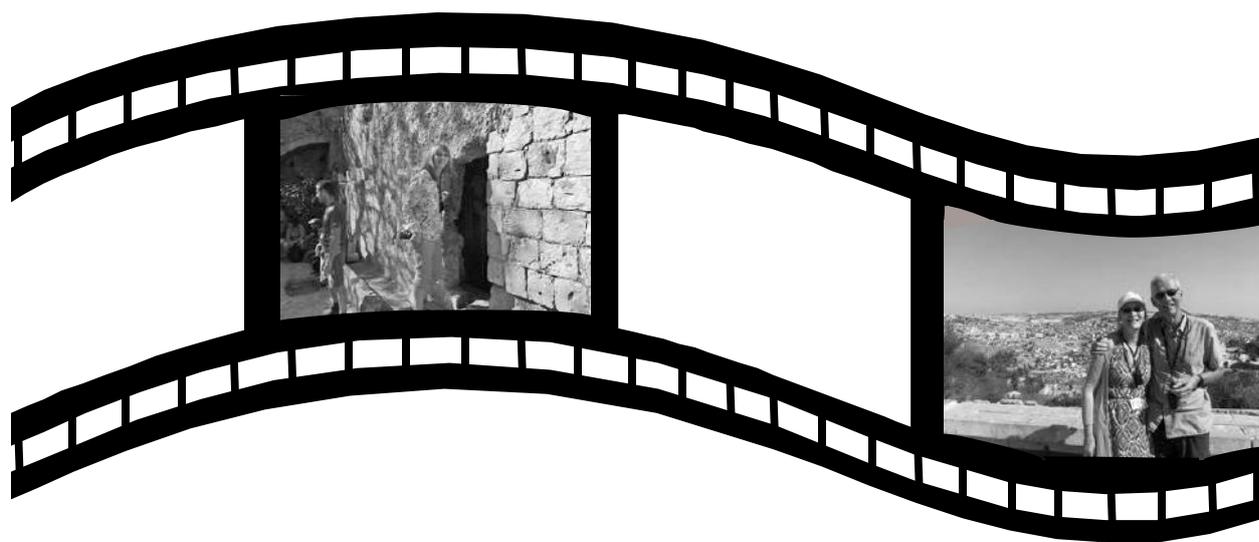
The strength and focus needed to get through the treatment is all consuming and I personally felt surprisingly adrift once it had finished. However, side effects were still gathering momentum. Again the Lord placed exactly the right people around me at the right moments.

After checks and scans, three months later I was told that there is no longer any sign of cancer in my body. My response surprised the medical people, not for the first time, as I shouted “Praise God” – then I sobbed.

I could have shared my story in Church at that point but there was more to learn then about God’s mercy and tenderness. He has carried me while I felt crumpled and exhausted, when I felt I should have been jumping around and blowing a trumpet. He has prompted unexpected texts, phone calls, prayers and invitations from people and woven details together beautifully. He meets us exactly where we need Him to.

This has not been an easy journey but there have been untold blessings and I know that I am enabled to move forward as the woman He meant me to be.

I know now Lord that I am safe in Your arms.



Holy Land trip made the Bible come alive

By Linda Tuffs

In October 2015 my husband, Frank, and I had the privilege of a very full tour of Israel in a group of 34 led by Chris and Lindy Hill. For weeks afterwards Frank was telling everyone we came across what a great time he'd experienced and how much history he'd learned about the Jews and Israel's past. He kept saying "it was the best holiday I've been on". I am sure that I shall keep on recalling nuggets of information from my time in Israel, as I read through God's Word, way into the future. It really does make the Biblical stories come to life and what an honour to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and his disciples.

We visited historical digs and heard words read from scripture where 'the Word' had uttered them. Whether sitting on the Temple steps where the Lord sat, or in the Garden of Gethsemane as He agonised over the coming final hours of His life, or tracing the steps He took after His arrest, it all brought the Bible to life for each one of the group. The Holy Spirit personally touched and challenged us in many areas of our walk with God. I feel I have returned from this trip a different person than when I left England.

In Jerusalem we stayed at the Olive Tree Hotel, were up early each morning and having consumed a banquet of a breakfast, were greeted on the coach by our driver and our excellent guide, Batya. I was amazed she could carry so much information about Israel's past and present in her head. Every trip began with where we were visiting today, the song

"This is the day that the Lord has made", and a prayer by Chris Hill. Batya would point out all sorts of things as we travelled along, telling us to look left then right and what was significant about that area, until we reached our first stop. I hadn't realised how rocky the landscape was or how hilly or desolate in certain areas with pockets of very fertile ground planted with fruit or olive trees set out in rows of greenery, then back to sheer cliffs either side of the coach as we journeyed up to a mountain top for breath taking views.

Amongst the places we visited while in Jerusalem was the Mount of Olives where Jesus ascended into heaven. We saw panoramic views of the Temple Mount and the journey Jesus would have taken on Palm Sunday as he rode from Bethany into the city. We had 20 minutes of quiet reflection in the Garden of Gethsemane where His disciples fell asleep rather than praying with Him. The Lord spoke to me also about "not falling into temptation" and I had to repent of how I am too busy doing other things rather than spending time with God. It is essential for us to give Him honour by devoting appropriate time daily to ensure that close relationship He wants with us, His children, is maintained. Chris Hill emphasised that hard times are here now for many Christians and we too must be ready to stand firm in our faith.

At the Western Wall we encountered many people deep in prayer and were told that every piece of paper pushed into the wall was retrieved and kept safe somewhere.

We also visited the excavations underneath the Wall where several elderly Jewish women spent time praying as well. We saw the shepherd fields where the angels brought ‘good tidings of great joy’ to those watching their flocks on the hillside when the Lord was born in Bethlehem as well as visiting the Palace and Burial Chamber of King Herod the Great. Frank was very interested in the Dead Sea Scrolls Museum and I was touched by our visit to the Garden Tomb.

We also visited the Pool of Bethesda and took communion at the place where Jesus was raised from the dead. One coach journey took us to the lowest point on earth – the nearby Dead Sea. Herod had built a palace and fortress at Massada. Many of us took the opportunity to bathe in the Dead Sea before we journeyed back to our hotel.

Our second hotel, Ron Beach Hotel, was even better than the first one with wonderful views, a larger selection of amazingly presented food and beautifully set out surroundings so that all bedrooms looked onto the Lake of Galilee which Frank swam in as soon as we got there followed by a dip in the swimming pool!

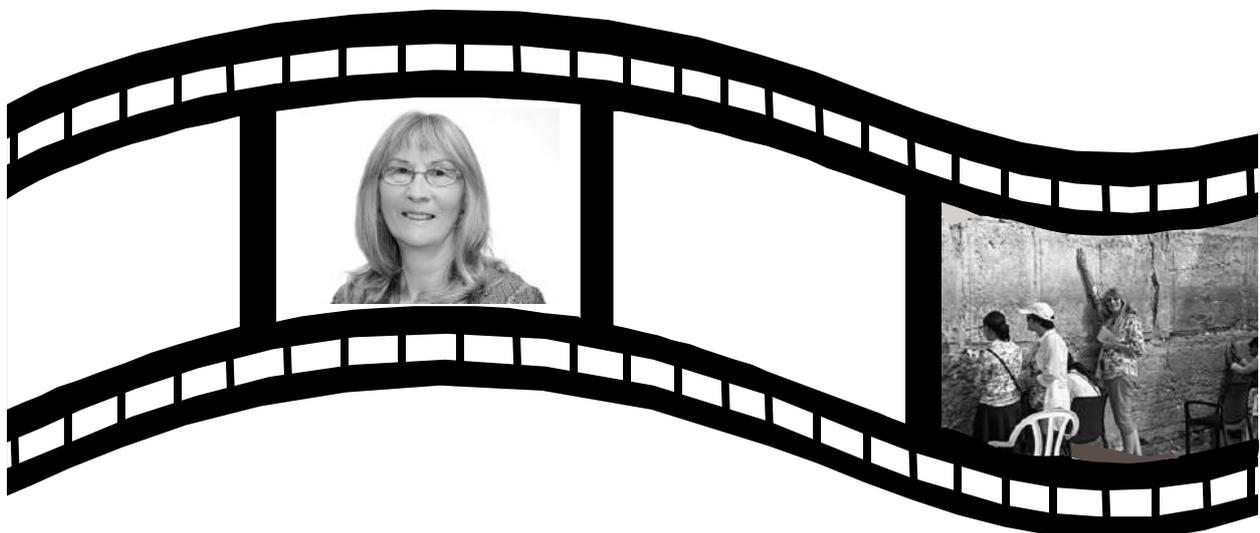
From here we visited the Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus preached, Capernaum where Peter, Andrew, James and John worked in the fishing industry, and the Kibbutz Ginosar, where we saw the remains of a 1st Century fishing boat that had been repaired so many times it was constructed of 12 different types of wood. It was perfectly preserved at the correct temperature for us to see the type of boat Jesus sailed in when He stilled the storm that arose on the Lake. That day we also rode in a similar boat and had our own spiritual experience on the quiet waters once the motor was switched off and Chris held a brief service. From the Golan Heights we viewed the entire Sea of Galilee and visited the Gamla Nature Reserve and Caesarea Philippi.

Another day we journeyed to Megiddo where God showed He was the only true God when Elijah called down fire to



burn up the sacrifice he’d prepared and had the victory over Baal’s prophets. We also visited a reconstruction of Nazareth in Biblical times with sheep, goats and llama roaming around free and saw how wine was made, wool spun, wooded articles made and food produced.

Well, I’ve left out so much but hope it has given you a flavour of what to expect in case you are able to enjoy this holiday of a lifetime for yourself. It is well worth saving up for and I would recommend Chris and Lindy’s Tour to anyone as all the time they are proving what it says in the Bible is true. All the archaeological digs are revealing this and you can’t help but be touched by the experience of walking where Jesus did 2,000 years ago. The next tour, their 96th. will be in September 2016 and Batya will be there to give you her vast knowledge and make the Bible come alive even more.

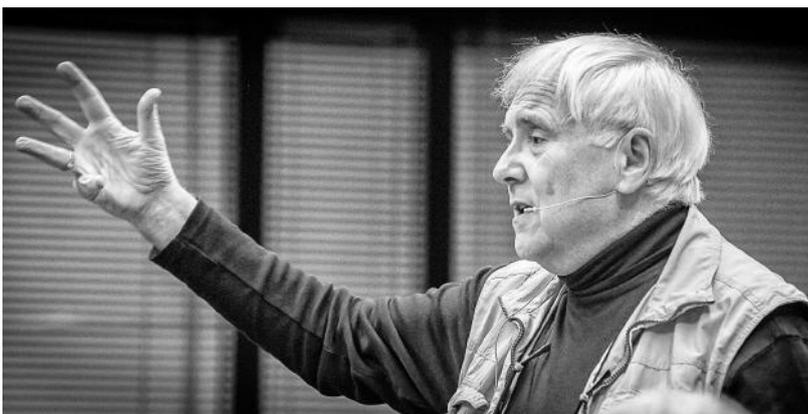


A busy year of events





Opposite page, above and below: Worship, and, top, Harman Hopkins signing on the cycle ride, and below Barbara Seglie and Martin Newman welcomed as new members, and below Father's Day. This page, top and left, Tammy Snowden, Nick Clifton and Patrick Sandell being Baptised. Below, Chris Hill speaking at Word of Life Bible School. Bottom left, Richard and Rachel Cornwell's 30th wedding anniversary blessing, and, right, Tracy Hallwood and Sally Verow with the Samaritan's Purse Christmas Shoeboxes.



at River of Life Church

To everything there is a time

Pam and Ivan Thurlow



On May 30, 2015, the River of Life Coffee Shop in Hamilton Road closed its doors for the very last time. Open since the early days of the River of Life Church, it was proving impossible to find replacement managers and so after nearly 13 years this much-loved facility had to close.

Many, many people have been involved in this work and it would be inexcusable to let this time pass without recognising their love and commitment to both the shop and the customers over so many years.

Pam and myself have been managing the shop for the past nine years since 2006, and we owe so much to so many who have cleaned, repaired, made cakes, and staffed the coffee shop throughout this time. Everyone who has worked in the shop has countless stories to tell of customers whose lives have been impacted by the River of Life Coffee Shop, whether rejoicing at the birth of children or grandchildren, tears with someone who has lost a loved one, or praying with others who are facing life challenges. We will all miss those opportunities to engage with ordinary people and share the love of God with them.

However, as it says in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To everything there is a time" – to every 'time' there is an end, and to every end there is the opportunity for a new beginning. We pray that all who

have enjoyed the coffee shop will join with us in looking forward to what lays ahead, a new beginning for each one of us, new joys, new challenges, new opportunities. This is a new 'time'!



In 2014 I was appointed Catering Co-ordinator. I wasn't sure at first if this was my calling but I have been blessed by it and really enjoy it.

However, I couldn't do it without the excellent, hard-working team who help me and I thank them for their help and support.



I am responsible for overseeing all the catering needs of the Church. It can be providing refreshments before Bible School or Prayer Meetings. It can be sorting all the food that is brought in for a shared lunch following a marriage blessing and putting it and the crockery and cutlery out. It is a privilege to be part of these occasions. It can be purchasing food for the Understanding Church Life courses or the annual Life Group Leaders and Pastors meeting and supper. For these events I buy in the majority of the food already prepared and I will make desserts and perhaps something for someone with special dietary needs but sometimes, as for Noel Robinson and his team's supper, we make everything.

Catering corps keeping the food flowing

I am also responsible for making sure we have a supply of biscuits, plastic cups, and other bits and pieces and I deep clean the kitchen several

times a year and am very grateful to the lovely people who have helped me thus far. On my own it can take the best part of a day but with just one helper we can finish in time to have lunch somewhere!

My grateful thanks to those who came forward when we ran seriously short of volunteers in 2015 and a call was put out, explaining the situation. Praise the Lord, we had an excellent response.

Alpha is something close to my heart as I came to the Lord through Alpha. Traditionally the Catering Co-ordinator has not been involved with the Alpha catering but this year I took it on and am very grateful for the help I received from everyone including some Alpha kitchen stalwarts who were a fantastic support. It really was a team effort and no-one complained when we were faced with different dietary needs at the last moment and a dash to the shops was required!

I thank the Lord I am able to carry out this ministry. However, I can always do with more help and if you feel you would like to be involved in some aspect of the catering at River of Life please contact me. I would love to include you. There is always a need for more helpers.



Concert a huge success

In April 2015 River of Life Church hosted a concert in aid of Cancer Research UK.

This event was compered by Rachel Sloane of Radio Suffolk and organised by Gemma Ninnmey from the Felixstowe Local Committee. The programme included a choir from Trimley St Martin's Primary School, several piano, guitar and vocal soloists from Felixstowe Academy, the Felixstowe Salvation Army Songsters, Suffolk Flute Group and Tom King a local folk singer on guitar.

There was also Pamela Hewitt, a classical pianist, Linda Owens, a local singer, and Andrew Fairley on trench flute. The evening ended with the Felixstowe Sings Out Choir conducted by Hattie Bennett which consisted of people who had been touched by cancer. They gave a rousing end to a very enjoyable evening.

There was a charge for tickets and all the money raised will support CRUK's work to defeat cancer. The concert was in memory of a committee member Wendy Crampton, who



helped to raise a great deal of money for Cancer Research UK. Their new research strategy sets out an ambitious target that in 20 years' time three in four people will survive cancer for at least 10 years.

The concert was well attended with the Mayor of Felixstowe, and Suffolk Coastal MP Therese Coffey enjoying the evening.

Cancer Research is continuing to look for volunteers to raise life-funds and help beat cancer sooner.



Learning skills that we all hope will never be needed

By Sue Harris

I am pleased to say that we had a good response from the recent appeal for more people to join the first aid team, although we can always do with more help, which of course helps spread the times each one of us needs to be on duty. By the time you read this article everyone on the team will have had professional training for first aid.

I have been on the first aid team at River of Life Church for the past five years and now head up the team. Thankfully I have not had to have much practice at first aid in the Church as most times first aid is given by prayer first!

A while back the Church purchased a defibrillator which members of the first aid team were trained to use. I for one was rather concerned about being trained to use one, but after the training I am confident in using this equipment if and when it is ever needed. Hopefully it never will be needed.

I believe that everyone should be first aid trained during their lifetime. One never knows when any of us could be called upon to help save a person's life.

I also use first aid when I am on duty as a Town Pastor in Felixstowe. You never know exactly what to expect between the hours of 10pm and 3am. It is reassuring to know you can help someone in need before the expert medical folk arrive.

Can I ask you to prayerfully consider joining the first aid team at River of Life Church? I take this opportunity to thank everyone who does serve in this way – it is a blessing to know we can be of help to one another in emergencies.



Sue Harris

Launch of new Church website for 2016

By Harman Hopkins

AS I write, a new website is being developed for River of Life Church. David Jennings (the Technerd) is hard at work coding the new site.

So, by the time you read this, the new site should be up and running.

It is based on the latest web design technologies and I trust you find the new site gives you a much improved experience.

Whether you are using a smartphone, tablet or desktop, it aims to make it easier to find relevant information such as upcoming events, articles, testimonies and audio/visual resources such as recordings of Sunday's sermons.

Links to other resources e.g. the River of Life Facebook pages will also help to keep the site active and relevant to our church family.

So, please make use of it at: www.riveroflifechurch.net. Also, please

let us know about your experience of the site:

- Do you find it easy to use?
- Is it good for you when using your smartphone or tablet?
- Can you find the information you need?
- Are there other things you would like to see on the site?
- Any other comments you feel would help improve the site.



Church family

Alpha is just the beginning of a lifelong relationship with Jesus

By Brian and Del Oakley

When God knocked for a second time on our door to ask if we would lead Alpha – the first had been while we were living in Manila in the Philippines – we really felt the prompting of the Holy Spirit and were quick to open it wide and embrace the opportunity almost before realizing the implications.

With much encouragement from pastoral staff and large helpings of practical help from a very experienced and committed group of Alpha veterans we made it through the first course!

As we look back, it's good to reflect on the lows and highlights of the season. What a joy to welcome new guests into the Church but as we moved closer to Holy Spirit Day we were very much aware of satan's interference in God's plan. We experienced similar conflicts through earlier encounters during our Christian walk so, in some ways, we came to anticipate and expect a repeat as Alpha attendees moved closer to Jesus.

What were the highlights? Well, we have plenty of those but the Holy Spirit Day must go down as the best. I think everyone felt the close presence of the Holy Spirit as Alvin Slaughter's rendition of Holy Spirit Rain Down built up to a crescendo during the closing worship session. That was a song which we'd first heard many years ago, loved from the first hearing and never tired of since. Strange to think that I'd hesitated in selecting it because I'd thought it may be a little too deep for new believers. Little did I know that it would touch many a



heart and we'd be asked for the artist's name later by several listeners. There was a feeling of emptiness as the final Monday night session came to a close. However, Alpha is not the end, hopefully, for the new believers it's just the beginning of a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ with the prospect of everlasting life in heaven to follow. We have already witnessed attendees joining Life Groups, becoming baptised and reflecting God's love in special ways.

Alpha is a wonderful way to discover spiritual truth, without pressure, in a really comfortable environment. Our challenge now is to build on our first leading experience and make the 2016 Alpha season even more special by attracting many more participants. It's our prayer that River of Life Church will join us in this mission and feel confident to invite friends and family on the forthcoming Alpha so that many more lives can be saved for Jesus Christ.



Above: The Alpha Holy Spirit Day, with Brian and Del and the Alpha Catering Team, below. Here the Alpha Supper is in full swing.

The name with purpose and power

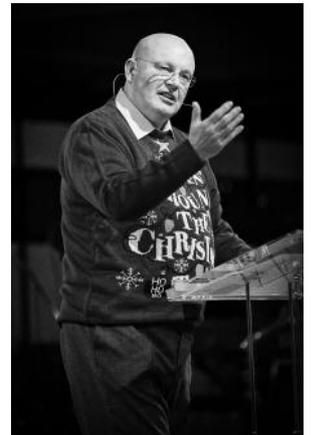


People of all ages came together to celebrate Christmas at River of Life Church with a special Carol Service.

Younger members of the church were among those who played music for the event, which was attended by the mayor of Felixstowe, Doreen Savage, and her escort Peggy Osborne.

Lead pastor Trevor Harris challenged people present to respond to the Gospel as he spoke about the name of Jesus – how our Lord's name explains the purpose, the person and the power of God.

Jesus' name means Saviour and God's purpose in sending him into the world was to save us.



Trevor said: "This was no ordinary birth. This was no ordinary baby. Jesus was a special baby – we call it The Incarnation – it means that God Himself was in this baby. God was entering a human body.

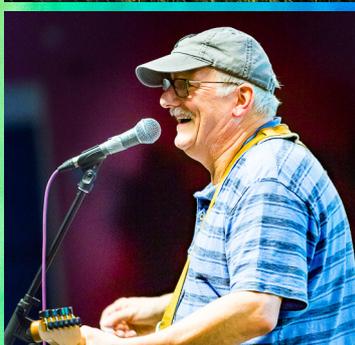
"So Jesus was God entering our human world. This is the extraordinary truth that, in Jesus, God came to us in a real physical, human way."

The power of God was in Jesus' name in what he came to do – saving people from their sins.



Top: Members of the Younger Church perform a selection of carols, and, below, Nina and Rhea play an item at the Carol Service. Top right: Pastor Trevor Harris. Left, Funmi reading the Word of God, and, right, Barbara and Martin worshipping.





Alpha 2016

Alpha

What do you think

Free Alpha Supper and Introductory Video
Friday 9th September. Course starts on
Monday 26th September.



Alpha, a great place to make friends and
ask questions

For more information go to our
website: www.riveroflifechurch.net
or phone the office on 01394 273700