

# ditorial Musing

Welcome to CA inFocus.

Spring is well and truly here and so is our second issue of CA inFocus, which you will find packed with stories from our evangelistic work across the UK and Ireland; all made possible through your generosity.

The Easter season is a time for reflection and celebration for all that Jesus accomplished through His death, burial and resurrection. As we remember this wonderful gift of grace, it is also a great opportunity to share this message with those who don't yet know Christ - and as Church Army, that's exactly what we do! By drawing alongside struggling people and communities across the UK and Ireland, we continue to show Christ's love in both words and action.

Even in some of the most unseen corners of Britain, our Evangelists are working every day, in partnership with dioceses and local churches, to bring people into relationship with God and positively impact entire communities through social work and action. As you read and pray through the following pages, remember that you have made this possible by generously supporting our work.



Happy Easter. He is risen!

Chris Hardy **Fditor** 





#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

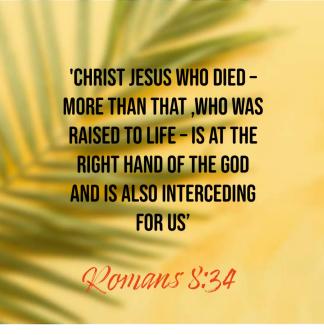
10-14 April: CA at Spring Harvest 27-28 May: CA at Big Church Festival

18 July: Commissioning of new Church Army Evangelists July/August @ CA at New Wine United and Greenbelt

However you use CA in Focus we want to know. Drop us an email any time at  ${\bf INFOCUS@CHURCHARMY.ORG}$ 

## **CONTENTS**

St Helier Centre of Mission	6
Easter: "He is risen indeed"	8
Caring for Creation	10
Our Evangelists	12
Central Fife	14
Retired Evangelists	16
CA & Mental Health	18
Being a light of hope with Church Army	22
CA's Prison Chaplains	24
The Marylebone Project	26
CA HR Team	28
CA in Ballina	30
Faith Questions	32
Our Evangelists-in-training	34
People & Places	36





Andy Rushworth Pathways Officer

Knowing that Jesus is talking to the Father about me is a source of great inspiration. There He is, the Son of God, Saviour of the world, talking to God about me - asking Him to look after me, provide for me and guide me into a life of purpose. I couldn't have anyone better talking to the Father about me.

During this Easter time, remember there is always a

death before a resurrection. We may experience the end of a job or a ministry program we run, but where there is an end, there is the opportunity for a new beginning - resurrection!

## IT'S NOT TOO LATE!

Will you be a light in someones darkest moment?

## GIVE TO OUR LENT APPEAL

churcharmy.org/light



## ST HELIER CENTRE OF MISSION

Built as a garden city after the First World War, the St. Helier Estate in Sutton, South West London, is now recognised as having high levels of deprivation, unemployment, single parents, elderly people and people with long-term disabling illness. Large parts of the parish are among the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Many residents are concerned about the levels of crime and poverty in the neighbourhood, which has risen over recent years. A lack of support on the St Helier Estate from relevant authorities has left its residents feeling powerless, especially now they are faced with rising costs of living, alongside unsafe housing conditions and health problems, which threaten the wellbeing of families and people living in the community. The Centre of Mission, led by Evangelist Tracy Marlow, along with Pioneer Evangelists Hayley and Rachel, is focused on bringing Christian hope and life to this community. Since we launched the St. Helier Centre of Mission in 2021, in partnership with the Diocese of Southwark, the area has become a hive of activity where God is at work in the local community.

#### **Meet Tracy**

t is amazing what God is doing here in St. Helier. Some people are coming to faith and being baptised, new people are coming along to our Sunday service, and we have a community choir, which is growing beautifully. God is also enabling us to help people in the local community on a practical level,

staff from Sutton Council come along to help people with benefit and debt advice. Once a month, we have an NHS GP who comes and sits with people to discuss any medical needs they want to talk about. The police often attend to discuss some of the problems the estate has and how they can help. There is also a Zumba class, plus a parenting class led by someone from Children's Services. God is with us in all of this and with the people who

come to the café and classes.

which is much needed. We have a café on a Wednesday, when

The help we are making available on the estate is so valuable; it has enabled us to bridge

gaps local residents face when trying to access help from service providers. Many people come to the Centre of Mission to access help, having felt overlooked and unheard by local services, but coming to us is where they feel safe.

One person who uses our services has been through a tough time. They have lost a lot of loved ones over the last few years and told us how much they were struggling and "just didn't want to be here anymore." But now they can see how God is working right where they are. They have now come to faith, along with some members of their family, and each day they want to be here. Other families are starting to do the same after seeing God work in their communities.

#### "COME AND SEE"

Some of the residents who experience poverty may ask, "Where is God in all of this?" Or, "What does God do for me?" We are showing them on a practical level that God is here, with us, among it all. Our invitation is to "come and see". That is why our Sunday service is called Come and See. It is a name that came from our new Christians who now go out onto the estate and tell others to come and see what God is doing.

- Pray for the strengthening of community partnerships already in place.
- Pray for the team working to build youth and children's work.
- Pray for opportunities to share the love of God at upcoming events at Easter and the King's coronation.
- Pray for wisdom and creativity to reach those already engaging with the café,
   Zumba class and choir with the Good News of the gospel.
- Pray for protection and for the wellbeing of the team at St. Helier.

INFOCUS.

### EASTER: by Chris Hardy "HE IS RISEN INDEED"

Happy Easter!

his week we are taking a break from our usual rhythm to think on the glorious truth that Jesus rose from the grave, conquering Satan, sin and death. If you have been in the Church for any number of years, you will likely have heard the phrase "He is risen indeed" on Easter Sunday. When you hear a fellow believer utter the phrase "He is risen", your lips may automatically reply "He is risen indeed" in a response that feels as automatic and natural as breathing.

But where does the phrase come from?

The phrase "He is risen indeed" has been around since at least the fourth century, when it began to be used among Christians as a way to proclaim their faith in the risen Christ. Some believe that this phrase arose from an ancient liturgy that included saying "He is risen" three times followed by "Indeed He is risen." Scholars differ in their opinion as to how and when this phrase became associated with Easter, but what remains certain is that it holds deep meaning for believers, who use it as an affirmation of Jesus' death and resurrection.

This four-word Easter phrase bears so much power because, while our human capacity to comprehend the grandeur of Jesus' sacrifice can often be limited, "He is risen indeed" serves as a reminder and affirmation of the everlasting victory that He won on our behalf. His death was not in vain and, because of it, we have been given new life.

> As Christians, we have the amazing privilege of being able to say "He is risen indeed" to each other, not only as a reminder of the truth but also as an inspiration to share our faith with others. It is this very truth on which the vision of Church Army hangs: to be able to spread hope through action and also to say with confidence to everyone we talk to that transformation is possible, not only in the here and now, but also in life everlasting.

This Easter Sunday, and for the rest of this week, join with us in saying with joy "He is risen indeed" to encourage one another to share the Good News with everyone who does not yet know about God's love and grace. And please pray for our Evangelists all over the UK and Ireland to boldly proclaim "He is risen indeed" in their words and actions so that more may come to know Him and receive eternal life.



- Pray for courage and boldness for Church Army Evangelists to share the Good News of Jesus' resurrection with those who do not yet know about it.
- Pray that many people will come to experience transformation through a relationship with Christ this Easter season.
- Ask God to open doors of opportunity to share faith in new and innovative ways.
- Pray that Church Army's Centres of Mission and projects would be blessed as they strive to bring hope, love and grace into every community they serve.
- Ask God to continue working powerfully through our mission to bring hope to the streets.

PRAYER

## CARING FOR CREATION

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it"

**PSALM 24:1** 

As Church Army, we understand the importance of taking care of the earth.

We believe that God has called us, the Church, to be stewards of His creation.

From God's mandate in Genesis 2:15 to "work" and "take care" of the garden of Eden, to the declaration of David in Psalm 24:1 that, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it", it is clear that God intends for us to care for creation, from loving people to preserving the birds and animals, trees and oceans.

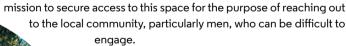
As a charity that loves God and loves people, we also have the opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to caring for creation by helping people everywhere encounter God's love and transforming communities through the work we do.

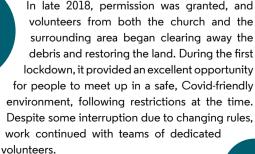
So, as World Earth Day 2023 approaches (Saturday 22 April), we are taking this week to look at some of the ways that our Centres of Mission Evangelists are using community gardens and nature to bring some green life to inner city urban areas, to be enjoyed by everyone and to bring people together in community.

#### NORTH RELEAST CENTRE OF MISSION

Stephen Whitten

"The community garden is situated on a piece of land in North Belfast, owned by the Methodist Church. It had been neglected for around 30 years and was covered in overgrowth, broken glass and rubbish. The Center of Mission embarked on a







Since 22 February 2021, we have partnered with Probation Board, who send a team twice weekly to fulfil their hours of community service. This has been invaluable in light of all that needs doing at the site. The garden has also created opportunities to share faith stories with these men, many of whom have opened up about difficulties they are facing and how much they value coming here as a way to clear their minds. With its mature trees and mountain views, there's something quite special about just being present in this environment while working alongside others in a supportive atmosphere — not forgetting lunchtime sausages cooked over an open fire! This positive experience has even led on to starting a men's group, which meets weekly beside the church for deeper conversations about life, faith and everything else!"

#### SCUNTHORPE CENTRE OF MISSION

Sean Andrews

"Four years ago, I had a vision to create something special - Mossy Church. Our mission was to explore faith through nature and conservation. We decided to do this every first and third Saturday of the month in two locations. On each visit, we take people on guided tours around our wild areas, which cover about a quarter of an acre. We use themes to explore conservation activities that people can relate to, and we help them reflect on their faith along the way.

One of our most ambitious projects was building a living wall around our Riddings wild area at Holy Spirit Church. This wall not only serves as a beautiful piece of art but also encourages local community members to plant seeds, plants and bulbs - creating memories for generations. In true eco-friendly fashion, we used sods dug out by Community Payback so that no materials were wasted. The results have been amazing, providing habitats for bees, moths and other critters! We also created a pond in the same way, using waste materials, and are currently building a greenhouse made out of empty pop bottles."

- Pray for the men who complete their community service at the garden in Belfast to encounter God for themselves.
- Pray that more local people would get involved in the Belfast Centre of Mission garden.
- PRAYER Pray for the Mossy Church initiative in the Scunthorpe Centre of Mission to develop and flourish.
- Pray that the people involved in the Scunthorpe Centre of Mission will feel equipped to share their love and care for creation with others.

## OUR EVANGELISTS

Stephen Ramshaw is the Evangelist at the Sheffield Centre of Mission, which works in partnership with the Methodist Church and Salvation Army to grow new expressions of Christian community and inspire mission and evangelism within the Diocese of Sheffield. Stephen had never been to church and was working full time in construction when he encountered Jesus. This encounter set him on a path to becoming a full-time Evangelist - something he never expected.

Meet Stephen

hat do I want to go to church for?" was my answer when my mother asked me to go to an Alpha course at her church. I had never been to church, and I had no intention of going, but my sister called saying my mam had asked her to persuade me to go. I thought, "Well, it must be important to her, so I'll go along." But I really didn't want to. I thought to myself, "As soon as they ask me for a fiver to fix the roof, I'm out of there." I was really suspicious and was ready to have a bit of a row, but they threw me completely off my guard, as they were so nice, and everything they said made sense. They explained Jesus to me, and I thought, "Wow, this is brilliant! Why hasn't anyone told me any of this before? This needs to be shouted from the rooftops." I had obviously heard of God before this, but it was the first time I had encountered Jesus. That night completely changed my life!

I was working in construction at the time, and I had the foulest mouth. I would break up a word to put a profanity in it, but after Alpha, I just couldn't swear any more. I had to learn how to speak without swearing - it was like a whole new vocabulary. My wife and I found a church, and the vicar there was brilliant; his name was Michael. We had

the same accent, and I discovered we grew up in the same area. He really took me under his wing, and I think he was pleased to have us there. Michael lost his life six months later in a car accident, which had a huge impact on me.

About 10 years later a new vicar joined the church, and one snowy night he knocked on my door and he said, "I think God is calling you to be a Church Army Evangelist." He told me to pray on it, so I did. I got an application form, but it took me three weeks to fill it in. I had always worked in construction, so this was new to me. I got



an interview and I thought, "If it's God's will, they'll say yes."
And they did! Since then, I have worked in Newcastle,
the Medway Centre of Mission, and now I'm in
Sheffield

I work between the city centre and a district called Arbourthorne. Every day, I walk around 24,000 steps looking out for the people most people look past or pretend aren't there. They're citizens of Sheffield, but the streets are their home. They're not always causing trouble, but people don't want to see them. Most have really chaotic and difficult lives, struggling with self-worth, addiction, homelessness, loneliness and lack of hope.

**SUPPORT** 

You can support Stephen's evangelistic work by quoting his ref: 2015SRA at churcharmy.org/give

I want to let people know how much they are worth. No one is a lost cause, and God can do anything with anyone. All we need is a bit of love and nurture. I can relate to people really easily. I have always loved people, and I like to see people doing well, and God is involved in that.

Recently a guy who likes a bit of a drink has asked me to pray for him to stop drinking. People are asking for God's help with their problems and that is a big starting point.

- Pray for the continued unity and cooperation of the churches and other organisations as we look to share the love of Jesus across Sheffield city centre.
- Pray for our recovery work in the city centre and our addiction awareness training. Pray that people will join this much needed ministry.
- Pray for our Oasis Community that we continue to grow in depth and numbers, for more people to know Jesus and that we remain a beacon of the amazing light, love and hope of Jesus.
- Pray for all of the midweek activities we have planned for our Oasis Community at 35 Chapel Walk.
- Pray for our work in Arbourthorne and the Men's Group starting.

PRAYER

## CENTRAL FIFE

Back in 2020, we spoke to Gerry Dillon, who had just taken on the tremendous task of leading the newly launched Centre of Mission in Central Fife in partnership with the Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane, in Scotland. What made this an even more impossible task was that he was doing it during the first of the coronavirus lockdowns.

Rather than wait it out, and seeing the great need of the residents in Central Fife, Gerry used the internet, and any other means he could, to connect with people in the area. Three years on, the Central Fife Centre of Mission is going strong and helping more and more people in practical ways while taking every opportunity to share the gospel of hope in Jesus Christ. We caught up with Gerry to find out what the Centre is up to in 2023.

from Gerry

e are very much being led by the community right now - listening to them and what they need. The original plan was to open up a café, but the more I listened to people, the more I realised they didn't need a café - what they really needed was food. People are starving here in Central Fife, so that has become the focus. We have food on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and we also have a pantry, which has got a four-month waiting list. The need is so dire that we have such a long waiting list. We created the pantry and kitchen project. Anyone who is hungry can come into the pantry and all the food is free. They can give a donation of what they can, when they can. We also prepare fresh food every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday so people can enjoy a hot meal. Wednesday is more of a sit-down community meal. Lots of different people come in, but there is a core of about 30 regulars.

One of the big things that has happened, which took me by surprise, is that some are coming along to church services on Sundays. They are happy to have conversations about faith while eating mid-week, too. I have become their community priest; people speak to me the way they speak to each other, which is great. It's a wonderful place



to be, and it's all about the people. Morrisons gave us their foodbank donations, but that was only for one year. That's coming to an end soon, so we are approaching different people/businesses for donations so that we don't run out.

One of the regulars who comes is an amputee. He arrived at my door one day in tears. He told me how he had become more and more isolated throughout the pandemic and was really struggling. He asked if he could talk to me. I said, "Yes, of course, but as well as doing that, why don't you come tonight (it was a Thursday) and have something to eat?" His eyes lit up, and he said, "Can I?!" I said, "Of course!" But then he was worried and said, "But what is the cost? I don't have any money." I told him, "There's no cost, just bring yourself." He came along, and then he grabbed me a few weeks later and said, "I was at the very end. I had lost all hope, and I just happened to come to you because I saw your door open, and there you were and there this group was, and it saved me. It's literally saved me: it's saved my life."

For me, everything we do is about the person and their dignity. Each person has needs, emotional and physical, as well as spiritual and pastoral needs. We are bringing people together to meet all of their needs. We have a small building, but it's a growing community with more and more people arriving.

I'm hoping for a Pioneer Evangelist soon so that we can discover new ways to reach people."

- Pray a business can be found to regularly donate to the foodbank to enable a constant supply of food to those who need it most.
- Pray that the conversations about faith at mealtimes continue to deepen, allowing hearts and minds to be open to seeking God.
- Pray that the Centre of Mission continues to meet the needs of the local community; that they will feel included, valued and welcome.
- Pray for strength and wellbeing for the staff and volunteers.
- Pray for a Pioneer Evangelist to join the team soon to enable Central Fife CoM to make further connections and develop meaningful relationships.

PRAYER

# RETIRED EVANGELISTS 1



Every CA Evangelist has a personal and powerful testimony of how they came to be saved. While everyone's story is unique and different there is often a common element where God works through someone else to bring that person into relationship with Him. For those who follow God's calling to a lifetime of evangelism, those evangelists become an instrument themselves, used by God to bring people to know and trust in Jesus.

lan Maher's story starts like this. He is one of CA's retired Evangelists with a lifetime of stories of people encountering the Living God, and it began with one person taking the time to talk and listen to a young man with questions about God.



y early experience of church was Sunday school, but I remember nothing of the content. It wasn't until my late teens that I began think "there must be more to life than this!". As I look back now, I can see that it was God's prompting.

One Sunday I walked into the church nearest my house, in Wales. I later found out the vicar had been a CA Evangelist. I burnt the midnight oil with him for months, during which time I threw every possible objection to Christianity at him I could think of; questions like "how can there be suffering in the world?" I would give him 101 reasons why there couldn't possibly be a God. He simply let me say what I needed to. He didn't belittle my questions, he just gave me the space to explore. At one point the penny dropped and I thought "yes, I do believe that Jesus is risen from the dead". That moment changed the direction of my life. I wanted other people to know this as well, so I tried to maintain that throughout the years of my ministry.

Often, I would encounter questions, but you know that underneath there's something else, you know this is not the question that they really want answered. So just by listening and giving them the chance and the freedom to express doubts without feeling belittled or put down and then once they have the confidence to do that they start to wrestle with the big questions of faith and that's certainly what happened with me and this approach with me was great. I saw something in the vicar that made me think "I want what you have got". I couldn't put my finger on it at the time but looking back it was how God worked in his life and enabled him to work

with other people and I think I wanted to be able to do something similar.

Those who train as CA Evangelists do not lay down their evangelistic calling when they reach retirement age. Ian spent his last 12 years before retiring as a chaplain at Sheffield Hallam University. During that time, he also felt called to ordination. Today he is an ordained CA Evangelist and works in a self-supporting role at Sheffield Cathedral as part of the clergy team.

#### ADVICE FOR YOUNGER EVANGELISTS

Be comfortable in knowing you don't have the answers to all questions. Because it's often in the exploration of things where God works, so you don't have to have the answer to every question that someone throws at you. It's quite okay to say "I'm not really sure about that let me come back to you." And sometimes we just don't have the answer you know, "Why does God allow suffering?" "Well, where is God in the middle of all that?" I think sometimes, especially starting out in ministry we think we have to have everything nailed down and know all the answers. Instead, I think we need to have the courage to live with the questions that we don't have the answers to and help others to feel ok to do that. Because I think if our minds are open then God can speak, if we close everything off, we end up putting God in a box.



- Pray for opportunities for evangelists to get alongside people and build relationships. Of course, our words about Christian faith matter, but sometimes, who we are speaks far more eloquently than the words we
- Pray for evangelists to have insight to see where God is already at work and then look for ways of working with others to help build up the communities in which you are called to serve.
- Pray that God always has new things for retired evangelists. That they might see clearly how God might be calling them in this particular phase of their lives.



## CA & MENTAL HEALTH

This week is World Mental Health Awareness Week; an opportunity to normalise conversations around mental health and providing recognition to those affected. As Church Army we engage with issues of mental health every day. We do this not just to reach out to the countless individuals struggling with mental health issues, but because love and hope is at the forefront of our caring and compassionate faith. Everyday our Evangelists, Centres of Mission and Key Projects are working to help individuals and groups with a whole range of mental health struggles, to show love and bring the hope of the gospel to their lives.

#### **GLOUCESTER**

In Gloucester, Emma Wilson is leading a café which is bringing something of the Kingdom of God to the area. The café enables anyone in the community who is lonely, feeling isolated, without anyone to talk to, or struggling with life, to come, eat, and do some life together. The café is run as a Community Interest Company (CIC); a unique limited company that enables mission-driven entrepreneurs to benefit the community!







#### From our Gloucester CoM:

PRAYER "Lord God, enable us to help others to encounter you, and to know that they are not alone, and that there is an ear to listen, a welcome at a table, and worth in their presence, as we journey together with you in community with each other. Amen."

#### **SELBY**

Amy Hayes is our Pioneer Evangelist in Selby. She is running GAB, which stands for God and Biscuits; an all-female group that meets every week and is engaging with mental health issues on many levels.

"Every Wednesday morning at 9.30, women descend on my house for pancakes, biscuits and tea and coffee. We sit round, eat and catch up. The group provides a safe space for members to be accepted and to share their stories without fear of judgement. During the weekly meetings, the members engage in meaningful conversations and play games such as 'deep meaningful conversation cards.' Prayer is a large part of GAB, with prayer often being held before any meeting.

One lady shared that, "It's the time of the week everyone looks forward to. Being midweek, it helps you get through the week - it's pretty special!"

Another lady told me how she wouldn't change any part of her life, even her past struggles with addiction and homelessness, because it has made her who she is today. The group shows incredible trust in each other. They even have a key to my house so that GAB can continue if I'm not around one week; it sounds crazy, but that is the level of trust. GAB creates a unique atmosphere where people can come together to laugh and have fun while still having deep conversations about faith and life. The positive impact on mental health through such a simple thing is profound."

 Pray that the members of GAB would experience more and more of the Kingdom of God in their lives. Pray that Wednesday morning would continue to be a sacred space full of laughter, pancakes and God.



## CA & MENTAL HEALTH

#### GIVE

Help us to reach more people struggling with their mental health.

Visit churcharmy.org/give

#### DUNDEE

Kerry Dixon from our Dundee Centre of Mission is helping people suffering with mental health problems in various ways including a men's support group called Pirate Monks. Gavin, who attends the group and mentors there too, told us how important the Pirate Monks is for him.

"It has certainly helped me in my faith journey, and it helps me with my mental health too. It has given me more confidence. We encourage meditative prayer and being able to talk freely in the group breaks down barriers. We pray for each other and we know that we are all equal and unique within the Pirate Monks."

You can find out more about Gavin's story in our next issue of CA inFocus.

- Pray for the men who attend Pirate Monks; that they may continue to feel the love of God.
- Pray that God would bring to us anyone who would benefit from the Pirate Monks.



#### WREXHAM

Jack Wright is the Pioneer Evangelist at our Centre of Mission in Wrexham, where mental health issues are a prominent problem, particularly among young people.

Jack runs a young men's hiking and mentoring group in the summer months. They head out of the urban environment and into the countryside. It encourages them to think about nothing but placing one foot in front of the other - leading to improved mental clarity. Jack also offers one-to-one mentoring sessions for those who need it, where he provides a safe and judgement-free space.

"Through these conversations, I see an improvement in overall demeanour, with these young guys feeling more confident and looking optimistically towards the future. Most of these young people are completely unchurched. They engage in Centre of Mission projects, but they don't have their own faith as such. But we are making steps in that direction. We talk about what happens after death; it's a stepping stone towards a faith journey."

 Pray that the young people of Wrexham continue to engage and we continue to be able to meet their needs.







## BEING A LIGHT OF HOPE WITH CHURCH ARMY

We couldn't do it without you! We are deeply grateful for the generosity of our supporters. Your financial contributions enable our 250+ evangelists to go out on the streets every day to connect with people in need; to train more evangelists to spread God's Word and equip individuals and churches to share faith with those around them. There are simple ways that you can help to keep us going, both financial and non-financial.

#### SHARE WITH A FRIEND

Help us to get Church Army's name out by sharing your copy of inFocus with a friend, or requesting a second copy by calling us on 0300 123 2113.

Share some of the testimonies you have read about in this magazine and ask your friends if they would pledge a regular gift at churcharmy.org/qive.

Just £6 a month could help us to reach more people as we respond to urgent and desperate needs.

#### **VOLUNTEER**

One of the best gifts you can give to Church Army is your time and skills. Join our network of volunteers across the countries who make Church Army what it is.

You may only have a small amount of time to give but trust us, it counts!

Get in touch with:

volunteers@churcharmy.org to find out what volunteering opportunities are happening close to you.





#### HOST A FUNDRAISER

Doing your own fundraiser can be a fun and brilliant way to raise money for Church Army and it is more rewarding than you may think. You could run, bake, cycle or do something completely different; fundraising is a brilliant way to raise awareness of the work we do.

You can find ideas, downloadable resources and a guide to get you started at:

churcharmy.org/fundraise

#### LET YOUR LEGACY SHINE

Have you considered leaving a deferred aift?

Leaving a legacy in your will to Church Army is an incredibly significant way of contributing to our mission. Many o our projects continue as a result of the generosity of legacy gifts. Including us in your will provides lasting support to the work we do and allows us to keep taking risks, expand, and be a light of hope to the next generation.

You can find out more about legacies at: churcharmy.org/legacies

#### **ONE-OFF OR REGULAR GIVING?**

Which is right for you today?

We love your one-off gifts because they provide us with the immediate funds to take action and make a positive impact today! However, we also love it when you join our family through regular giving, helping us build sustainable and reliable support for our missions and projects for the long haul. Your regular gift keeps us better equipped with the resources needed to ensure our work remains as effective as possible.

Thank you!

## CA'S PRISON CHAPLAINS

Once entrenched in a life of violence and gang activity and having served time in prison, Paul Ogunyemi believed life was built on power, where there was no right or wrong. But a meaningful realisation that Jesus Christ died to save him from all he had done invigorated his spirit with faith in new beginnings. Now a Commissioned CA Evangelist and Prison Chaplain - thanks to the experiences formed by his past - Paul works towards inspiring others down different paths while proclaiming Christ's love all around him. His story reminds us of hope; no matter our past mistakes or negative experiences there is always potential for redemption when we open ourselves to His love.

Meet Paul

t just 16 years old, violence and crime become a way of life for me. I was heavily involved in gang culture and my criminality didn't end after being released from prison for robbery with violence. A street evangelist changed everything; He asked if I believed in Jesus Christ - at that time, I was planning to take a rival gang members life - when his words stopped me dead: "Jesus died so you could be saved". His message caused an epiphany within myself making me question how God would see someone like me?

I tried to find some good things about myself, but I couldn't, I was a very violent person, I was a criminal, my life was about money and power. I couldn't find any redeeming features. A spiritual battle then started within me, I was having a conversation with the enemy who was saying "You can't be forgiven, you've done too much, you might as well carry on as you are". After being released from another arrest I found myself in a church

and crying out "God if you're there you need to give me something that I can hold on to, anything,

otherwise I'm going to kill someone or be killed. Please give me something". Then I had a vision of something like a screen, and all the wrong things I had done appeared on this screen-like image before me, it was crushing because I had done some awful things and it was all laid out in front of me. I had been to prison as a punishment for breaking the law, but at that moment I saw that all the things I had done had broken God's law and I recognised I couldn't pay for all the bad that I had done. It struck me right there and then why Jesus had died, I knew it was true. I then felt an

overwhelming sense of the presence

of God's love, an unbelievable feeling of being forgiven and I knew God existed and that I would never enter back into that violent life again. Even though it meant that I would be in danger, I knew God was protecting me, I wasn't afraid.

God led me to train as an evangelist with Church Army. It was in the third year of training when I heard someone talk about prison chaplaincy. I knew that was my calling and after much time spent praying about it, I have just been licensed as a prison chaplain. My previous life makes me relatable to the inmates and enables me to hold a conversation with them. They are keen to know my story and how I dealt with things before I had faith and after. God has used my mistakes and experiences to help and guide others to a more fulfilling life. My evangelist training from CA has been a great help with my ministry. CA gave me the opportunity to consider other people's opinions and to listen and always respond with gentleness and love. I want to help people understand what is true and along that journey grow in my understanding too."

- Pray that chaplaincy teams have the space to replenish their own fellowship and not neglect their own spiritual needs.
- PRAYER Pray that the chaplains would be able to reach out to the inmates and help them to see the hope that is available through a relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Pray that God would provide opportunities for the chaplains to share their faith with inmates who are receptive to the message.
- Pray for wisdom for the prison chaplains as they navigate the challenges of working in a prison setting.

## THE MARYLEBONE PROJECT

#### WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MARYLEBONE?

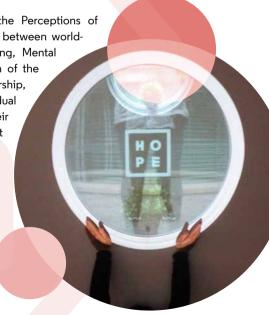
At the Marylebone Project, we have been supporting vulnerable homeless women in crisis for over 90 years. Every day, we help vulnerable women turn their situation around by providing a safe journey from living on the streets to living independent, meaningful lives. In recent months, we've seen an outpouring of support and gratitude - with new staff members joining our team, collaborative partnerships forming and valuable relationships being built. Our mission is to provide essential care and guidance as these women take steps towards autonomy and stability.

#### HOPE THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

Recently, the Churchill Hotel hosted an event to display the photographs, honouring the hard work of the amazing women at the Marylebone Project. Marylebone was recognised for successfully providing employment opportunities to former homeless people, such as Sarah\*, who now works for Hyatt Regency, one of the world's most luxurious hotel and resort companies, after gaining valuable experience from Munch-The Marylebone Project's Catering Enterprise.

The inspiring initiative, "Challenging the Perceptions of Homelessness", is a collaborative effort between world-renowned photographer Marysa Dowling, Mental Health Fight Club Art, and the women of the Marylebone Project. Through mentorship, they have discovered their own individual photography skills and developed their creative voices. The photos taken depict empowering moments, like friends coming together, keys (representing safety and home), and words such as "Hope" illuminated on neon signs - all capturing meaningful memories in time.

This initiative is a powerful example of how much can be achieved through collaboration and creative expression.



#### INTERNATIONAL WOMAN'S DAY DONATION

On International Women's Day, we were filled with gratitude as Victoria's Secret UK bestowed a very special gift of 5,000 pairs of underwear to the Marylebone Project in honour of their incredible work. These items will not only make up welcome packs for our 24/7 drop-in service at The Sanctuary, but they'll also support many more women facing vulnerability and lack of access to essential goods. Through The Sanctuary, and across all the services we provide, we aim to empower the lives of vulnerable women with compassion and kindness. This is a wonderful gift from Victoria's Secret, who have highlighted the incredible work the project does to empower vulnerable women.

"As part of our ongoing philanthropic efforts, we will be donating to the Marylebone Project. We are proud to support the amazing work the charity does."

- Victoria's Secret UK.

#### MUNCH AT MARYLEBONE

At the Marylebone Project, we are committed to investing in our vulnerable homeless women by providing them a safe place to stay and giving them access to accredited courses designed to strengthen their self-confidence and equip them with essential skills. Munch, our social enterprise, is here not only as an environmentally sustainable corporate catering business but also so that these amazing ladies can gain experience through training needed for long-term employment. Additionally, they have the opportunity to develop their cooking abilities in a supportive atmosphere while blending traditional culinary recipes with unique ideas from each individual.

"Food is not the same as nutrition. When I was working, I always made sure I had healthy food to eat, but now, with no income and living off donations, it can be hard to find consistent fresh food and staples like bread and vegetables. However, it is comforting to know I will not go hungry, as there is always something available at the Marylebone Project."

- Claire\* Marylebone Project

- Pray that all women who come to the project will feel welcome and safe and encounter God's love.
- Pray that collaborations with other agencies would continue and flourish to enable women to progress to independent living.
- · Pray for donations to the project to continue and for awareness to grow.
- Pray for the staff at Marylebone Project to feel supported and appreciated.

PRAVER INFOCUS

\*not her real name

## CA HR TEAM

This week, we are praying for one of the Church Army teams that you won't often find in the spotlight. Behind the scenes, the HR and Volunteering Team do an incredible job of looking after our staff and volunteers. Their work is a ministry of care for people, and it enables CA's frontline work.

"Hi! We're the CA HR and Volunteering Team. It's our job to facilitate the employee life journey of our 175 staff across the UK and Ireland as well as our 500+ volunteers. This means we cover everything from recruitment and induction to payroll. We work closely with line managers to support them in the HR aspects of their role and ensure they have the tools and skills to get the best out of their staff and volunteers. As a team, we are eager to help people in ways that will allow them to flourish in their roles and enjoy being part of Church Army."



#### FAYE POPHAM

HR & Volunteering Manager and Safeguarding Lead

Faye leads our HR function to make sure Church Army is a good place to work. She works closely with the senior leadership in developing and ensuring a healthy culture within Church Army. Faye also leads Church Army's safeguarding work along with the two deputy leads, together making sure that work is a safe space for everyone.

### **CURTISE MONK**Safeguarding Administrator

Curtise supports the Safeguarding Team to enable safer recruitment and safeguarding training for our staff and volunteers.

### **DENISE AMBROSE** HR Advisor

Denise looks after everything across the employee life journey, including recruitment, employee relations, employee administration, wellbeing and policy development. She is often the first point of contact for managers seeking HR support and advice.



#### LISA MATHESON

**HR** Assistant

Lisa works across the whole of Church Army. She provides employee support and covers most aspects of the HR function.



#### PANNI LOH

Volunteer Facilitator

Panni's role is all about supporting our volunteers. She has developed a clear Volunteer Journey with tools for safer recruitment, welcome, support and training.



HR & Payroll Administrator

Heidi is our go-to person for any payroll and pension queries, plus holidays. She is the person who can find answers to questions and solutions to make everyone's job on the frontlines smoother.





Pray that, as a new team, we would work together effectively and build good, strong relationships with one another.

• Pray for joy as we serve Church Army, that we would model the CA values in all that we do and be a blessing to the organisation.

- Pray that we would have wisdom to know how best to handle the many different situations and conversations we are faced with each day.
- Pray for the Safeguarding Lead (HR Manager) and Deputies as they respond to safeguarding concerns and oversee Church Army's safeguarding practice.
- Pray our relationship with our volunteers would deepen as we find ways to engage them in the life of Church Army.

## CA IN BALLINA

Ballina is a small town on the west coast of Ireland, with a population of just over 10,000. It is the largest town in County Mayo and the vast majority of people there live in rural areas and have agricultural ties with the land. The Ballina Centre of Mission opened in 2016 in partnership with Ballina Churches Together and the Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry. The aim of the Centre of Mission, led by Marian Edwards, is to build bridges within the local community and to meet the spiritual and practical needs of people of all ages, seeking to support people through prolonged difficulty or immediate need.



have always believed in God, but it wasn't until I was 22 and started to read the Bible that I really got to know Him. Throughout my life, there has been suffering, but I have always leaned hard on God. I have seen his hand in my life on many occasions, even with how I came to know Church Army, to me it was miraculous. It was a chance meeting with a lady who had come to the town to give a talk about CA. I couldn't believe there was an organisation willing to take me, train me and equip me to share the love of Jesus and enable me to achieve a qualification from Durham University. This sort of thing just didn't happen to people on the west coast of Ireland, and I was 50! I jumped at the chance, and I knew it was divine providence. I knew God was calling me into Church Army, I had no idea what it would lead to, but I knew it was my calling.

I'm now an Evangelist at the Ballina Centre of Mission. I meet people where they are in their struggles, grief and turmoil, and I show them the love of God through support, both practically and pastorally. I walk through the town and encounter people that way: it's a great way to make connections and to follow the

example Jesus set by walking through towns

and meeting with people. My work is very much relationship and friendship based, and a big part of that is being present and visible in the community.

I work with people who may need help with the costs of fuel or food bank referrals, especially with costs spiralling at the moment. There is also a lot of need for help with mental health issues and isolation. There is a large traveller community in the area. Some of



the female travellers have faced real hardship and emotional trauma, and they need a friend, someone to listen without judgement. A lot of their relationships can be quite insular, and they sometimes face abuse within their communities and can carry a lot of guilt and need someone to talk to.

One of the things we use a lot here is the art of Kintsugi pottery. It's a Japanese philosophy of repairing broken objects with gold. In the West, we throw everything away, and maybe we throw away these broken people. Kintsugi sees the treasure in jars of clay and treats repair as the history of the object rather than something to disguise. It says that beauty can be found in imperfection. For me, the challenge is figuring out how I can pour gold into these broken vessels.

I want to meet with people in their times of need and let them know the Good News. We need to bring more Good News to the streets and local communities, just like Jesus did. He had encounters with ordinary people, and they were encounters of mercy. People are already carrying burdens of guilt and shame, some are already broken and fragile people, and we need to tell them there is a way to salvation. We need to give them the Good News of Jesus. They need to feel God's love, mercy and grace.

Pray for more volunteers for this part of His harvest field.

 Pray for those involved in the work at the Centre of Mission, that they too will become 'fishers of men'.

 Pray for the Irish Traveller community in Ballina, that they will come to know the grace of God and his Word.

 Pray that the team will be united in purpose and vision to share the Good News of the Kingdom.

• Pray for continuous provision for the Centre of Mission and give thanks for the consistent love and support.

GIVE

Help Evangelists like Marian bring hope in Ireland.

Find out more at churcharmy.org/give

PRAYER INFOCUS

## FAIT Wuestions A new Faith Suite Resource from CA

In today's world, it can seem like so much of our lives is governed by logic and science. For many people, what you can see and prove is the standard for belief. But, as Christians, we know that faith can move mountains. Having faith in God and putting trust in Him above all else amidst the barrage of today's logical arguments and modern advancements can leave us with some big questions, like, "why is there suffering?".

Thinking about big questions and doubting what we already believe is a normal part of being human. For Christians, this is especially true; it can often feel like what we believe is thought of by others as strange.

Faith Questions is our newest resource in the Faith Suite and is designed to help Christians think through how they might go about answering difficult questions about faith by taking a storytelling approach to these ideas. Throughout the sessions, we look at the logical challenges that often come up in discussions about belief and the deep questions that Christians and non-Christians ask about God, while remembering that sharing God's love in words and actions is at the heart of finding the answers.

The list of questions will continue to grow, so keep checking back on our website.



Why do I ask questions of my faith?

Why is Jesus so important to Christians?

What is the purpose of the Church?

Troubling Church history

Why is there suffering?

What should we do with the Bible?

Faith Questions will be launching soon, so please take a look, and share it with anyone you think would be interested in using this free resource. Also, please pray for everyone who engages with some of faith's biggest questions.

- Pray that people at all stages of their journey with God can engage with Faith Questions and find the material valuable.
- Pray that people who have questions about their faith will feel encouraged and empowered to ask these questions.
- Pray that all who engage with the resource would experience deeper and stronger relationships with God.
- Pray for anyone who is experiencing doubt in their faith to feel reassured that doubts and questions are a part of being human.
- Pray that all who engage with Faith Questions will feel confident and equipped to answer any difficult questions they may encounter when discussing their faith.

MERCIA

## OUR EVANGELISTS-IN-TRAINING

As Church Army, we don't just do evangelism, we equip others to evangelise, and we train those who are called by God to make evangelism their full-time vocation. We call these incredible people Evangelists-in-Training (or, more fondly, EiTs).

One of our EiTs is Collette Dorgu. The way she tells us about her own evangelistic journey reminds us that everything we do is for God's Glory and in service of His Kingdom.

Meet Collette

ollette is a middle name I chose myself. My actual name is Woyinkarara, which means the woman who worships the almighty God, not just God but ALMIGHTY GOD. And my twin brother, who is now a bishop, is called Woyinkarowei, which means the man who worships God almighty.

I never used to think of myself as an evangelist. I always thought of an evangelist as someone like Billy Graham - someone who is always winning souls. But what seemed to come naturally to me was pastoral care for people. Even at church, there was someone who seemed much more of an evangelist than me. We used to say that she was the one who went fishing (Matt 4:19), then I was the one who cleaned them up and looked after them. That did not seem like evangelism to me.

It wasn't until I started exploring Church Army in 2014 that the penny dropped, and I got my "eureka moment". I remember it very clearly: I heard about Church Army after I felt God calling me back to my Anglican roots.

I went to the Anglican church close to my house. As soon as I got there, the vicar said to me, "Collette, I believe God sent you to us. We need you. I think you should consider evangelism." And I thought, "Nope, I'm not an evangelist." But I explored the idea, and God led me to train with Church Army.

I came to realise that an evangelist is not just an extroverted type of person who always gets a response to telling the gospel. I now know

> evangelism is much more than that; it is about helping everyone everywhere to encounter God's love and be





empowered to transform their communities through faith - just like our Church Army vision says. You don't have to be a Billy Graham type of person to be an evangelist; there are many more ways to be evangelistic. When I realised this, I thought, "Wow, all these community things that I have been doing, and all of the pastoral care that I give, is evangelism!" That was a big lesson for me. I'm currently involved in an outreach programme through a residential home. I don't go there to preach the gospel, but I am going there to show God's love in action in the things that I do for the people there.

I used to worry that if I spoke to someone about faith, I would do it wrong, especially if they didn't come to faith after talking to me. I used to ask God, "What am I doing wrong?" But I now realise that evangelism can look different for different people. There are many more evangelists out there than we think."

### CALLED?

Called to evangelise?

Find out more at churcharmy.org/vocations

- Pray for the residential home project and its residents and care staff.
- Pray for God's favour and for open doors to other residential homes so that staff and residents can encounter God's love.
- Pray for good health and strength as the EiTs come towards the end of their training.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will help the EiTs implement their training.

## PEOPLE & PLACES

Praying daily for the Church Army network



And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6:18

Welcome to People & Places. In this section of inFocus, you will see the names and locations of our Evangelists and staff members listed daily for your prayerful support. Each person is listed against a day of the month. Please pray for them on that day on each of the next three months (e.g., 1st of April, May and June).

Church Army is made up of people across the whole of the UK and Ireland. We have Commissioned Evangelists, Pioneers in Centres of Mission, national staff working in the background and many more in between - all engaged in different ways to see hope and light enter the lives of everyone who is yet to encounter God.

As a charity that trains and releases Evangelists to follow their calling, we do not always know about the work they are all currently involved in. As such, please pray daily for these incredible people however they are engaged in their calling of building the Kingdom.

Sometimes the prayers of others can help to shape our own. These are some of Church Army's set prayers, which you may find helpful when praying for our staff and Evangelists.

The following are five categories for people mentioned in People & Places. You may find the following guide helpful as you pray for each individual.

- ♦ Commissioned Evangelist
- Commissioned Evangelist (retired)
- ▲ Evangelist-in-Training
- CA Mission Community Member
- Staff

1	Mary Bittles, Rickmansworth  Aubrey Bradfield, Colchester  Heidi Lewis, Newton Abbot  Hannah O'Neill, Sligo CoM  Alan Rainford, Morecambe	Jon Durley, Bridgend ◆ Andy Falconbridge, Bridgwater ◆ Gordon Lamb, Dursley ◇ Phaedra Pamphilon-Green, Bletchingley ◆ David Worley, Wolverhampton
3	Don Egan, Stowmarket ◆ Craig Groocock, Shottery ◆ David Wells, Bedford ◆ John Worsfold, Lowestoft ◊	Sean Andrews, Scunthorpe CoM ◆ Steve Eccleston, Whaley Bridge Mike Griffin, Liverpool ◆ Ros Haines, Ormskirk ◇
5	Janet Arnold, Stoke-On-Trent ◆ Stephen Caple, Haywards Heath ♦ Richard Diamond, Southampton ♦ Gail Southgate, Suffolk CoM Neil Walpole, Dewsbury ◆	lan Chapman, Northallerton ♦ Stephen Gray, Midlands ● Irene Lees, Birmingham ♦ George Lings, Sheffield ■ Brian Wisener, Coleraine ◆
7	Kelvin Knowles, Aldershot ♦ Karen Saunders, Greenwich CoM Neil Thomson, Sheffield ♦ Yvonne Williamson, Chesterfield	Jane Emson, Middlesbrough ◆ Martin Hartley, Norwich ◆ Ade Prescott, Knottingley ◆ Doreen Wheatley, Bradford ◇
9	Mike Dare, Haverfordwest CoM ▲ Gladys Finlayson, Luton ❖ Philip Johanson, Bournemouth ❖ Paul Kinlock, Preston ❖ Joan Macey ❖	Julia Crathorn, Gillingham ♦ John Hotchin, Hull ♦ Michael Joint, New Milton ♦ Steve Martin, Umberleigh ♦ Chloe Sheppard, Winchester ▲
	Paul Knight, Ferndale ♦  John Mills, Cradley Heath  Alan Roberts, Prestatyn ♦  Robin Webb, Sheffield ●	Dorothy Bush, Nottingham ◇ Nigel Chapman, Bridlington ◆ Wendy Saunders, Norwich Paul Warren, London ◆
3	Martha Botros, Colwyn Bay ▲ David Grace, Burnham-On-Sea ♦ Cynthia Kerr, Gloucester ◆ Vanessa Kirby, Middlesbrough ◆ Neil Obbard, Leeds CoM ▲	John Menagh, Belfast ◆ Gemma Payne, Sheffield David Sutton, Dawlish ◇ Andy Wier, Sheffield ● Tony Williams, Coleford ◆
5	Michael Angus, London ♦  Jacob Ankrah, London  Gaynor Drost, Rotherham ♦  Heather Thomas, Stowmarket ♦	Ken Gaskell, Ossett ♦ Martin Joss, Peterborough ♦ John Marrow, Epsom ♦ Leslie Tennant, St Neots ♦

17	Gordon Bank, Rugby ♦ Keith Bell, Ludlow ♦ Jo Bowyer, Aberdeen ♦ Norman Pickavance, Wetherby Kevin Wren, Swanley ♦	18	Carrie Bowman, Plymouth ♦ Dawn Cooper, Chesterfield ♦ Stephen Ramshaw, Sheffield CoM ♦ David Thorp, Preston ♦ Pete Tomkinson, Preston
19	Yvonne Bradbrook, Exeter ♦ Eve Elmes, Winchester ♦ Steven Grasham, Geashill ▲ Kate Hatton, Hawick ♦	20	Dan Burrows, Purley  Brian Duckworth, Dover ♦  Angela Jarvis, Wakefield ♦  David Woodall, Rhyl ♦
21	Keith Blinston, Sheffield ♦ David Coleman, Bradford □ Guli Francis-Dehqani, Chair of Trustees, Bishop of Chelmsford Val Joss, Peterborough ♦ Sheila Samuels, Godalming ♦	22	Diana Burton, Bushey ◇ David Edwards, Canada ◆ Brian Fletcher, Thirsk ◇ Joanne Milns, Hull ▲ Peter Rouch, Sheffield ●
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31	Terry Drummond, Otley ♦ Andrew Housley, Ormskirk ♦ Simon Morbey, Medway CoM ● Dorothy Needham, Bolton ♦		

#### **DEATHS**

Since the last issue the following have gone to be with the Lord. We pray for their families and thank God for their faithful service to Him throughout their life:

Captain Ian Ferguson Sister Jenny Gowan Mrs Linda Burgham (former CA Sister)

> Church Army, Wilson Carlile Centre, 50 Cavendish Street, Sheffield, S3 7RZ

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