

CENTRAL NEWS



GOOD NEWS STORIES from the CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 2016

Welcome to the Summer Edition of CENTRAL NEWS



In terms of Association life it has been a significant period, especially with the encouragement to 'dare greatly' and THE GATHERING events. Time will tell whether this was something worth the Association driving (it

would be really helpful to hear your views), although at the very least it has offered what I call 'a nudge' towards connecting more deeply with our God, our culture, our selves and hopefully one another.

I do hope you will have an opportunity to visit the Association FaceBook page or Web site to discover some of the videos and stories there. You will find that some of our smaller churches have taken small but brave steps, and I must recommend the video of Andrew Goldsmith at Ampthill Baptist Church who ran a five week course focussed on 5 BIG QUESTIONS in the local COSTA Coffee shop. A great example of Daring Greatly!

On this front page you will find an article by Nicki Pitt describing her experience of the FOOTSTEPS Course which I particularly

want to highlight as new courses will be starting up in the autumn: Footsteps 1 [and 2] are held on 10 Saturdays, September to June, from 10 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. (details can be found at www.centralba.org.uk — click on the Footsteps button on the front page). I think I have offered my opinion before that this course is one of the best things that we are doing as an Association to help educate and train leaders & members of our churches. On those occasions that I have visited I have been struck by the sheer BUZZ around the place, resulting from folk engaging with studying their faith at a deeper level.



Lastly I trust that we will be seeing a number of you at the CBA Assembly in June. The afternoon session will have a magazine format and there will be an opportunity for a sharing of some of the great things that are going on in 'your' church in a 'just a minute' style — so please come prepared.

Colin Pye



FOOTSTEPS

WARNING: FOOTSTEPS WILL CHANGE YOU!

After many years of attending church I had a good foundation of Christian knowledge, been involved in Bible study groups and quite a few aspects of ministry. However, attending the Footsteps course has enabled me to grow in ways that I never expected.

Although I knew that it would not be like going back to school I did not know how the teaching would be delivered, expecting it to be like a seminar with some questions. The reality of Footsteps is that although the speakers have prepared sessions to cover the course, crowd participation is actively encouraged; in fact it is what makes the course! As well as taking in what was being spoken about I had to get to grips with the different viewpoints that were being introduced by my fellow Footsteppers. This was invaluable as I heard interpretations and ideas that were completely fresh to me – having the freedom to explore things deeper than ever, with such a varied group of people and cultures. It has been a safe place where all comments are welcome and time taken to explore them.

I have enjoyed each and every aspect of Footsteps. It has not seemed the huge commitment that I signed up to, one Saturday every month for ¾ of the year – it has been an absolute joy. The subject matters are not wishy-washy, really meaty topics in fact,

but because of the participation and explorations it is not just a fact learning exercise, but a way to get a better understanding of Christian faith and values, with practical ideas introduced too.

I have never been interested in history or geography, but for me Footsteps has opened up a new passion for these subjects. I have learnt that it is through understanding the historical and geographical settings of the bible that the words can fully come to life. Before, I had listened to what others had interpreted in sermons and studies, but now I realise that I have the key to unlocking things for myself – wow! Yes, I may come to the same conclusion as what I already heard, but I have a better understanding of why, which makes all aspects of my ministry stronger.

Footsteps does not answer every question but rather equips on how to look for the answer, which usually leads to more questions. The course gave me a deeper knowledge and respect of my Baptist roots and left me hungry to know Jesus even deeper – so much so that I am 2/3 of the way through Footsteps 2.

Footsteps has given me a surer confidence about my personal faith, having changed my relationship with the Bible, and therefore my relationship with Jesus. I feel equipped to speak about Jesus in a more rounded way than ever before, and the Footsteps experience will no doubt continue to impact on my future ministry.

Nicki Pitt is from Great Missenden BC



When JAZZ meets GOSPEL A Home Mission Story

On Saturday 6th February 2016, we hosted a jazz concert featuring the Gary Wood Quintet (with myself on saxophone on the right of the picture). Trumpeter and

vocalist Gary is a member of Ampthill BC, Beds, where he worships alongside Roger Evan, the band's pianist. The concert featured gospel-soaked jazz classics interspersed with Gary's PowerPoint presentation on the influence of both Gospel music and the Gospel itself on many of the jazz greats such as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and John Coltrane... The music was accessible and entertaining and Gary's presentation style certainly drew in the audience who thoroughly enjoyed themselves.



The Gary Wood Quintet

Our little church was packed with over 100 in attendance, some from the congregation and other churches, but also many others: local jazz fans, school parents, neighbours, friends of friends... The low-key Christian content was there but certainly not 'in your face', again thanks largely to Gary's communication skills and inclusive style. Because of a Mission Initiative Grant we were able to distribute flyers locally and offer free refreshments in the interval. We even managed to feed the band.



This event also coincided with the opening of our new kitchen, fitted into a new extension. We have raised a lot of the funds for this ourselves, but it has also been made possible by the Herts Baptist Churches Church of the Year Appeal and a loan from the Baptist Building Fund, as well as other funds too. For over 50

years Howlands has made do with a tiny galley kitchen. For the first time ever at the jazz concert our catering team were able to serve drinks through a hatch. It might sound a small deal but this new facility is really going to open up new possibilities for us, and, to quote The Carpenters, we've only just begun...

As ever at Howlands we are very grateful for Home Mission which has provided half of my part time stipend since my family joined the church in 2007. Without it we would have moved on years ago, but it enables us to stay where we sense God's call to be, and hopefully provide some consistency in ministry to the church. It has been a privilege to see the church develop and grow in number, gifting and depth with the Lord. Community links continue to develop through our thriving toddler and youth groups as well as fun days, Alpha, crafty coffee mornings and more. Many outside groups are now regularly using the premises which not only gives us extra funds but also further links locally. The church is now truly something of a community hub.

We wouldn't have thought it viable for us to host a jazz concert, but thanks to the Mission Initiative Grant as well as the minor detail that the band played for no fee and relied on the audience's generous retiring offering, it was not only doable, it was a rip roaring success. If anyone is interested in hosting a 'When Jazz Meets Gospel' concert in their church, Gary can be contacted through his website <http://www.jazzexperience.co.uk/>.

Dan Foster is Minister of Howlands BC, Welwyn Garden City

COMMUNITY LIBRARY

BREACHWOOD GREEN

When Herts Library service decided to end visits of the mobile library to the rural village of Breachwood Green, the church members stepped in and offered to set up a community library. This built on the existing "exchange" library already run. The new library was launched with 250 books donated by the Library service, covering many sorts of reading material, and catering for those for whom it is not always convenient to get to libraries in local towns. The books were sorted by volunteers and gave valuable experience to two Duke of Edinburgh award students from the congregation. The library is open at the same time as the weekly church Coffee Club that offers the villagers an opportunity for coffee, biscuit and chat. Daring Greatly? Well, maybe pushing the boat out a little



CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

with
Lynn Green
Mark Ord
Ruth Bottoms

Ministers' Conference 2016
10-12 October 2016 at High Leigh, Hoddesdon

Designed by Fawcok



CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

SMALL CHURCH DAY 2016
Sat 17th September

following on from the success of last years' event we are delighted to invite you to a second day of reflection & encouragement for those in small churches

Leadership, Worship & Preaching in the small church

with Ruth Bottoms & Carol Murray

9.30am - 3.30pm
Abbey Centre (chapel)
 Northampton, NN4 0RZ
 very near J.15A of the M1
 free parking

Cost £10
 light lunch provided

to book in please go to
www.centralba.org.uk/small-churches-network/



Ministry in the 'Third Age'

Carel and I arrived in England in January to begin yet another adventure in God's plan for our lives. I suppose that can seem a bit presumptuous to say; yet that is exactly what we believe. When Carel and I were still a young married couple—about fifty years ago—we made a commitment together to go and serve wherever God might lead us. And has He led us? He certainly has!

After serving as pastor in three churches in Texas and Oklahoma, we were appointed missionaries in 1973. I was thirty-one and my child bride? Well, I'm not revealing that! We have served on the islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique, and several cities in France. In all we served 32 years as missionaries in a French-language environment, making cross-cultural adjustments in both a Caribbean, then European context. How grateful we are to God for leading us to serve Him in these places and among many we now call brothers and sisters.

Many would consider the kind of life we've led as pure folly. I believe Jesus when he said, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life" (Luke 18.29-30). He who loses his life for Christ and the Gospel truly does find it.

We came home in October 2007 to begin a final furlough before official retirement in May of the following year. Since that time I've tried to keep busy. I did much Missions promotion for my sending body. After the terrible earthquake in Haiti, I spent a lot of time there helping set up the disaster relief response efforts of Texas Baptists. Then for three and one-half years I was pastor of Second Baptist Church, Dallas. Sound like retirement to you?

Let me confess to you what I found out in retirement. I don't like not being on mission for God. Of course I could serve in a home church in Texas as a member. In fact, I did that. But my whole adult life has been spent trying to use my gifts and calling to make an impact for the Kingdom. When I knew my time at Second Baptist was coming to a close, I remembered hearing about the possibility of volunteering in England through American Interim Pastors Ministries (AIPM), the goal being to try to help a church grow again to the point that it can call an English pastor. Knowing that my own experience had proved my giftedness for cross-cultural ministry, I felt that God was nudging us in this direction. Thanks to the services of a UK charity, Gateshead International Ministries (who act as our employers), we have been able to respond positively to the call of God.

Coming to join the family of believers at Ringstead has felt like coming home. Our prayer is that God will now grow His church as, together; we seek to impact our village for the Kingdom. Don't ever retire from serving the Lord!

Robert Shehane was welcomed as Interim Minister of Ringstead BC in January



Carel & Robert Shehane

Now that the warmer weather is here, many Baptist churches will be holding community and fundraising events.

The good news is, if you have a policy with Baptist Insurance, most one-off events are already covered under your church insurance policy.

So if you're planning a church fete, or just holding a Sunday School outside, these events are considered normal church activities and your public and employer's liability insurance covers these events. To help you control any risks in organizing an event a risk assessment needs to be completed to ensure reasonable steps are being taken to prevent harm to your people and any visitors. Best practice recommends the risk assessment be recorded in writing and retained.

For more information and guidance on events visit www.baptist-insurance.co.uk/events



Your Responsibility for Church Organised Events
 A guide for churches

Introduction
 Welcome to our church guide about planning and holding church events. Organised events, such as a church fete or concert are a great way to welcome the work of the church and bring new people into the church family. They often provide an opportunity to raise much needed funds too. However, without adequate planning and organisation, the running of such activities can lead to accidents and injuries.

This guide gives you a brief overview of what you need to consider when planning church events and activities, and directs you to the more detailed guidance that is available on our website.

For more information and guidance, go online at www.baptist-insurance.co.uk

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 Please do not contact us for individual claims.
 Email us at enquiries@baptist-ins.com

Find out more information on our website when you see this symbol



Baptist Insurance
 Covers all members and church insurance

I was a stranger AND YOU WELCOMED ME

Although we don't always notice, there are many churches which are near to mosques. Oakridge Baptist Church and Jubilee Road Mosque in High Wycombe are next door neighbours (see photo below). The most common question asked by fellow Christians from outside the area is, "isn't that a challenge?" and they are surprised when told, "No, it is a joy and a privilege".

The relationship between the two places of worship has always been courteous and neighbourly, albeit with occasional friction between individuals over parking. On the occasions of the annual birthday parade of the Prophet reasonable efforts were made by the organisers to keep the noise levels down until Oakridge's morning service concluded.



Seven years ago, Oakridge BC became one of seven host churches (one church per night of the week) for the Wycombe Homeless Connection (WHC) Night Shelter programme. The Night Shelter runs on a limited basis through the winter months providing beds, hot dinner, breakfast and showers for homeless people.

About three years ago, Imam Jeelani from Jubilee Road Mosque began noticing that people were congregating around the Jubilee Road entrance to Oakridge Baptist Church as he was arriving to conduct evening prayers. His interest piqued, he made enquiries and was invited with a couple of the members of the mosque to visit the Night Shelter to see it in operation. He was really taken with the ministry and described it as a work of salvation. Following this encounter, the mosques in High Wycombe have raised significant funds and a number of Muslim volunteers have been trained by WHC to participate in the Night Shelter programme.

What began as an act of curiosity about the work of a Christian charity (WHC), has become one of a several projects



Mark & Imam Jeelani

that have united the community of Christians, Muslims and others of High Wycombe around a common social concern to act together with loving kindness in this and a variety of other very practical ways.

One of these ways has been for Oakridge Baptist Church to come outside as the morning service ends on the day of the Prophet's birthday parade and share peace and friendship with the paraders who in turn

distribute white roses symbolising peace in our community. The parade is then waved on its way by Oakridge Baptist Church and at its end is welcomed into the market square by the members of All Saints Parish Church. The speeches that follow are fuelled by rhetoric that our community is united around love of God and love of neighbour, and that what unites us is far greater than what divides us.

At our Christmas 2015 morning service, Imam Jeelani came to Oakridge to bring greetings from the mosque as a modern day 'wise man from the east' and this reciprocal act was appreciated by many. Wycombe may not be unique in Christians and Muslims working in friendship side by side on matters of mutual social concern, but through our friendship we have gained confidence that our respective faiths are enhanced as we are liberated to share with one another why we love God in our particular ways.

Mark Macaulay: Minister of Oakridge BC, High Wycombe

A Day in the life of a HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN...

My working day starts at about 7.50am when I get to my office and switch on my computer. Often, tea is an essential. I then log into the database of patients in the hospital and check it for changes. I can then prioritise who needs a visit that day and work out how much I can do depending on what my diary looks like. Some days my diary is a blank page and others meetings, funerals and staff training combined takes up a large proportion. On those days I know that I probably won't be able to visit many patients. I try not to visit before 9am if I can help it, as many prefer to be 'up' before they start chatting to someone. All of our visits start by introducing ourselves; both by name and role. Wearing a dog collar might help with recognition but patients can meet so many members of staff that it seems fair to remind them even if you've seen them before.

During the course of a week we have two sets of volunteers who come in and each work on a particular ward visiting any patient who wants either to talk or simply to be listened to. We also work closely with the bereavement and palliative

care teams as all patients nearing the end of life (and

Since April 2015 I have seen 581 members of staff and 1165 patients

their families) are offered chaplaincy support, as well as those whose relative or friend has already died and they are coming to see in our mortuary.

We spend a fair amount of time training staff members, to help them develop their own skills in pastoral and spiritual care but also to make sure they understand the service we provide to people and can appropriately refer patients. On a busy day this can feel counterproductive!

The rest of the day is spent trying to visit the patients who were identified at the beginning of the day as needing one, visiting various wards and seeing who makes eye contact with you and would like to have a chat, and seeing what the phone or pager brings in terms of emergencies. We visit every ward area once a week as a minimum, so I also like to keep an eye on where I haven't been yet this week and stop by to see how staff are. Staff support is a big but less known about part of our work and we have lots of conversations in corridors and around the hospital about staff members' problems. Some days we will perhaps need to spend several hours with one patient and on others we will see lots of patients for a smaller time, we can never predict what a day will bring. Since April 2015 I have seen 581 members of staff and 1165 patients (slightly below my target for patient visits) so we tend to be on our feet and out and about most of the day. At 4.30pm, barring emergencies, I head home, ready for another cup of tea!

Sarah Crane: Chaplain at Milton Keynes Hospital

