

# MOSAIC

JAN - APRIL 2025

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**RAM**

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**A**s the New Year approaches, I feel anticipation and excitement while reading about new pastorates starting, church plant plans, community reconciliation, and churches feeling re-invigorated among the many entries in our latest magazine. Reading what God is doing among those in the RM network is so encouraging. Mount Zion Church in Lancashire has a new theme for the year, 'Let your light shine', which may be a good prompt for each of us. It reminds me of a visit to a Quaker Meeting House in York, our staff team meeting venue, where a wall hanging contained the quote: "Better to light a candle than curse the darkness." In the troubled world in which we find ourselves, how might each of us contemplate being a light to our community? It only takes one candle to overcome darkness; where might the Spirit of God call us to shine in 2025?

Perhaps our light would shine brighter if we worked with and helped other churches in our community. On page [X], you can read about how Forest Community Church helped a church relaunch in Ross on Wye. This led to people becoming followers of Jesus and a baptism – the first in over twenty years!

Charlie and Abby Clayton have let their lights shine by working with a local activity centre and developing not one but three football teams! Perhaps you could commit yourselves to regularly praying for them and the kingdom work they are called to. You can find out more on page 11.

Our staff team review a book suitable for personal or group study for Lent. Their comments and recommendations can be found on page 8. Why not share your resources and ideas for the Easter season on our Facebook page or email them to the office, and we will post them for you!

As tentative signs of a new season begin to emerge, we are seeing the first appearance of snowdrops and crocuses. These plants are among the first to bloom in late winter or early spring, often pushing through the snow to greet the world with their vibrant colours. They are a beautiful reminder that even in the coldest and darkest seasons, God is at work, bringing forth new life and hope.

In the Bible, we are often reminded of renewal and the promise of brighter days ahead. Isaiah 35:1-2 speaks of how "the desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy." This verse captures the essence of God's transformative power – the ability to bring beauty and joy out of barren, lifeless places.

Let the crocus inspire you to trust in God's timing and His ability to bring growth where there once was none. Like these small but mighty flowers, your season of blooming will come, and it will be a testimony to His faithfulness

**Revd Simon Mattholie**  
CEO Rural Ministries

**"the desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy."**

**Isaiah 35:1-2**

### Albert Road Evangelical, Oswestry, Shropshire

We are a small church with no Elders or Deacons and have been without a Pastor since July 2023. It had fallen to our church Managing Trustees to guide us, as we began to search for a new Pastor trusting to God's leading. Over this time, folk have pulled together to keep the church going, contributing in various ways but we have all longed for the settled position of having a new Pastor to lead us. And the Lord has graciously answered our prayers! On November 1st our new Pastor, Benjamin Sealey took on the church pastorate joined by his wife Heather.

We have managed to continue with our weekly Little Gems group for mothers and toddlers, with a very competent leader and a small team of faithful supporters. This has been a blessing to the helpers and those who attend because when our previous Pastor left we weren't sure that we would have enough people to run it.

It has been a joy to welcome Benjamin and Heather to Albert Road and together we are looking forward to this new and exciting chapter in the life of our church.

### Bawtry Community Church, Bawtry, South Yorkshire

In 1 Corinthians:3, Paul says, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow." If I was writing about our youth ministry, I would say "Crissy planted. Jordan and Ruth watered it, but God has been making it grow."

Our fledgling youth ministry has entered a new phase. It was started a few years ago by our then family and community worker Chrissy who has now moved on to another church. She handed the youth ministry over to Ruth and Jorden, a young married couple in our church. They are both very busy with their jobs and bringing up their young child, and commute quite a distance to work. However, they have made time to head up the youth group with the help of another faithful lady Sam.

What has struck me is how God in his wisdom has used different personalities with different gifts, to plant, water and grow our youth group. Please pray for these three that they will see growth, encouragement and God's hand at work.



### The Meeting Place, Westbourne, Sussex

Dear friends, we are so grateful for your continued prayers and support. The Meeting Place Community is going through a real time of change at present. We are very excited about the restoration of worship in the building after a fifteen year break and are still experimenting with what that community will look like and how we will serve Jesus and the wider community. To help move this forward we have taken on an intern for the next twelve months. At the same time we are waving farewell to our Pioneer Minister of the past five years, Neil Attewell and he will leave a big hole. However, we hope to be advertising for a replacement very shortly, God willing.



## **Bootle Evangelical Church, Bootle, Cumbria**

Here on the West Cumbrian coast the small Bootle Evangelical Church, known locally as Bootle Chapel, continues to be richly blessed by God.

Recently we have seen new members join the Church and we have also enjoyed seeing visitors to the Lake District who discover the Church and some of its activities. We continue to have a very good relationship with the Parish Church and very much enjoyed celebrating with them at carol services and at other seasonal events.

Thanks to the technological skills of one of our members, Bootle Chapel has expanded its community engagement through social media platforms. The Chapel's YouTube channel, "Bootle Evangelical Chapel Cumbria," now hosts recorded sermons by local and visiting preachers, which have gained traction with 64 and 44 views, respectively. Notably, one sermon was utilised by another church in Cumberland for teaching purposes. Additionally, the Chapel maintains a Facebook page, "Bootle Chapel Hall," to keep locals informed about regular community events and activities, complemented by an updated website at [www.bootlechapelcumbria.org.uk](http://www.bootlechapelcumbria.org.uk). It is hoped that this will reach a much wider audience.

# **RAM** Zoom prayer

**30 minutes to  
connect and pray  
with others in  
rural ministry**

**Monthly: 1st Tuesday: 10am**

- **7th January**
- **4th February**
- **4th March**
- **1st April**



Scan to join, or go to the link  
on the home page of  
our website.

[www.ruralministries.org.uk](http://www.ruralministries.org.uk)



### **Bont Elim Community Church, Pontarddulais, Swansea**

We wanted to kickstart the Christmas feeling when we started planning our 31st October Light party. Our vision was to light up our corner of the village and celebrate the light. We also wanted a party that celebrated the light. As John Chapter One says, “The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness could not snuff it out”. The party was four hours of fun and food, with different rooms of activities to move between.

The date was significant. In 1904, Evan Roberts made a declaration in Moriah Chapel, just seven miles from us. The first person to respond was a young girl who cried out to the Lord. The Holy Spirit began to move and the Lord used this date as the beginning of a revival which swept through Wales and touched the four corners of the world.

We were contacted earlier in the year by a lovely man linked to the Scouts who was working with the Peace-light of Jerusalem. We had discovered that there were just two places in Wales who had received the candle into their premises and celebrated the Light of the World. Interestingly, one of these places was a church already in our village. Rather than compete, this gave us the opportunity to extend Christmas. And so, we decided not to pack up Christmas with the rest of the world, but extend it out by two weeks. The Peace-light service gave an opportunity to declare to our region, Christmas is still here! Jesus is still the Light, and the Light continues to shine.

### **BroadGrace, Coltishall, Norfolk**

Over the past year we have been praying for the Lord to lead us in a church plant locally. We would appreciate your prayers on two points. The first is that the Lord has led us down unexpected paths! He knows the end from the beginning, and we do not, and so often we do not see things clearly. It is also a joy as the reason we pray before we began planning was that we hoped to see Christ working in and through us in ways we could not have anticipated.

The second observation is that we are in a very difficult season. Over the last few months we have been hit by a cluster of issues. Sometimes it is suffering, other times sin and, most intriguingly miscommunication. It is this especially that has led us to wonder if we are experiencing a particularly intense period of spiritual warfare. The devil is a liar and when already sad and difficult matters are made worse by problems communicating with each other then it makes us wonder if he is getting involved. This is difficult to diagnose but we are trying to remember that our battle is not against flesh and blood, and so that the best protection is the armour of God, and the weapons the Holy Spirit gives us are God’s Word and prayer (Ephesians 6v10-18). We often remind one another that the One who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world (1 John 4v4). We would be so grateful if you could pray with us about these things.

## Alnwick Baptist Church, Alnwick, Northumberland

Ask many Christians about Halloween and the overwhelming response is likely to be, “I can’t wait till it’s over.” But Halloween is also an opportunity for Jesus followers to shine light into the darkness. That’s exactly what our Children and Families worker Sarah did by creating a Pumpkin Party. Following on from the inaugural event in 2023, it was attended by twenty three children dressed up to the nines in fancy dress (not scary) plus parents and carers and a fab team of eight from our church family. The message that, “Having enough and sharing what we have” was conveyed in a multi-sensory way. One mum said, “My daughter has been so excited for this, I’ve been making her costume for weeks.” Costumes included Sully from Monsters Inc, a mermaid and a human form of the Operation Game!

We may only encounter some of these people once a year, but on that one occasion they are able to understand in a very accessible way that God’s values and His Light shine in the darkness and in Him there is Hope.

One of the joys of pioneering in a rural context is innovation and being prepared to “Give it a go” perhaps because there’s been a God nudge to try.



## Open Blue, Calne, Wiltshire

Open Blue continues to show the love of Jesus to Forces families living on an isolated estate of Ministry of Defence housing by offering a baby and toddler group and an after school club once a week. Numbers at the after school club have increased from six to eight to ten to twelve. The children enjoy the craft and cooking activities we provide, and when the weather is good, they love playing outside. A group of four or five mums stay while their children play and we have been getting to know them. Most of the children are from Commonwealth soldier families so we are looking forward to telling the Christmas story through the craft and cooking activities as well as giving each family a copy of Hope Together’s excellent book Gift of Christmas.

## ReBorne Sherborne & Milborne Port, Dorset

Into 2025 and the Christmas decorations are back in the box.

At long last we are able to be in our renovated building.

We pray that the outreach connections from ReBorne Milborne Port will see local men women and children encounter Jesus and that their lives will be transformed.

We continue to pray for younger families to embrace the church family as an important part of their lives as we look to the future.

As we stand firm on the word of God we are excited to see how He directs us and uses this facility for the extension of His Kingdom.



# Between the River and the Sea



**The Wilford peninsula in East Suffolk is a wild and beautiful place, bounded by the North Sea and the River Deben. Kathy Wilson moved to the tiny village of Shottisham two and a half years ago, bringing the retreat centre The Place by the Water with her, from its original home in nearby Kirton. She and her team had prayer walked around the entire peninsula, seeking God's will on where to plant. With eighteen churches in the benefice and only three vicars to cover the entire area, they felt that there was a real need to identify the place God wanted them next.**

“With the best will in the world, three people will struggle to meet the needs of all the people who go to eighteen churches scattered across a large area of land. Our work at the original Farm by the Water in Kirton showed us that many people in rural communities suffer from loneliness and isolation. With pubs shutting down and bus routes being cut, there is less to do and more difficulty in getting around. We started off ten years ago getting to know our community, doing crafts and baking together, going for walks, laughing together and sharing the ups and downs of life. After a while, once we were part of the village, we began to run retreats where people could take time out and meet with God. Our work was missional and community based, making people feel comfortable and welcome.”

When the owner of the farmhouse which hosted The Farm by the Water asked for

it back, Kathy and the team entered into a discernment process with the Diocese of Suffolk, and the Lightwave CIO (Bishops' Mission Order within Suffolk).

“We prayer walked all over the Wilford peninsula and prayed in many of the eighteen churches. When we got to Shottisham, we felt that that was the place God wanted us. The diocese rented the rectory to us and the minute we walked in, we realised that all our prayers had been answered. The décor was perfect, we were gifted furniture which was exactly right for the rooms and there was plenty of parking. We were ready to transform it into a safe space for people to get to know God. I've recently been ordained so I take the services in the parish church and we have just had the first baptism there for years. God is really at work.”



**She and her team had prayer walked around the entire peninsula, seeking God's will on where to plant.**





You can't just steam into a community and try to be everyone's friend overnight. It takes a lot of prayer and patience.

There is little for young people to do on the peninsula and the team's community activities are starting to attract them from other villages and as far afield as Woodbridge. Kathy and the team prayed for more families to come to Shottisham and within six months, four moved in.

"We've noticed the village WhatsApp group becoming much chattier and more open. People stop when they're dog walking or on the way back from the school run to chat to us. We run a Bark and Brunch community café and lots of walkers drop by the rectory, eat and chat with us then carry on with their walk. You can't just steam into a community and try

to be everyone's friend overnight. It takes a lot of prayer and patience."

Suffolk rural society is traditional and it takes time for newcomers to bed in and make friends. The team at the Place by the Water now run regular Sunday suppers and are known and trusted in the village. Kathy has invested time and love in the little church and that too is bearing fruit.

"It's difficult to choose a favourite moment over the last two and a half years, but one thing that shines through and shows that God is working in this community is the story of a lady who came and did the Identity Course with us. She had got involved with some fairly dark stuff, but she has been released from all that and her whole physical appearance has changed. She now realises that she is loved and has an identity in the Kingdom. We will continue to pray for the village and the area and keep modelling God's love through service and friendship."

Rural ministry can be tough, but Kathy loves the fact that she can pray and share with her colleagues within The Lightwave Community and RM, come alongside people with the same heart for missional community and reach out to others who know what it is to build the Kingdom through relationship.

"The chance to work with RM has been a godsend for this time. The day-to-day work can be hard and wear you down, but they are such a wonderful support. It's such a blessing to know that we all have a united heart to continue building up God's Kingdom, by the water and away from it."

### Charlie & Abby Clayton, Missional Listeners, Mevagissey, Cornwall

It has been a busy season for us in Mevagissey. Charlie has had the opportunity to work alongside our local activity centre which was on the brink of closure. Bringing on a new board of directors and overhauling the operations, he has managed to galvanise a team to turn the place around. In the process he has been a “minister of reconciliation” between groups in the community who had been in conflict, and he has created opportunities for local people to take ownership of their community space in a new way. Alongside that, he has developed three youth football teams who are currently in their first season; this, alongside the Friday night youth club, provides spaces for young people to be invested in and encouraged. We know that becoming fully human, actualising potential, enjoying a sense of belonging to community, and meeting local need, is part of how the Holy Spirit wants to bring people into the Kingdom and bring the Kingdom into people, and we are seeing this happen in the materiality and normality of village life.

All the while, our prayer community is growing as three other people have felt called to the village and are joining the rhythm of prayer, prayer walking and being available in the community. Prayer and service, contemplation and action, is the rhythm and combination that continues to emerge for us here. Please do pray for continued good rhythms, wisdom in developing these projects, and financial provision for us as a family.



### Fenlands Church, Tydd Gote, Cambridgeshire

In the last issue, we shared about how events we hold usually involve food – and we continue to do the same. As well as the “usual” weekly events, last year we held a Harvest event with, you’ve guessed it, food! In addition, we’ve offered a couple of “Free2You” tables. Church members contribute unwanted items and they can be taken by either someone else in the fellowship or a visitor to the event. It’s been very popular, and it’s part of our message to the community, that just like giving stuff away for free, so Jesus is the free gift of God available to any and all. We have been meeting in small groups, “Church in the Home” and there has been much blessing and care. Sadly, one or two members are very unwell, but their testimony of faith and trust in Jesus has been a witness and testimony not just to those who are not yet in God’s Kingdom, but also to us as we pray and support them. We have much to be thankful for, as the song goes, “give thanks with a grateful heart”.



### Joy Dimond, Missional Listener, Stow, Gloucestershire

The local vicar and I visit shop staff and business owners each month taking, “Biscuits and Blessings” to thank them for being the face of Stow to tourists and locals alike. We often pray for and with these people.

The Baptist Church continues to develop as a community space. The regular events include a weekly drop in cafe, a foodbank, a dementia cafe, a venue for the WI and more recently a six week “Getting Connected” course run by Gloucestershire Adult Education.

The aim is to increase participants’ confidence in using digital devices to access services that they might otherwise not have access to. Increasingly services are on-line and we have a high proportion of over 65’s that are disadvantaged by this. We are hoping to add a follow-on course to develop skills further and another beginners’ course in the new year.

After Christmas, we opened up the church building to increase space for community events. We were granted planning permission to reimagine the sanctuary area and now have sufficient funds to begin the work. Since moving here I have felt God saying that the church should be a welcoming place for the community of Stow. I look forward to seeing what He will bring as we make more room. We continue to meet once a month for a cafe style afternoon service in the Church Hall.

Out in the community I continue to serve as a School Governor, a mentor in the school and more recently as a charity trustee to our local nursery school.

### Great Moulton Evangelical Chapel, Great Moulton, Norfolk

Here in Great Moulton, we sadly lost one of our congregation. Hazel was a wonderful friend to us all. Throughout her life, she has held God as her father and friend, and she knew where she was going. Her funeral was led by Mark, a longstanding friend and the Chaplain from The Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. The eulogy was given by a previous pastor Steve, from Great Moulton Chapel.

Throughout the Christian service, many opportunities were given to those who were not regular church goers or who followed a Christian faith, to learn about the love of God at those times and for everyone’s future.

Hazel and Geoff regularly attended a café in Bury St Edmunds, The Crazy Horse. This was a local motorcycle meeting place. There were staff and friends from there who witnessed such Christian love and message for those who mourn.

Matthew 5:4 tells us something special. It says, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” This does not mean you’ll suddenly feel happy if you’re sad. Instead, it assures you that comfort is on the way.

People find real hope in these words during tough times. Mourning can change our hearts and lead us to seek Christ’s love and forgiveness more deeply. Jesus gives grace to those who grieve with Godly sorrow over sin.

This kind of mourning brings an end to wrong actions and leads us toward everlasting life with Him.



## Parkview Chapel, Botesdale, Suffolk

At Parkview, every Friday evening, we run Junior Friday Club for primary school aged children. We all enjoy Bible stories, craft and games and it's a great opportunity to work with the children and get to know their parents, building on relationships.

Our prayer is that these children meet Jesus, and, that they and their families see the church is a place for them. Sadly this does not happen as much as we would like.

However just recently one child from the group and her mother joined us not only for our Friday Club, but also for a Ladies' Craft Evening event the next day, and then also for our Sunday service the next morning. The mother has even taken to wearing one of our Friday Club Leaders T-shirts.

The story of this child and her mum have given us hope and encouragement. Hope we are doing the right things, and, encouraging us to keep going because spiritual fruit will come.

Also, at the aforementioned craft event, we saw 34 ladies either demonstrating their skill sets and trying to learn new ones. Almost all of these ladies were not Christians. As they left each one of them asked when the next event was.

Our hope now is that, in preparation for Christmas, God is at work with this child and her mother, and also in these ladies. And that maybe this Christmas we see them again and they realise the true meaning of Christmas. Please do pray this will be the case.

### Mount Zion Church, Cliviger, Lancashire

Reflecting back is important. As a busy “doing” church, it is very easy to charge on with the next event, next round of regular outreach and services. Taking time to review and evaluate is easy to put on the back burner.

Here at Mount Zion Cliviger, we are truly blessed with a loving and willing church family. It’s good to take time and remember that each person extravagantly gives their time, energy and commitment to growing God’s kingdom, day in day out. It’s good to say thank you – so thank you all my brothers and sisters in Jesus, at Mount Zion and across the Rural Ministry network for using your time, talents and love for Jesus to spread the love of God across this troubled land of ours and out into the world beyond

our shores. You are loved and appreciated and YOU are partnering with God to make Jesus known throughout this land. And God IS moving over this land.

Our church family theme for 2024 is based on Acts 2 42-46- “Building a community of believers”. Have we achieved this? Have we really tried? Is God pleased with us? What are the fruits?

Hopefully, as a church family we will be taking time out as 2024 comes to an end to reflect and evaluate our work this year and as we start our next theme in 2025, “Let Your light shine” Matt 5 14-16, we will be moving in the direction our Father in Heaven wants us to go. With His blessing!

### Forest & Wye Community Church, Cinderford, Gloucestershire

Last month we relaunched the church in Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire. We have been building towards this for three years after the church came close to closure when only seven people were attending the Sunday service and we (Forest Community Church) were asked to help. Since

then we have run one church in two locations, Cinderford and Ross, which are nine miles apart. During this time, we have been preparing to relaunch the Ross church by upgrading the building and building a new team. We now have a great team of twenty or so people who are

committed to the church in Ross, completed most of the building work and had the official launch on 15th Sept. Sixty five people turned up to the launch which was encouraging, but even more encouraging is that we now have two people who have trusted Christ who were baptised on 3rd November in Ross. These were the first baptisms to take place there for twenty years! How we rejoice in the God of miracles who transforms lives.



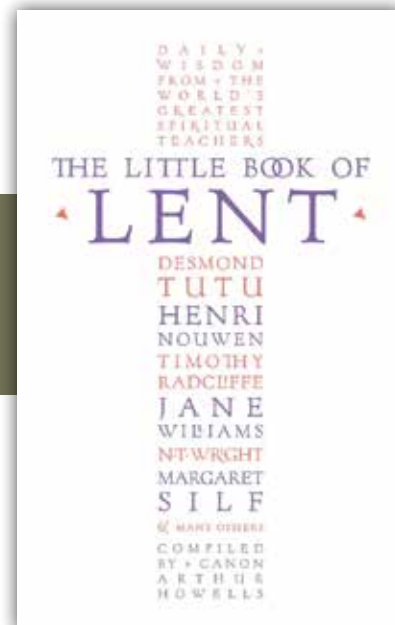
# Lent Book Review

## The Little Book of Lent (2014)

Published by William Collins and compiled  
by Arthur Howells  
Reviewed by Simon Mattholie

I often read a devotional book alongside my daily Bible readings and reflections; sometimes, the additional thoughts match my regular readings, giving them greater depth. The Little Book of Lent, first published in 2014, continues to bring each day of Lent to life with an inspiring collection of spiritual writers' readings accompanied by scripture and prayers to assist in direct daily contemplations. It is on my 'must-read' pile for Lent 2025.

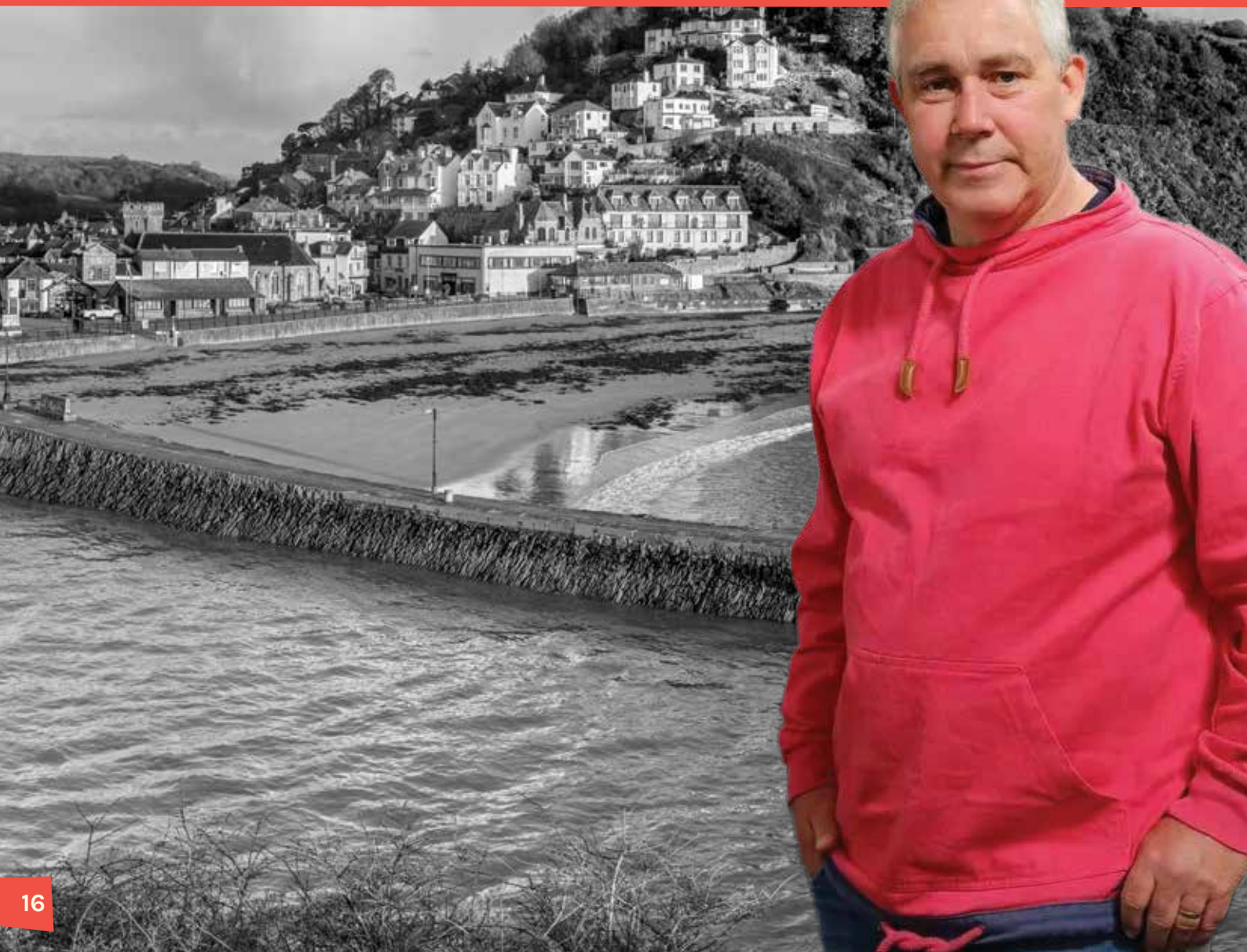
Starting on Ash Wednesday, inspiring writers and theologians such as Desmond Tutu, Sheila Cassidy, Henri Nouwen, and Jane Williams, with their different Christian perspectives, all bring something unique and thought-provoking to each daily reading. As a Nonconformist, I find the set pattern of thought, scripture and prayer helpful for my quiet time. Nevertheless, you could easily use this book with others to meditate on God's truths and share your thoughts and feelings. This revised and updated edition would be especially beneficial for a Lenten course or home group discussion.



Whoever reads 'The Little Book of Lent', in its entirety or excerpts, will find their contemplative journey through Lent enhanced. If you or someone you know is getting ready to give up something for the duration of Lent, this is the ideal present for you to give them or keep for yourself.

Whoever reads 'The Little Book of Lent', in its entirety or excerpts, will find their contemplative journey through Lent enhanced.

# Coast to Coast: Guests in the Community





England's most westerly county, Cornwall, is a tourist hotspot in the summer months and it's often associated with picturesque harbours, beaches, surfing and cream teas. However, there is more to this remote part of England than meets the eye. For a start, it is one of the most economically deprived English counties and many of its inhabitants suffer from loneliness, isolation, disaffection and poverty. Looe, a seaside town twenty miles west of Plymouth, has all the sandy beaches, rock pools and fishing boats a tourist would expect, but behind the pretty shop fronts, not everything is as it seems.

Barney and Sara Barron used to live on a large estate on the outskirts of Portsmouth. They know all about urban deprivation as the thirty thousand people who called the estate home found themselves in one of the most economically deprived areas of the UK. Barney's role within Urban Expression required him to carry out research into rural poverty in coastal towns and he remembers the epiphany he had on a train to Penzance.

"I was looking out of the window at the stunning scenery around St Michael's Mount, when I remembered the stories I'd heard about Cornwall having some of the poorest estates in the country. That knowledge didn't sit well with the sparkling blue sea and sandy beaches image of the county."

Barney and Sara were up for a new adventure and waited on God for some more details. They decided to visit Looe.

Paddling on the crowded beach, Sara heard her name being called and to her amazement, saw old friends from Birmingham had chosen the same day and the same beach.

"It was no coincidence. We felt that this was a safe space and that God was present and that was the beginning of our journey. The town has a mixed demographic with some very wealthy areas masking hidden poverty and homelessness."

The Barrons moved to Looe in May 2018 and spent a year as guests there, getting to know people in their community and waiting on God. Six years on, they've set up a charity called Boundless Trust which began with youth work and has expanded into children's work, a food bank, community meals, befriending and a faith community.

"We rent our building from the Harbour Commission in the centre of town, above a fish shop. There is a fairly strong aroma up here some days, and the people who deliver the food for the community fridge sometimes complain about the steep stairs, but God has been good and given us exactly the right space."

Sara and Barney offer a place of welcome two days a week. They host the community fridge, there is a computer room/office space and

We felt that this was a safe space and that God was present and that was the beginning of our journey.





We spent time as missional listeners rather than leaping in and offering our services the minute we arrived.

a small kitchen, a community fund for those in crisis and they work with local restaurants who cook hot food delivered by volunteers for Looe Community Meals.

Barney and Sara are clear on why God sent them to Cornwall. "Like many other Cornish communities, there are many isolated and lonely people in Looe. One of the issues is that there are only two churches here, the Methodists with a faithful but tiny and ageing congregation, and the parish church which is one of six in the benefice. Part of our broader work here is to make Jesus known in the community as we offer a safe and welcoming space for everyone to come to. However, we spent time as missional listeners rather than leaping in and offering our services the minute we arrived. When the Covid restrictions lifted, the town council asked us to partner with them because we'd taken the time to build credibility and trust. We now work with fifty volunteers - Boundless Trust is a catalyst for change."

There are so many stories which have come from Barney and Sara's time in Looe, built on the benefit of listening and taking opportunities as and when they arise. Sara remembers a time when she took the time to listen.

"A friend who always comes to the Easter sunrise service invited me out for a drive. She told me that though she has left the church long ago with good reason, she hadn't walked away from God. In getting to know us, she had found a gentler way to be with God. That confirmed our belief that we need to be available and let God move."

**Three hundred and thirty five miles northwest in the coastal Norfolk village of Ingoldisthorpe, Sam and Suzie Abramian and their ten year old son Josh live looking out over the wide expanse of the Wash. They moved from nearby Hunstanton in 2020.**

Sam was the minister of a Baptist/URC church in the town for six and a half years while Suzie stayed at home with Josh and led the children's work and worship at church. When they began to feel it was time to move, God worked a major miracle of housing provision for them and they were able to rent a cottage on a working farm in the centre of Ingoldisthorpe next to the primary school. They moved in the day before the first lockdown! They're daily blessed by the miles of beautiful walks around and about them. As they've got to know their community, they've felt God leading them to stay there. Earlier last year, Sam and Suzie were able to buy their first home together. It needed a lot of renovation, but their friends have been so helpful.

The Abramians spend a lot of their time outdoors. Northwest Norfolk is a paradise for walkers, runners and cyclists and ten year old Josh is a keen footballer. His parents are very involved in their local football club where relationships have deepened and honest conversations have been had.

North Norfolk is beautiful and remote, but it has become popular with second

homers which has led to challenges for local people. Affordable housing is scarce, both in the rental and purchase market, largely due to the disproportionate number of holiday lets and second homes which have pushed up the average house prices and reduced the number of permanent lets for locals. Cuts have led to restricted resources available through support agencies, and those who need help are forced to travel to a nearby large town. Isolation and loneliness are also major issues in this part of the county.

Like the Barrons in Looe, Sam and Suzie have allowed friendships to develop naturally and have learned what it means to live closely with others, allow themselves to be vulnerable and ask for help when it's needed. They are generous with their time and life experiences, and that in turn has built the trust in their relationships. Conversations and opportunities for prayer have come, sometimes unexpectedly, because others are seeing how they live all of their lives, not just small parts of them.

While Sara had an unexpected faith chat in the car, Sam and Suzie found themselves talking deep into the night with friends around a bonfire in the garden. They had all worked together on the house renovation and grown closer as a result. Questions about faith were a natural part of the conversation and were a real joy to Sam and Suzie.

“We have been blessed to have the time and space to be in the community and have learnt to allow conversations about faith to come from these relationships, often being initiated



**Conversations and opportunities for prayer have come, sometimes unexpectedly, because others are seeing how they live all of their lives, not just small parts of them.**

by others. This has happened in so many ways and at different times. Sam found himself chatting with a colleague who had had some spiritual experiences and wanted to talk about them. It has also been interesting how some of Sam's paid work for funerals and now as a hospital chaplain, has been so missional and led to many conversations. God is clearly at work in people's lives and stirring a desire in people to talk and ask about Christianity and Jesus. We're learning that we're not necessarily called to initiate an event or programme for this but to hold back, listen and be ready for where God is causing that desire to bubble up.”

### Millom Baptist Church, Millom, Cumbria

We have started making use of our new audiovisual equipment, and hosted our first movie night. The intention is for this to become a monthly event, with the simple purpose of providing a warm happy space to enjoy time together. We feel that this is particularly important through the cold dark winter months. Our straightforward social contact through coffee mornings and the winter warm space are helping us build relationships with people who would never usually enter our building.

However the most exciting thing we experience is seeing our ordinary friendships and actions begin to produce fruit, as people begin to encounter Jesus not just through the Sunday morning worship but in conversations with church members who are willing to share their story and be good news. And central to all of this is prayer, which underpins everything we do. Meeting to pray on a Sunday morning before our service has been the most encouraging way to begin our time together each week, and has been a huge blessing.

Our prayer moving forward is that God continues to lead us and guide us with every step, and equips us to share Christ's hope and good news in our everyday lives.

### The Place by the Water, Shottisham, Suffolk

As Advent and Christmas approached, we arranged a series of retreats, crafts, worship and fun, trimmed with seasonal goodies, a few mugs of hot chocolate and the amazing message of HOPE that the Christmas story brings.

We put on two retreats. One was a wreath making workshop using dried flowers or glass baubles and included lunch, the other was a session where guests made a foliage wreath and table decoration and also included a lunch together. They were very much enjoyed and we loved bringing our community together at this very special time of the year.

We also offered family afternoons and Christmas Sunday Suppers in our continued work with our community to show them the love of Jesus. We're now offering reduced rates for our workshops to say thank you to our Crew 100 members and we very much enjoyed our thank you meal after Christmas.

Lastly we would like to invite you to pray as we come to a junction in our ministry. Some of our funding ended at the end of December, and there is still a shortfall for our running costs being met. Please pray with us as we apply for grants and invite people to join the Crew 100. We love serving God in this very special place, and hope to carry on in the future.

### Waypoint Church, Berwick-upon-Tweed

A nineteen-year-old leading the worship then the following month preaching for the first time. Two eight-year-olds playing in the worship team, a nine-year-old starting the service and doing the opening prayer. Youth helping with setup, refreshments, welcoming. Classmates who don't go to church being invited and experiencing God's love. Young people from other churches connecting in and being encouraged. This isn't tomorrow's Church, but today's! This isn't about inviting young people to the party but giving them a chair at the table.



## Lavendon, Baptist Church, Lavendon, Buckinghamshire

With Christmas over and a new year begun, it feels right to look back and reflect on how God has been working in and through the church this past year.

As part of our outreach into the village, we've had a series of events throughout the year building on our links with our community and have welcomed people into the chapel as well as taken part in the wider life of the village. Highlights have included our recent pre-Christmas café and shop, our summer BBQ, the picnic we had on the

village playing field and the ongoing success of the church team in the monthly village quiz nights. Our 'craft and chat' and our 'baby and toddler' groups continue to offer a great space for people to meet and spend time together.

Alongside this, we've have also faced a number of challenges, mainly with the chapel being flooded by torrential rains and some expensive repairs needing to be made.

Here at Waypoint, we are now six months in to running our evening Immerse Services. It is slowly taking shape, and we are learning loads along the way. We are also seeing other impacts with adults stepping up to serve and giving things a try, and the young people getting more involved during Sunday morning services. We feel God is leading us to becoming more and more a church of generations for generations.

Please continue to pray for strength, energy and God's wisdom for those leading. For God to continue to build the Immerse Service and that the young people will grow a heart for worship. Please also pray for good relationships with other local churches.

We have seen how God is working in people's lives, with a number of people joining the periphery of church life and beginning to get more involved in some of the activities and events that the church is involved with. We've introduced a quarterly half day of prayer that has been well received and also back at Easter we had our first baptism in the building.

**Our new feature shining a light on selected missional partners in each edition.**



### Life Changing Prayer

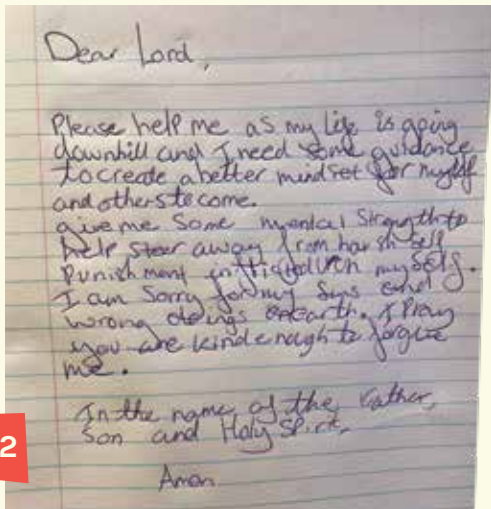
Aaron Rigby founded Dorset Youth for Christ eight years ago and works with a small team building communities and coming alongside young people wherever they are. A significant part of DYFC's work is in schools where Aaron acts as a School Life Pastor. Recently the Head Teacher of a non-faith school approached him since a fourteen year old pupil had been asking questions about life after death.

"The Head wanted there to be a balanced argument so brought in the pupil's atheist science teacher. I had no idea how the conversation was going to go and I was amazed that although this young person had never been to church or looked into Christianity, he reported that Jesus had visited him in his bedroom. I asked if he had felt afraid and he replied confidently that he hadn't. The science teacher's eyes were opened to their fullest extent at this point!"

Aaron is used to thinking on his feet and dealing with unusual situations. He spoke to the boy about Paul's experience on the road to Damascus and gave him

some background on what Christians believe about life after death. The boy took it all in and asked, "Isn't what happened to me a little bit weird?" Aaron reassured him that it was completely normal. He then asked for prayer. "What happened next was incredibly moving. The boy asked me if he could pray and I explained that God is his father and wanted him to be open. He then asked his teacher if she would pray with him and she agreed to say, 'Amen' at the end. This young person had never prayed in his life and it was a very raw prayer. I could see the teacher getting emotional as she said, 'Amen.' 'That was a beautiful prayer,' she said. The boy asked me for a Bible and his teacher said, 'Can you get me one as well?' When I fed back to the Head (who is a not a Christian), she asked for copies of youth Bibles to put around the school."

Aaron was delighted to see another life being transformed by Jesus. "If I hadn't been there, what information would that boy have received? We took on a youth centre in Sherborne and we now run a food bank from it. We're getting to know youngsters who are trying to navigate life through poverty, disaffection and poor mental health. We're bridging the gap between local churches, schools and food banks, trying to build a strong connection between faith and the local community. We hear about youngsters meeting together to pray and read the Bible. Engaging with them where they are and helping them to encounter Jesus is a huge privilege."





## Miraculous Provision and Community Growth

Andy Lund, part of the leadership team at Durrington Community Church ten miles north of Salisbury in Wiltshire, is a hard man to surprise. He has seen the impact that prayer makes on church and community life, and in the last edition of MOSAIC, he told us about barriers breaking down. However, in November, the church received a significant anonymous financial gift from someone in the community. This in itself was not the miracle. The church knew there was a damp issue, but had only recently called in a firm who discovered that the soakaways were blocked. If left, there would have been serious damage to the floors and foundations. The donor had no way of knowing this. Two days after the donation, the firm quoted for the necessary work and it was almost

God has worked an everyday miracle in our community!

exactly the same amount as the donation. The leadership were able to give the work the go-ahead. New soakaways and paving have been fitted and the church is again fit for purpose. Andy explains why this is so important.

“Our building gets used a lot. We held a successful Harvest Supper in October, welcomed eighteen children to our Light Party in November, hold a regular men’s breakfast, run a monthly family church event to which five families are currently coming, give space to our local foodbank, host the community choir and often lend our accommodation to other churches. We need a place which is dry and safe. God has worked an everyday miracle in our community!”

# Church Without Walls



Think about surfing and your thoughts probably turn to the wide, sandy beaches of Cornwall, awash with lithe folk in wetsuits with boards under their arms. You may be surprised to learn, however, as I was, that considerably further north, there is a healthy Scottish surfing scene. No one knows this better than Jon Timms, founder of Discovery Church Dunbar, Rural Ministries Lead for the Northeast and Borders hubs and member of Christian Surfers.





Eight years ago, Jon and his wife left Cornwall and relocated to Dunbar, a small coastal town in southeast Scotland around thirty miles east of Edinburgh. Its two beaches are a haven for surfers, particularly as the town is one of the driest and sunniest in Scotland. He works part-time for RM, encouraging and supporting hubs with pioneering ministries.

“We felt the nudge to move, prayed it through then visited some friends in Dunbar and fell

in love with it. We wanted to work on retreat-style mission in wild spaces. Scotland has a vibrant outdoor community with surfers, skiers, snowboards, climbers and mountain bikers and we felt that setting up a creative collective focus with the emphasis on the outdoors was the right thing to do. We’re part of the communities network with 24-7 Prayer and their six missional qualities of prayer, creativity, hospitality, mission, justice and learning underpin everything we do.”

Discovery doesn’t have a building, church merch or regular services. It is composed of a handful of households which live out their faith together. When they first got together, they knew that they didn’t want to do church in the tried and tested way. “We knew how to pray and eat and walk on the beach, so we started there and waited for God to show us what He wanted,” explains Jon. “People who came to us were often burned out from being on the leadership in busy churches. That’s not us. There was already a foodbank in Dunbar, so we volunteer there. We help grow veg in the community gardens, assist at the youth project and sit on the boards of charities. We believe in going out, being kind and living out our faith in front of our neighbours and friends.”

Dunbar is a community in transition. Historically a thriving harbour town, now it’s popular with commuters who can be in Edinburgh in 22 minutes on the train. Young families are everywhere and house prices have risen exponentially, driving out many locals. There are some pockets of poverty and



**We wanted to work on retreat-style mission in wild spaces.**





disaffection, but Dunbar has a strong ecoculture and many independent shops, cafes and co-operatives. The ecumenical youth project does amazing work and the Wave Project, a national surf therapy organisation, helps people with learning difficulties, disabilities or who are socially excluded spend time on the beach.

The members of Discovery Church live out their faith in a missional way every day, going where people go and working with their community in a natural way.

Jon was planning out a motivational talk for the Sunday gathering when he saw a Facebook post from a friend who was running a swimathon charity event.

“She was asking for volunteers to bake cakes and help serve on Sunday morning on the beach, and I thought, ‘I can’t sit here writing a talk about missional service when there’s someone in our community in need.’ I told everyone we were cancelling our formal gathering and to get their bake on and join me in helping! We all pitched in and our actions spoke so much to the lady who organised the swimathon. She couldn’t believe we’d cancelled our plans to help her out. That’s how we like to show our faith in action.”

Discovery Church members spend a lot of time on the beach. On a Saturday afternoon, the car parks are full of families with their boots open, barbecues lit and coffee on the go and that is a huge part of the local community. As Jon says, why wouldn’t the local Christians hang out there? They’re involved with the local, newly set up chapter of Christian Surfers and spend a significant amount of their time listening and being Jesus to hurt, wounded and unsure people in Dunbar.

“We try to be a gentle community, a church without walls. We’ve met a couple of people who were ready to walk away from church, even from their faith, because of church trauma. Here at Discovery, we spend a lot of our time gathered around firepits or on the beach, just chatting and listening. Six months or a year in with us, we’re hearing people tell us, ‘I’m ready to lead again,’ or ‘I feel that I’m being healed.’ We inhabit the middle space, between the folks at the front who are excited by change and challenge and the ones at the back who love routine and comfort. We’ve got a heart for both groups, but we know that it’s Jesus who builds the church. We’re laying down our own agendas and seeking Him wherever He might be. Which is very often a shared space on the beach, in the forest or the garden, I’m happy to say.”

**“We try to be a gentle community, a church without walls. We’ve met a couple of people who were ready to walk away from church, even from their faith, because of church trauma. Here at Discovery, we spend a lot of our time gathered around firepits or on the beach, just chatting and listening.”**

## Gosberton Baptist Church, Gosberton, Lincolnshire

“What a Piece of Work is Man!” Words spoken by Hamlet, in despair about the wretched state of the men who surrounded him.

Some new churches seem to have tried to elevate men by subjugating women. Most of us, though, have just learned to live with the reality of a male population, full of insecurities and doubts, but not expecting to find answers in the Christian community.

I wrote in the last edition of ‘MOSAIC’ that we had been inspired to look at the Men’s Shed Movement. A group of men now meets twice weekly, though our chapel is unsuitable for all the work they would like to do.

‘But’, I said, ‘an answer to prayer may be imminent’.

And how! We now have an invitation from a neighbour to start meeting in his well-built shed and make use of his large stock of tools.

More than that, our District Council has offered to restore for us a very large and well-equipped agricultural shed, with a large tract of surrounding land, for a rental of - wait for it - £1 per annum! It will take some time for it to be ready, but meanwhile we have an excellent temporary base.



So we are looking forward to working with a good number of men who will join us when we have a proper venue; men who need to find love, support, a listening ear, an outlet for their skills and who will see, we hope, the reality of God working among us.

## Village Church, Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire

Towards the end of last year, Village Church was busy launching the Village Hub in time for Christmas. Over the years we have had the opportunity to partner with local charities, organisations and businesses to support the vulnerable in our community and we have felt compelled by God to develop this further. What started as hampers and donations at Christmas has evolved into the Village Hub, a weekly drop-in space for a friendly welcome with access to a food and baby bank, signposting services, befriending as well as partnership and access to CAP services with whom we are working to support members of our community to become debt free.

We're so happy to share that our new Christmas initiative, the Free Toy Drop and Shop was a huge success. We had vast amounts of toys donated and have been able to support a large amount of families this year with one mother commenting that without the toy drop she wouldn't have been able to give her children any toys this year.



Our lantern and interactive nativity walk around our village gave families a chance to experience the Christmas story. We also partnered with the community to run a Christmas food hamper appeal, feeding families who would otherwise struggle to have Christmas dinner. Through community referrals from partner organisations we fed around 300. Your prayers are appreciated for this project.

We rounded off the Christmas period with a community Christmas dinner for anyone on their own or struggling at Christmas.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership from all of us here at Village.

## Wychwood Baptist Church, Milton-Under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire

As we enter a new year, we look back and look forward. Looking back, we give thanks for how God has sustained, blessed, and used us for His kingdom and glory.

It's been an interesting year – with our Pastor having two major operations, one planned, one not and our Administrator being signed off with Long COVID. We've been blessed by the support and ministry of others during this time. Over the year, we've continued to support the physical and spiritual needs of others through our Larder,

Cafe, Youth and Children's outreach, Seasonal activities, and Community events. We held our first "Fun Run", and our Church family has grown!

Looking forward, we welcome your prayers for new and developing gospel opportunities, for the Holy Spirit to continue to work with relationships, new initiatives and healing for our team. We ask for your prayers that we grow in knowledge and love for the Lord and for wisdom as we address our financial needs.



## Sutton St James Baptist Church, Sutton St James, Lincolnshire

Having very recently lost our pastor and her husband as they had to step down due to ill health, we have been thrown into quite a disarray. The trustees have suddenly had to step up and take control of everything. This has not been easy and being used to the pastor doing everything, there was a lot of learning to be done!

With the help of Jesus and lots of prayer, we have managed to pull things together and can see a clear way forward after some considerable worry.

Our recent service was amazing and we saw the Holy Spirit at work in our congregation in many ways.

Praise God that He will always stay with us even when we may waver!

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."  
(John 14:27).



# Working the Soil for the Kingdom

**“Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.”  
(1 Corinthians 15:58).**

The period after Christmas and New Year is a strange time. The leafless trees, barren landscape and inclement weather can give the impression that nothing is going on and as we experience the short, dark winter days, it's easy to forget that under the soil, green shoots are getting ready to push through the earth and that the miracle of spring is not far away. In our Christian walk, it's tempting to compare ourselves to others to our own detriment. Why is our outreach not bringing more people into church? Was that informal coffee morning with the school mums really what God wanted? When we doubt ourselves, it's important to remember that God's mission is constant – prayerful listening and obedience will lead to His faithfulness in small things.

No one knows this better than Jonathan and Rachel Oatridge. They moved to a large village in North Lincolnshire in 2013. Two years later, they met with a small group of other Christians who had a heart for the village and began intentionally missionally listening. They organised prayer walks, got to know people in their community, chatted at the school gates and sought God. But where many missional listeners are in communities suffering with disaffection, unemployment and isolation, the Oatridges were up against a very different kind of challenge as Rachel explains.

“The village is quite self-sufficient and comfortable, so people don't think they need Jesus. Many people never leave, so I found it tough to make friends at the school gate as there is already a strong social network. While many people don't come to church, they get very upset if you try and change anything with beloved traditions, such as the Christingle service!”

In 2015 after some team prayer, Jonathan and Rachel decided to rent one of the village allotments and join the gardening community.

“We were a bit taken aback by the rampant weed growth, but there were lots of opportunities for theological reflection! We stayed for two years, but we found that nearly all the allotment holders were retired and started work at nine in the morning. We were turning up after work and missing them, but although we didn't make as many connections as we expected, relationships and growth happened within the team.”



“The soil might be hard, but God is the great gardener and he knows what growth there is beneath it. We simply find people of peace who are happy to do life alongside us and wait on Him to reveal His purpose.”



I suppose you could say that we were tilling the soil for God and that He had His own purpose for it.

Stopping a ministry well is just as important as beginning one, and the Oatridges were ready for the next step.

“After conversations with a local councillor about opportunities to serve in the village, we started a regular ‘Community Cuppa’ drop-in in the village hall around the time that carers were picking children up from the local primary school. For a variety of reasons, this never gained the traction that we had anticipated and so, after a year, we also took the decision as a team to shut it down. However, we journeyed with a group of around eight people for a year and we had conversations about faith. Nothing dramatic happened, but we still see those people around and chat with them. I suppose you could say that we were tilling the soil for God and that He had His own purpose for it.

When Covid hit, we started an intergenerational gathering on Zoom which led to us hosting church around our breakfast table. We also felt God calling us to be missional listeners and enablers for the whole of the county to enable others to seek new ways of being church in their local area. Long story short, at the start of 2024, the Zoom gathering came to an end and we felt as missional listeners for the area that there was a real gap in people carrying the gospel into the business community.

In 2021, Jonathan and Rachel opened up a business community hub in Scunthorpe. Open to anyone local who works from home, it gives anyone self-employed the chance to spend a day working in the company of other people. It’s good for dealing with the loneliness that can come from working solo and it also offers free coaching for unemployed people



to get them back into work. There have been unexpected signs of growth, of green shoots pushing up through the earth.

“It’s important to stress that this is not a Christian business. However, we seek to bring kingdom values of community, love, openness and generosity and we’ve found that there are plenty of opportunities for conversations as people help each other with aspects of work or stop for a coffee etc. One of our clients had been watching a programme about Guy Fawkes on Netflix and asked us what the difference was between Catholics and Protestants. That led to a really good talk about faith. We’re both qualified life coaches and we feel that God has fitted us for this time and this work.”

Wonderful stories have come from Jonathan and Rachel’s intentional listening and relationship development at the work hub.

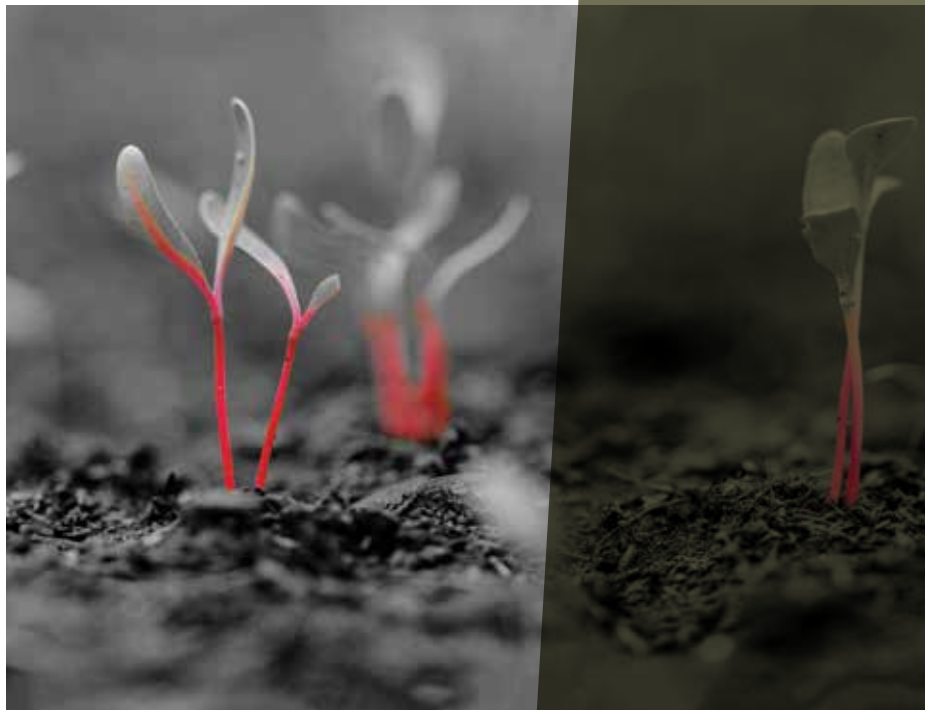
“One of the group who I’d been coaching had lots of challenges in their life. They had become more open and one day I mentioned that Jonathan had been a church leader and they almost fell off their chair! They thought that we were so normal that we couldn’t possibly be churchgoers.”

Jonathan agrees. “We spent time with one young business owner, who, while being very open-minded in some ways, was suspicious of the Bible and of Christians. Chatting to Rachel one day, she said that the point of being called a Christian is that the clue is in the name – Christ at the centre. He was dismissive. ‘Yeah,’ he said, ‘but you’re basing your ideas on the Bible.’ Rachel asked him if he’d ever read it and he went all sheepish

on her and said he hadn’t. He went off to uni shortly afterwards, but he came back to spend time with us in reading week and we’re praying that we can read it together.”

Through Rachel and Jonathan’s work in the community, they are getting little glimpses of God’s grace working in people’s lives.

“The soil might be hard, but God is the great gardener and he knows what growth there is beneath it. We simply find people of peace who are happy to do life alongside us and wait on Him to reveal His purpose.”



Through work in the community, they are getting little glimpses of God’s grace working in people’s lives.

# Lent **Book Review**

## Searched Me Out and Known Me: Journeying Lent with the Psalms

by Charlie Bell  
Reviewed by Jo Allen



Bell's book is both a provocative and hopeful read; provocative because he is not scared to challenge our patterned ways of thinking and being in our modern world, and hopeful because he firmly anchors his thoughts in the story of Jesus. Bell invites us to 'think deeply about the role of time in your life, and the lives of those around you,' (P.14) encouraging us to prioritise God together during Lent.

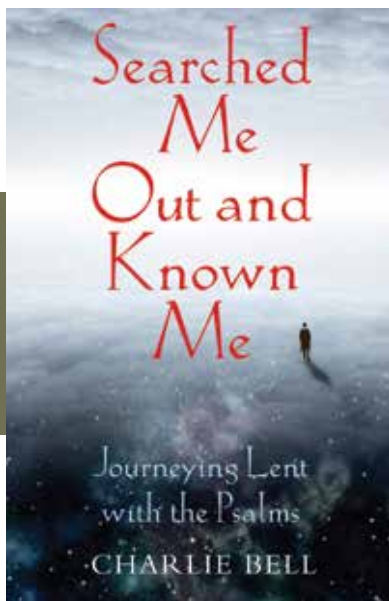
Each chapter has a Psalm, a gospel passage, a provoking thought from Bell and a prayer, through which he challenges our need to make Church relevant, encouraging us to anchor ourselves in the Biblical story of Jesus which for him can be explored through the liturgical year of the Anglican Church. As such, his book walks us through Lent, with a chapter for each Sunday and then a chapter for each day in Holy Week culminating in the celebration of Easter Day.

Bell is an Anglican vicar, and therefore not ashamed of including religious language and the collect (prayer) of the day. Although the more traditional language would normally cause me to put a book down, he includes

this in a way that is approachable and unashamedly anchored in the hope of Jesus. It has to be noted that, even being a pioneer, I say this as an Anglican vicar myself.

Although this is not his aim, Bell does seem to push for traditional church habits in a way that I don't think he has fully considered. Those of us who make church 'relevant' as he puts it, have our own rhythms that draw us and those who are outside the Church structures to Jesus. It is still a reminder, however, to consider what we change, and why, and Bell's sure hope in Jesus makes this reader consider what he is saying.

As I read this book, I was warmly invited to search myself, to allow the Spirit to challenge any habits that were drawing my gaze from Jesus and to find myself in God. An example, is one of Bell's thoughts on forgiveness: 'If our forgiveness is utterly unearned, utterly free, then the bad news, for those of us who like to hold a grudge, is that others' forgiveness is utterly unearned, and utterly free too.' (P.41) His words can cut



to the soul, much like a double edged sword. Am I, are we, genuinely living in Jesus' generous forgiveness both for ourselves and for others around us? As I read Charlie Bell's Lent book I was indeed searched out and found.

If, like me, you have had a difficult year, you may be thinking that this book is not for you, but Bell makes it clear that it is not a guilt trip or a forcing to do more for God, but an invitation to divert our attentions and affections to God during Lent. To not be ashamed of being Christian and to truly take the time to enter into Jesus' journey to the cross and his resurrection. Bell's ability to draw on Christian tradition and to understand our current culture is prophetic and heart-warming.

If you want a light book that takes you through the story of Lent I would not suggest this one, but if you want a book that kindly challenges you and draws your gaze to Jesus, this is for you.

As I read this book, I was warmly invited to search myself, to allow the Spirit to challenge any habits that were drawing my gaze from Jesus and to find myself in God.

### Epping Green Chapel, Epping Green Essex

Christmas arrived with a sense of expectancy, of the celebration of Christ the Redeemer. We had several amazing events. One Friday afternoon, we conducted two full hours of evangelism using a banner. A first-time shoebox from Samaritan's Purse, hosted for a week, brought enormous delight and success for the children. Our lovely new church board which was donated to us now displays our identity to the community. For responses to prayers about health concerns for many of our members, we owe the Lord all our thanks. We are grateful because, despite our tiny church membership, the Gospel's spreading fire remains vigorous and alive. We appreciate the people's dedication to do what is best for advancing His Kingdom. Lives are changing. Inspired by our Minister, we wait for increased participation in our new ministry, Lantern Ministry. Using the power of God's Word and the Holy Spirit, "Lantern Ministries exists to illuminate lives with the transforming light of Christ, guiding individuals and communities to spiritual development, service, and hope."

Important components to include: • Biblical Foundation: Consult the Scriptural inspiration for the ministry -e.g., Psalm 119:105 or Matthew 5:16. • Pay special attention to ideas of lighting, hope, and direction. Depending on your main concentration, stress spiritual development, community service, or evangelism.

We would like for you to remain in touch with Lantern Ministries! Follow us on Facebook (@EppingGChapel) to see what's occurring and help us in our objective of illuminating society. We appreciate your prayers for all of these things.

### Pinchbeck Baptist Church, Pinchbeck, Lincolnshire

We have seen recent change over the past three months with two members of our leadership team moving on to pastures new. They have now relocated to Gloucestershire. They have served Pinchbeck Baptist Church faithfully for a considerable number of years and are also extremely well respected within our village community. As a congregation, we wish them well in their new home and pray that they will settle into a new church family. What became apparent as we prepared for their departure was that God had already trodden the path before and revealed to the Leadership Team who would take on their roles and responsibilities. We have a faithful God, who calls us to be bold and courageous. Some of us have needed to step out of our comfort zone and step up to the commitment of being a servant of the Lord. This is not only a time of great change for our church but a time of great opportunity. As we grow in number, we can see there are many limitations within the church building. Our Pastor has shared a vision how we can improve our facilities to further the work of our Lord. We are praying, actively seeking God's will for our church. We would welcome your prayers around this time.

We may not know where we will be by this time next year, but we know that God does. Nothing is too hard for our God, and we are reminded to hold on to His promise. We love serving our community and pray that God's will is revealed to us. Whatever the size of the project we must keep our eyes firmly fixed on the Lord in whom we trust.

Romans 8:28 "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

## Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy

Harvest is one of the busiest times of the year for a rural chaplaincy, and this year has been no exception. Our chaplains have led and participated in many harvest thanksgiving services in rural churches in Derbyshire, and we see supporting local clergy and congregations in this way as a vital part of our role.

For the first time this year we hosted our own harvest supper in Hlland Ward, Derbyshire. It was a wonderful evening of faith, farming and fellowship. Along with 120 guests, we sang harvest hymns, listened to fascinating talks about faith from a farm vet and from a craftsman from the US who carves incredibly intricate Bible Sticks, and we enjoyed a delicious supper of pie and mash. We prayed together and thanked God for his overflowing generosity and abundance.

By the time this issue of MOSAIC is published, the Derbyshire Farmers' Christmas Carol Service, which is always held at the start of December, will have taken place. It's a unique experience – a traditional carol service with



lessons taking place in the main ring of the livestock auction centre in Bakewell, in the Peak District. Around 400 people join us to worship and sing carols, most of whom will be from farming families.

At Christmas time, many people who would not usually do so at other times of the year visit a church or attend a carol service such as this one. We would like to invite you to pray that maybe a line from a carol or a word or two from the reflection resonates with them as they reflect on their Christmas church visit and lead them closer to the true meaning of Christmas and to experience the love that our Saviour Jesus Christ has for each and every one of us.

## EFC Christian Fellowship, Sutton-on-Sea, Lincolnshire

We continue to strive to be effective and relevant in our mission field in Mablethorpe and Sutton-On-Sea on the Lincolnshire coast as the community is slowly growing and developing with new houses and community buildings being provided for the area. We have had many answers to prayer over recent months as we have a few members of the congregation battling serious health issues. We trust in God for healings and breakthroughs.

We are praising God for the way He has provided for our needs as a church over the last year and now we have a good team of visiting preachers who regularly come to

support us. Our congregation has grown by a few which is encouraging and we are a significant active member of Churches Together as we work with our local brothers and sisters. Recently we have been blessed by a married couple who have joined us and Neil has shared with us his powerful testimony which has been an encouragement to us all. We have no one story that I can point to, but we have had many brothers and sisters who have faced difficult challenges but have still held on to their faith regardless. We ask our Rural Ministries family to pray for our spiritual growth and for a fresh vision for us into the future as we seek guidance in leadership.

# Lent **Book Review**

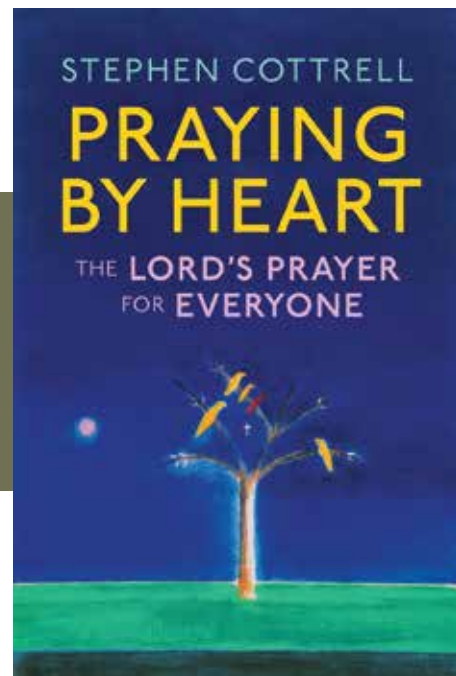
## Praying by Heart: The Lord's Prayer for Everyone

by Stephen Cottrell  
Reviewed by Jon Timms

This is a wonderful short read from the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, about the Lord's Prayer. It reminds us of the centrality of these words of Jesus and how they bring shape and form, not only to our lives and our walk with God, but to how we engage with others and with the world around us.

Early on in the text, Cottrell says '.....the Lord's Prayer comes from the heart of God to the heart of the world via the heart of Jesus and is lived and communicated to the world through our hearts. As we learn this prayer by heart and say it each day, we come close to the heart of God and learn to live God's way.' This summarises the heart and intent of the book.

The invitation is for the reader to dive deeply into these words of Jesus that all too often are lost in familiarity. The text address Jesus' prayer line by line and offers gentle yet profound insight into each section: Our Father, the three praises, the three humble requests and the doxology. We're reminded that the Lord's Prayer is the 'pattern and



outline of all prayer' which ultimately draws us deep in the heart of God as our prayers unify with those of Jesus.

The book also includes some reflective questions at the end which are really helpful for personal and/or group reflection.

**The invitation is for the reader to dive deeply into these words of Jesus that all too often are lost in familiarity.**

# Rural Mission Hubs

Rural Mission Hubs aim to support and encourage pioneers, practitioners, and permission givers, as well as those looking to explore pioneering rural ministry and mission. They are an opportunity to share stories and encouragements, pray together, explore ideas, and listen to God together. It is a gathering of like-minded explorers with an open door to anyone seeking a safe place to be, and as such, invites you to join us on the journey.

Each hub aims to meet two or three times each year and has its own character with no set format.

## Future Rural Mission Hub dates:

### 30th January

South East Rural Mission Hub: Ashburnham Place, Nr Battle, Sussex

### 6th February

East Midlands Rural Mission Hub: Launde Abbey, Leicestershire

### 12th-13th February (residential)

Northern Rural Mission Hub: Scargill House, Nr Skipton, North Yorkshire

### 27th February

East Anglia Rural Mission Hub: Clare Priory, Suffolk

### 7th March

Thames Valley Rural Mission Hub:  
St Mary's Convent, Wantage, Oxfordshire

### 10th March

North East & Borders Rural Mission Hub:  
St Cuthbert's Centre, Holy Island, Northumbria



For the latest details on  
all Rural Mission Hubs go to  
[www.ruralministries.org.uk/rural-mission-hubs](http://www.ruralministries.org.uk/rural-mission-hubs)



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