

The background of the cover is a dense field of pink flowers, likely bellflowers, with yellow centers. Several semi-transparent pink circles of varying sizes are scattered across the image, some overlapping the flowers. The text is centered in the upper half.

CA inFocus.

Issue 6

April - June 2024

CHURCH ARMY
.ORG

Editorial Musings

What a joy it is to welcome the spring season and along with it the awakening of God's creation in the natural world. This time of year marks a beautiful phase of transformation and renewal with wildlife emerging from their winter slumber, trees and flowers blooming and the sun peeking through clouds, promising blue-sky days ahead. Just as nature changes, so too do our lives and surroundings; we greet new beginnings and bid farewell to the old, sometimes facing unexpected or unwelcome changes. During such transitions, we can find solace in God and trust in His guidance, knowing that He has a unique path for each of us to follow.

This edition of inFocus begins on Easter Sunday, a significant day for Christians as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Beyond fulfilling His promises, the resurrection symbolises powerful change and offers a beacon of hope to all believers.

Through His selfless act, Jesus made it possible for each of us to draw nearer to God, allowing us to experience the transformative power of His love. His sacrifice brings restoration, peace and hope for our past, our present and our future.

As you delve into the upcoming stories, you may find yourself reminiscing about past experiences, drawing strength from the courage of a story similar to your own, or being inspired by tales of transformation. But the main message throughout each of these stories is that there is hope. Showing God's love through words and action, we can empower people, no matter where they are, or how desperate their situation, to make positive changes to their lives and communities.

I hope that as you read each page, you will feel a renewed sense of how powerful your support is. Without it, we would not be able to shine the light of God's unwavering love on those people in the darkest of places.

Sarah Waller
Editor



UPCOMING EVENTS

1-5 April: Spring Harvest (Skegness)
8-12 April: Spring Harvest (Minehead)
1-5 May: AOG Leaders
14-16 May: Elim Leaders Summit
25-26 May: Big Church Festival

If you see us at any of these events come and say hello!

However you use CA inFocus we want to know. Drop us an email any time at

INFOCUS@CHURCHARMY.ORG



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**WE WERE THEREFORE BURIED
WITH HIM THROUGH BAPTISM
INTO DEATH IN ORDER THAT,
JUST AS CHRIST WAS RAISED
FROM THE DEAD THROUGH THE
GLORY OF THE FATHER, WE TOO
MAY LIVE A NEW LIFE.**

Romans 6:4



Beth Burras
CA Formation
Lead & Tutor

Beth oversees the development and formation of the EiTs, enabling them to reflect on their own growth.

When I think about baptism, I sometimes focus on the water involved and I consider how we are washed clean, cleansed of our sins and made pure. I often forget (probably because I don't attend enough baptism services) that the waters also represent burial with Christ. Our old, sinful selves are buried with Him in baptismal waters so that we can be raised to new life, sharing in the same resurrection power that raised Christ from the dead.

I had a full-immersion baptism as a young teenager, in the local swimming baths. We sang some worship songs, I confessed my faith and I was baptised in the shallow end. Afterwards, the pool staff rolled out a huge inflatable assault course and we had a pool party!

When I came up out of the water, I asked for the song 'Shackles' by Mary Mary to be played, with these words in the chorus:

"Take these shackles off my feet so I can dance, I just wanna praise you, I just wanna praise you."

I understood that baptism meant freedom from my old life and being raised up to a new life of praise, worship, joy and dancing. Breaking free from the shackles that bound me before, I embraced a new life as I committed to following Jesus.

As you pray for Church Army over these next few months, you might like to use this verse from Romans and the image of baptismal waters to help you pray. Pray for all the people we are reaching out to with the love of God. We long for them to come to know and experience new life in Christ as they leave their old lives behind and follow Him.

TRAILBLAZERS & PIONEERS

by Elena Walker

As March draws to a close, we find inspiration from history that empowers us for the future. Dedicated to women's history in the UK and encompassing International Women's Day, March is a time to shine a light on the achievements of women across society. It's a time to honour those who courageously battled discrimination and championed a fairer society. It's also an opportunity to reflect on how each of us can continue to support women who still face prejudice, injustice and inequality.

For more than a century, women have played a vital role in Church Army's mission. Over 100 years before female

ordination was permitted and even before gaining the right to vote, women served as 'mission nurses', spreading the gospel and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in deprived areas of London.



Marie's unwavering support and leadership were instrumental in shaping Church Army into what it is today.

Our focus now includes helping those in need as well as training, and it was the dedication of women like Marie Carlile that paved the way. Founded by her brother, Wilson Carlile in 1882, Church Army owes much of its success to his younger sister, Marie. Her drive and dedication created a team of women who pioneered social action while combining it with the gospel.

Marie's unwavering support and leadership were instrumental in shaping Church Army into what it is today. Despite doubts from others and questions over her capabilities ("What good can such a small, frail person do there?"), she fearlessly ventured into impoverished and dangerous neighbourhoods to train and inspire other women to make a difference. Through her legacy, hundreds of women have been trained in evangelism by Church Army.





*If before the coming of Church Army there was little lay work in the Church of England for men, there was even less scope for women. In the years that are ahead, the church will look back, with ever increasing gratitude, not only to the work that Marie Carlile did, but to the women's work which she made more easily possible.**

Today, we continue this tradition by equipping both men and women across the UK and Ireland as Commissioned Evangelists to spread the gospel and serve their communities. Taking risks is in our DNA. We nurture and empower the trailblazers and the

pioneers, those unafraid to break new ground and venture to places others don't. We train individuals filled with a passion for Jesus and committed to sharing the Good News with those around them.

Do you want to make a positive difference in your community?

Are you passionate about ending social injustice and spreading God's love?

Do you feel a calling to help make change happen?

Discover more at

CHURCHARMY.ORG/GET-INVOLVED

PRAYER INFOCUS

- Pray for people who feel discrimination and victimisation, that they may know the unconditional love of God.
- Pray for prejudice and inequality to end and for people to understand that each person is valuable and precious, and that God loves each of us.
- Pray for people who feel called by God to help those less fortunate. Pray they may find their path and be encouraged by faith.
- Pray for people considering training with Church Army, that they may flourish and that their unique skills and gifts will be developed.
- Pray for all those working for God's kingdom, showing God's love through words and action. Pray they would be refreshed and encouraged.

YOUR SUPPORT IS OUR LIGHT

At Church Army, we believe no one is ever beyond reach. Every day, countless individuals feel overlooked and forgotten by society. They are the unseen souls, lost in the shadows, shattered and worthless in their own eyes. They feel isolated and unloved, trapped in the suffocating grip of poverty. Yet, amid their despair, there is hope. At Church Army, we reach out and make a difference to so many lives. We shine the light of God's love into the darkest corners and we are able to do this because of you – our wonderful and faithful supporters! Your continued kindness and commitment to Church Army enables us to shine a light on those who may be lost in darkness. Many of our supporters have personally felt the positive impact of Church Army.

meet david

My first contact with Church Army was in the 1950s, when I was an undergraduate at Cambridge and a member of the university Christian Union. We were invited to a breakfast by Rev Cyril Bowles, the principal of Ridley Theological College (who later became the Bishop of Derby). The aim of the meeting was to give us an idea of the work of CA. I was very interested in what we were told, so I went to spend a weekend at the CA headquarters in Branston Street, London. It was a fascinating weekend. We did a 'March of Witness' to Hyde Park Corner and a visit to a prison.

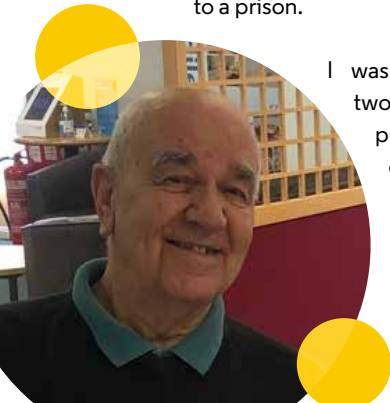
time, I became a committed supporter. My local church has been fortunate under God to have had many contacts with CA. In the 1970s and 1980s we were considerably helped by two CA captains, both opting to live in the most deprived area of our parish. In addition to ministry among us, they consistently challenged us about the needs of their neighbours, when most of the church members were from a more prosperous area of the parish.



*At CA we believe
no one is ever
beyond reach*

I was impressed by the two-fold aim of CA to proclaim the gospel clearly and to meet the needs of others, particularly the most deprived. From that

Much later, we benefitted from the work of two more CA workers. They set up a charity shop, though it was much more than that. It was situated in the needy area of Burngreave (a district in Sheffield). The shop provided non-expensive clothes and other necessities and was also a haven of peace in an area of our parish that was too often the scene of violence and even murder. They also visited our local school with a team from Church Army, where





My support of CA has now lasted for well over 50 years. I feel that I have been greatly enriched in my Christian life by contact with CA.

they did a week's 'mission'. I was heavily involved in the school at the time, so I was able to see the profound impact it had on the children.

My support of CA has now lasted for well over 50 years. I feel that I have been greatly enriched in my Christian life by contact with CA.

Your support means the world to us. Thanks to people like David, we can make a difference in the lives of those who need it most. Our work not only has a practical impact, but also a spiritual one, by sharing the gospel and the love of God. You can help us shine God's love into the darkest places.

To find out how, visit

CHURCHARMY.ORG/GET-INVOLVED



**PRAYER
INFOCUS**

- Pray for all those who support Church Army, that they may know how much they and their generosity are appreciated.
- Pray that those who are new to Church Army may see the impact of our work and feel inspired to support us.
- Pray that Church Army will continue to serve those most in need and that these people will feel valued and loved.
- Pray that the foundation laid in 1882, by Wilson Carlike our founder, will continue to serve as a reminder of the importance of our work.
- Pray that we reach the spiritual heart of all we meet, and that they may come to know and love Jesus.

7 APRIL - 13 APRIL

14 APRIL - 20 APRIL

GOD & BREAKFAST

Life can be tough. The current cost-of-living crisis is hitting families nationwide, especially those already facing struggles. The NHS is still recovering from the pandemic, with services stretched, particularly in mental health. Communities across the country are grappling with poverty, hardship and tough times. The Flaxley Road estate in Selby mirrors other areas facing challenges. It stands as one of the most socially deprived communities in North Yorkshire, with residents facing pain, suffering and brokenness. In moments of distress, Christians are encouraged to entrust their worries to God for solace. However, navigating this in a world full of daily challenges can be daunting. Enter God & Breakfast (GAB), a ladies' group at our Selby centre offering a safe, nurturing space to delve into life, faith and connection with God.



I lost my parents within six months of each other. I find it really hard to open up to people until I trust them. But here at GAB, I can be myself, open up and talk.

mel



I drive 25 minutes to get here and I wouldn't miss it! It really gets me through the week.

vickie

As pancakes, tea and coffee are served, the ladies gather around the table to enjoy breakfast. The Gabbers, as they fondly refer to themselves, meet every Wednesday morning to share breakfast, explore the Bible and engage in heartfelt conversation about their struggles and joys. GAB starts their day and their discussions foster fellowship through

good food and supportive conversations. Church Army's Amy Hayes, leads the Bible study with creativity, props and interactive sessions to encourage open sharing and reflection. Each member, whether grappling with loss or seeking meaning through a Christian perspective, finds a supportive space to explore their thoughts. For the Gabbers, this group is not just a gathering but a chosen family. Every individual is welcomed, valued and respected, making their involvement significant.



sophie's story

In autumn 2023, Sophie and her husband welcomed a baby girl called Emily. Sophie went into labour unexpectedly, but thankfully, Amy was on hand to get the couple to hospital in time for Emily's early arrival. She stayed with Sophie and her husband throughout the birth, providing much-needed support and encouragement. Before Emily was born, specialists told Sophie that her baby had a heart condition and would need surgery as a young infant. Unfortunately, the condition

was far worse than they anticipated and baby Emily was baptised as an emergency at the hospital. But baby Emily lived longer than doctors anticipated, meaning her parents could, with the support of specialist nurses, take Emily to a church service where they used part of her baptism liturgy in the service and celebrated with the congregation. Sadly, baby Emily passed away not long after. It is devastating for Sophie and her family, but GAB has been a source of comfort for Sophie.



I'm on a journey at the moment and I have been for some years. It was my husband who introduced me to church. I never went as a child except with school. Coming here has really helped me with everything that has happened with Emily.

For the Gabbers, it's more than a group. It's a family they have chosen to be part of. Each person is welcomed, valued and respected and being involved in the group is significant for everyone. The Bible stories are an integral part of the morning and every person is

invited to contribute, say their thoughts aloud and feel heard. It's a space for each of them to escape their everyday worries, hand them over to God and have fun, experience fellowship, feel encouragement and enjoy some laughter.

- Pray that the Gabbers would continue to grow in faith and that the table would extend.
- Pray for the upcoming prayer space in the local school in Selby the week before Holy Week. Pray that it would be a real benefit to the wellbeing and spiritual life of the school.
- Pray that Friday Family Fun in Selby would continue to grow and that people would encounter Jesus at the Good Friday event.
- Pray for wisdom and direction for the future of the Sunday work as the team in Selby await the opening of a community building they would like to use.
- Pray for the 'Our Space' community building, that it would open soon and that it would be a real benefit to the people the Flaxley Road Estate, Selby.

**PRAYER
INFOCUS**

DEDICATION TO ENDING VIOLENCE

Knife crime, gang culture and drug dealing pose significant threats to the residents of Greenwich, London. The borough has seen an alarming **1,197** knife offences reported by the local council in the last three years.* Unfortunately, individuals from unstable or abusive backgrounds, often enduring extreme poverty, are most vulnerable to getting caught up in violence and crime, leading to devastating consequences for the entire community.

Since his commissioning in 1999, Nick Russell has devoted his ministry to the people of Greenwich. His mission is to connect with those facing the darkest challenges and through compassion and encouragement, guide them towards a path away from crime and violence.

meet nick

Greenwich has some very affluent areas and many of which are amongst the poorest and most affected by crime, especially drug crime. For many in these areas, drugs offer an escape from anxiety and depression, creating a lucrative drugs economy. Impoverished young people are often recruited as delivery workers.

The work of Church Army in Greenwich has always focused on the most deprived populations, working with the worst three to five percent in terms of poverty and the worst five percent in terms of crime. Many cash-strapped councils are struggling to look after their poorest and most vulnerable. We are bringing the hope of the gospel and God's love, the core value of Christianity. We've found that lives – especially young offenders' lives, are transformed by this love, even when they don't come to faith. If people experience a loving community, a lot of the youth violence and aggression tends to dissipate. Neglect in infancy creates feelings of being unloved or unlovable, physical and mental abuse can lead to constant mistrust, violence and aggression in young people. One of the times I was in danger was when an angry young man ambushed me threatening



to stab me. But as we talked it seemed that God's peace took over his heart, his anger was replaced by the look of a sad, lost child. Deep down many violent young people are like that. 1 Corinthians 13 talks of love and I find that love which perseveres through everything, even through vandalism and bad behaviour, creates a big change in troubled young people and that impacts the

whole community. Middle Park, where I am based, has one of the lowest rates of youth violence of any estate in Greenwich and I believe that's down to our youth work, engaging with those who are involved in the drug gangs. In neighbouring estates there is much more violence than where we are. The work we do with the young people through our youth charity Superkidz in Eltham and through TYM in Abbey Wood, creates a ripple effect across the community. We do practical things as well, such as providing hot meals and family outings to alleviate poverty. We are there to serve people and that has no conditions or demands. We should be channels of God's love and that can be a tremendous way to break barriers - it's very disarming.

The hardest and most dangerous part of any work with youth gangs is when they don't know you and no relationship has been built up. That's when you are most vulnerable to violence. But once they do know you, if you've been there as long as I have, even if they know you by reputation - there's a kind of unwritten law that they won't do you any harm. We seek to bless people when we first meet someone, by doing something for them that they enjoy, a trip to a football centre or a



...and that's the key thing - we care about each and every person that comes in, no matter what their behaviour is like

McDonald's. We work on the 4 Bs – Blessing, Belonging, Believing, and Behaving. We want them to feel like they belong and are wanted at our clubs and in the community. Our hope is that they will accept Jesus, but often, just belonging to a community where they feel loved changes their behaviour. And that's the key thing - we care about each person that comes in, they could be aggressive, they could vandalize the place, but we just don't give up on them.

Years ago, we often visited two brothers living on the estate.

They were 11 and 13, growing up in very

sad circumstances, rarely having food.

One of them, Jim*, started to work for some drug dealers, as a way to survive.

Things spiralled, he was sent to jail, but we visited him throughout his lengthy sentence.

He spent 11 years in various detention facilities from the age of 14 and was put

on a sentence meaning he could be recalled to prison without trial throughout his life. When he came out, he was unemployed and struggling, we thought he could help at one of the clubs. The lads there would often throw pool balls at each other, I always tried to stop



them. I re-read psychology books to try to solve this problem, but I was struggling. One day, they started throwing the balls around and Jim came out of the kitchen. He was a built like a tank, I was worried he was going to wade in throwing punches, but he didn't. He called them together, speaking with great gentleness he asked them to stop. In two minutes, he stopped what I had spent months trying to defuse. He taught me so much and what struck me was his extreme humility, there was no judgment or condemnation. These young people have experienced a lot of judgement, brutality and difficult family lives, being tough with them doesn't work - it just antagonises them, they feel threatened and get more aggressive. You've got to meet them at their level, treat them with dignity, trust in their ability to respond and to be kind, which nobody else has trusted them to be and they can change amazingly.

Showing love and compassion has a huge impact, as recognised by many psychologists. Almost always, gang members haven't felt much love in their lives, either because parents use drugs, are neglectful and emotionally absent, or

just because a parent can be doing two or three jobs to make ends meet. One of our lads was churned up with guilt because, as a small boy, he hadn't tried to help when his mum suffered severe domestic abuse from his dad. Often violence has been aimed at them too. To these youngsters the love of God that comes through us is like water to someone in a desert.

In Greenwich our work is vital, but it's riddled with sadness and danger. A rival gang once turned up at our youth club armed with knives, we got everybody in and locked the doors. Two days later, they murdered someone outside of one of our children's clubs on another estate. When that kind of thing happens, you do start to worry, mainly about other members of the clubs. But there's no doubt that we are making an impact amongst the gangs, both in terms of reducing the violence and helping them change their attitudes. As we make them feel more valued it reduces their aggression. Church Army is powerful because I believe that the Spirit of God is at work through us, because the Spirit of God is a Spirit of love and love is what these young people need more than anything else.

The Greenwich Centre of Mission works in partnership with The Superkidz Community Trust and XLP.

PRAYER INFOCUS

- Pray for protection, safety and courage for staff and volunteers at Greenwich who may face or witness dangerous situations.
- Pray for support and encouragement for those working in difficult urban areas.
- Pray for young people who may be impacted by gang culture, drugs or knife crime, that they may be treated with patience, understanding and respect. May they come to know the love of God.
- Pray for resources and funding to be available to help people impacted by poverty and deprivation to allow them freedom from a life of crime.

**Information from Borough of Royal Greenwich Council - 'Let's live #knifefree' campaign*

**name changed for protection*



*You've got to meet them at their level,
treat them with dignity and trust in
their ability to respond and be kind,
which nobody else has trusted them
to be and they can change amazingly.*

HELLO SUNDERLAND!

Did you know that living in a cold home and facing food poverty can significantly increase the risk of death and health complications? Unfortunately, Sunderland, in the Northeast of England, has some of the highest poverty rates, with many families struggling. In fact, there has been an alarming 82 percent increase in universal credit claims since the cost-of-living crisis began. 30 percent of the city's children living in low-income families, in certain areas this number jumps to a staggering 42 percent, compared to a national average of just 18 percent.*

But there is hope! With regeneration efforts underway, we have an incredible opportunity to support and uplift local communities and we are excited to announce the opening of our centre in Sunderland. We welcome Steve Grasham, who will work with Father Richard to build a vibrant worshipping community and address the urgent needs of the local people and spread the love of God to those who need it most.

meet steve

Being here in Sunderland and working alongside Father Richard to launch the new centre is really exciting. We are going to be working across three churches in the local areas. Many of the local people may not be familiar with Church Army, so it's a great opportunity to bring our mission to new people. My wife, Fran, and I are living right in the middle of the area and we hope to get to know the local community and make connections. Working with Father Richard will bring a great dynamic, as he knows the community a little better than I do. We both have a real heart for mission and we have different skills, so we will be able to complement each other really well. We are both starting

from scratch to build this centre, which is a thrilling challenge.

I want to put into practice something I learnt during Church Army training – double listening. This involves listening to God and to the community so that we can discern what the needs of the community are before we come up with any ideas on how to serve them. We want to serve them in ways they think are useful and needed, not just what we think they need. We have done some research on what the area already has and things we think could benefit the area that aren't provided at the minute. Ultimately, our mission is to establish a new worshipping community that addresses spiritual need as well as





I want to make friends with people and let them know they are welcome on this journey of faith. I know some may not join us, but I hope many do.

other practical needs. It's going to be a bit of a journey with the folks who already attend church in the area, but that is what's exciting. There is student accommodation in the parish as well as Royal Sunderland Hospital and the home of Sunderland Football Club. The potential to reach many people is enormous and we want to work out the priorities and meet those first.

There is naturally a bit of trepidation. Before coming here, my wife and I were living in Ireland working with the Church of Ireland, now we are back in England, in an unfamiliar area, but it feels right. God is at work. There's a lot to do and I think it's key to get out and about, visiting the local churches and small groups. Making sure we listen to people and not just the PCC in church but the parishioners, the congregation and the community. We'll be visiting schools and local shops, finding

out where the local people go and what's important to them. This is our chance to build a firm foundation, trusting relationships and ultimately, strong friendships. I want to make friends with people and let them know they are welcome on this journey of faith. I know some may not join us, but I hope many do.



PRAYER INFOCUS

- Pray for meetings with centre staff and church representatives and that those in the local community would hear and support the vision for the area.
- Pray for Steve and his family as they settle in to a new area.
- Pray for Steve to feel inspiration from God during prayer walks about the things the centre should focus on to benefit the local community.
- Pray that the local community would be encouraged by the presence of the new centre and that people would be open to exploring faith and new relationships.

FAITH CREATES CHANGE

Caia Park, Wrexham, is one of the most deprived areas in Wales. Sadly, 26 percent of local children are living in poverty and 13 percent in severe poverty. More than 20 percent of the adult population in the area report having no recognised qualifications. Suicide rates are higher than the national average and 41 percent of residents identify as having no religion.* The need is urgent, but thanks to your support, there is hope! Through food initiatives, youth groups, sports sessions and providing a welcoming space for exploring faith, Josh and Jack at our Wrexham Centre are working to create positive change and empower the community. Together, we can bring hope and support to those in need.

meet josh & jack

We have a youth club here called the Tin Can Youth Centre. It's right beside one of the schools, so we thought it would be a great place to start working with some of the teenagers in the area. When it first opened, it went really well. We had it all painted and games consoles, a pool table and couches. We made some really strong connections and people started exploring faith. We had two young people become Christians, which was awesome.

The pandemic made it difficult to keep the relationships we'd built with the young people, but we are in the beginning phase with more young people now and that's exciting. We have around 30 or 40 regular young people who come along and they are all completely unchurched.

For some of them, it's a bit of a safe haven. They feel like they don't fit in and struggle to make friends, but they know they are welcome here. Drug use in schools is a big issue too. We are trying to raise

some money to buy a van so that we can take them on trips to build really firm relationships and explore faith more.

Food poverty is also an issue in this area. To help, we do hot meal projects in the school holidays. At Christmas, we delivered 97 Christmas dinners to families who wouldn't have had anything otherwise. But that's just a little help to address a huge need. Missing Christmas dinner is just the tip of the iceberg for a lot of families in this area.

We run some sports groups as well. Bridge the Gap is part of a national initiative between churches. It's a football group for young men, but it's not a competitive thing at all. It's about coming



They feel like they don't fit in and struggle to make friends, but they know they are welcome here.

along, making friends and talking. We are open about mental health and talk about our challenges. It has really taken off and people bring their friends along. It gives us chances to talk about faith as well.

The connections we are making through our outreach give us a way to talk about Jesus and make disciples. God's heart is for the poor and we have a chance to help people and bring some hope into their lives. There is a lot to do, but we want to meet them in their need and understand what people are going through. If you can do something in the name of Jesus and bring people some joy, I think that is really important.



If you would like to find out more about our Wrexham Centre or make a donation, please visit:

CHURCHARMY.ORG/MISSION/WREXHAM

PRAYER INFOCUS

- Pray for donations towards a much-needed new van for the Wrexham Centre.
- Pray for all the young people engaging with the Wrexham Centre, that they would continue to visit and invite Jesus into their hearts.
- Please give thanks for Bridge the Gap initiative and pray that it will continue to reach many young men and that they may be open to explore faith.
- Pray for the relationship with the Wrexham Centre and the local high school, that God may open doors and create fruitful relationships.

*Source – ONS Census Profile & Research Senedd Wales

*The Wrexham Centre of Mission is in partnership with the Diocese of St Asaph

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Talking about death is not something that many of us feel comfortable doing, but it is perhaps the only thing in life that is guaranteed. As Christians we believe that we will have an onward journey to rest with our Father in heaven and for some this can make the thought of death somewhat more bearable. But surprisingly, research shows that around 59% of adults across the UK don't have a Will** or any instructions for their loved ones after their death. Many CA evangelists who work in healthcare settings, often help grieving families who have no idea what to do once their loved one has passed on.




Death is not something we are comfortable talking about as a society and many people don't know what to do after a loved one has died. As chaplains we have a lot of difficult and delicate conversations with people...

Mike Reeder - CA Evangelist & Senior Chaplain St Lukes Hospice

WHY WRITE A WILL?*

Without a Will in the UK, the law dictates who receives your assets, potentially leaving loved ones out or benefiting unintended parties. By drafting a Will, you retain control over your estate and belongings and can gift it to individuals or organisations of your choice. You can include clauses to minimise Inheritance Tax and maximise your loved ones' share. Advice from a solicitor can help you to make informed decisions that reflect your values and ensure peace of mind for you and your family.





Church Army understands the importance of planning for the future and ensuring your loved ones are looked after. We also know that many people wish to leave a lasting gift and continue to support the causes they care about, even after they've gone. That's why we have partnered with the National Free Wills Network.

WRITING YOUR WILL WITH NATIONAL FREE WILLS NETWORK:


The National Free Wills Network offers a free, no-obligation service to help you write a simple Will, or update an existing one. They will connect you with experienced solicitors who can guide you through the process at no cost to you.

Here's how it works:

1. **Contact Church Army:** Fill out the form overleaf and return it to Church Army in the envelope provided, or contact us and we will refer you to the National Free Wills Network and answer any questions you may have.
2. **Choose a Local Solicitor:** The Network will connect you with participating solicitors in your area who specialise in writing Wills, and explain how to make an appointment with your chosen firm.
3. **Will Writing Appointment:** During your appointment you can discuss your wishes with your solicitor who will guide you through the process.
4. **Optional Gift to Church Army:** There is no obligation, but you can choose to include a gift to Church Army in your Will at this stage.

**This guide is for information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. We encourage you to consult with the solicitor provided by the National Free Wills Network for guidance and to ensure your Will meets your specific needs.*

***Statistics from Canada Life 2020.*



READY TO EXPLORE?

Simply fill out the form below and post it in the envelope provided, or email a scanned copy to: legacy@churcharmy.org

Please complete the form in **black ink and CAPITALS**

Title:

.....

First Name:

.....

Middle Name(s):

.....

Surname:

.....

Address:

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Postcode:

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Email:

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Telephone number:

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Date of Birth:

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In Partnership with:



Church Army, Wilson Carlile Centre, 50 Cavendish Street, Sheffield S3 7RZ. 0300 123 2113.
legacy@churcharmy.org – www.churcharmy.org/legacy

LEAVING A GIFT TO CHURCH ARMY

Church Army has been demonstrating the love of God through word and deed to those living in difficult circumstances for almost 150 years.

Candice* visits The Sanctuary at the Marylebone Project every day. She uses the facilities and joins in with the activities available...



I am so grateful to everyone who supports Church Army. This is the only place I feel safe. Coming here makes me feel like I have a family, like I belong somewhere. I feel loved.

candice

While there is no obligation to do so, we would love you to consider including Church Army in your Will. Your gift will transform the lives of future generations, giving hope and helping them to understand and experience God's love for them!

Thank you for considering Church Army in your future planning and **helping us to shine His light into the darkest places!**



*name changed for protection

RECOVERY CHURCH

Struggled in darkness to destructive behaviours, chained to a relentless cycle of torment, pain and suffering – it's common for those battling addiction to experience these emotions. People often feel alone after addiction has taken a devastating toll on their relationships, jobs and even their faith. But, as Christians, we believe in God's unconditional love for all of us. We are valued and important in His eyes, even when we feel lost. Addiction doesn't discriminate – it can affect anyone and it doesn't just involve illegal drugs or alcohol. People can become addicted to other things, like prescription drugs, gambling or pornography. The shame and stigma around addiction often prevents people from seeking help, but evidence shows that having just one person by your side, walking with you through the difficult journey, can double your chance of recovery.*

In collaboration with STAR (Steps to Active Recovery), Church Army has opened the first faith-based addiction recovery centre in Sheffield. St. Leonard's Church hosts the John 10:10 recovery group every Wednesday evening. The dedicated team, including Church Army's Stephen Ramshaw, is trained to deliver Life Courses, providing essential guidance and walking alongside our siblings in

Christ on their recovery journey.

Sadly, 53 per cent of people affected by addiction feel unable to talk about it.* This can increase feelings of isolation and encourage withdrawal from everyday life. Altered behaviour can also make it difficult to engage in normal activities. This may mean that many Christians struggling with addiction feel unable to attend church or worship groups. The John 10:10 group tries to bridge that gap.



We are valued and important in His eyes, even when we feel lost.

Each evening starts with a warm welcome followed by uplifting worship songs and meaningful scripture discussions. Everyone is reminded that they are not alone, that they have each other's support and more significantly, God's presence. The group stands together through struggles and pain, finding solace and unwavering love in God. It's a sanctuary for candid conversations and deep questions. People are at various stages of their journey, with the group offering a nurturing environment for each person to strengthen their faith. Some are rediscovering their faith after feeling disconnected, while others are new to faith. One member's profound experience has led to their decision to follow Jesus and be baptised, which will take place at the group. One of the leaders is considering Evangelism training with Church Army – all powerful



I meet a lot of negative people in my everyday life, which makes it hard to stay strong. But coming here makes me feel safe and wanted. It makes me feel strong, and it is such a good help.

reminders that God is at work even when you may feel beyond reach.

Lizzy* has been going to the group for a while. It is so important to her that she takes two buses to get there: "I meet a lot of negative people in my everyday life, which makes it hard to stay strong. But coming here makes me feel safe and wanted. It makes me feel strong and it is such a good help."

Recovery is a long and difficult journey. It takes determination, patience and encouragement. Groups like John 10:10 make it easier for these isolated people to feel a sense of fellowship and be reassured of God's unending love. With your support and continued prayer, we can help more people lose the shackles of addiction and walk with them towards their freedom.



For more information or further help you can visit:

STARRECOVERY.ORG

PRAYER INFOCUS

- Pray for anyone affected by addiction to feel able to seek help and talk about their situation.
- Pray for all who struggle with addiction, at any stage, to know how loved they are by God and that His love is unconditional and unwavering.
- Pray for staff and volunteers involved in helping people with recovery, that they will draw strength from God and from fellowship with siblings in Christ.
- Pray for resources to be available to addiction recovery services.
- Pray for continued love, patience and understanding from society for those dealing with addiction.

*Names changed

*www.actionaddiction.org.uk

SPIRITUAL SUPPORT IN SPORT

Imagine dedicating your childhood to becoming a professional footballer, playing in all weathers, training every day and it finally comes true! It's an amazing feeling to be part of a professional team, but the pressure to perform well and stay focused can be overwhelming. From the physical demands to maintaining a winning mindset, or the challenges of social media, the mental toll can be immense. You want to talk about it, but you don't want to seem weak or, worse, jeopardise your place on the squad.

Many professional athletes face struggles like this, but sadly, they often go unseen or unheard. Well-known sports personalities have recently spoken up about their own challenges and how important it is for teams to have the right support systems in place. That's where sports chaplains play a vital role, offering a listening ear, confidential advice and spiritual support to help athletes navigate both on- and off-field challenges. Church Army's Josh Smith is a chaplain for Wrexham AFC, a football team in Wales that gained global fame after being taken over by two Hollywood stars and securing promotion to the national football league in 2023.

meet josh

This is my eighth season now as chaplain at Wrexham, but, since the takeover, my role has changed quite a bit. The new CEO of the club understands the importance of chaplaincy and she's really behind it. I'm now involved in offering the chaplaincy service to everyone in the club, from the players to the office staff. This gives me the chance to build relationships with people on a more long-term basis. Football is structured in a way that some of the players might only be there for a year. I get to chat to them and offer support while they are there, which is awesome, but with club staff, I can create a deeper bond. I feel like I'm part of the community at the club now and people

are much more able to approach me and have a chat.

When I'm meeting someone for the first time as chaplain, I explain that I'm there for them to talk to about anything, whether that's their mental health or if they want to talk to someone impartial. Whatever they say remains confidential (within safeguarding measures). If it's a player and they want to talk about something they are struggling with, sometimes, they don't want to confide in the manager because they don't want them to think they are distracted or losing focus, but they know they can talk to me in a safe and confidential space.

I'm open about being a Christian, and when it's a one-to-one conversation, I'll



When I'm meeting someone for the first time as chaplain, I explain that I'm there for them to talk to about anything, whether that's their mental health or if they want to talk to someone impartial

often say what I believe and ask if they would like me to pray for them. If they say yes, that's great, but if they say no, that's OK, too. It's important they know I am here for them to speak to whenever they need me. What people most often need is someone to listen. Signposting is a big part of being a chaplain. When I think they need to get advice from other sources, like doctors or other support networks, I give them information about where to go next to get help. If I don't know straight away how to support someone who needs further help, I'll research it and come back to them. People sometimes don't want to share their feelings with people they are close to, but they can share with a chaplain. It's good for them to understand that, as chaplain, I'm there to listen, to help and to support.



PRAYER INFOCUS

- Pray for opportunities for first team and coaching staff to chat with Josh and build relationships with him. Pray for his colleague, Sarah, to build relationships with the women's team.
- Pray for the opportunity for the chaplaincy team to be involved with the new academy structure at the club and that young people will feel supported by chaplains at Wrexham and elsewhere.
- Pray for an increased sense of trust between the chaplains and the club, both in Wrexham and in sports teams across the nations.
- Pray for chaplains in all settings to be valued and for relationships to be fruitful and pray that chaplains themselves would be well supported.

HIDDEN DESPAIR

Isolation, worry, ill health and financial hardship are some of the difficulties beneath the scenic tranquillity of life on the waterways. Many who live permanently within this hidden, floating community face desperate hardships, estranged from conventional society. Accessing public services can feel almost impossible and people are often on the brink of despair. With nowhere left to turn, some are only just surviving. But there is hope! Our Waterways Chaplains serve as anchors in these drifting lives, serving these hidden communities with empathy and compassion. They not only help navigate the complex web of public services and practical assistance, but they also provide emotional and spiritual support. Mark, a Baptist Minister and keen boater, is the Lead Chaplain for the South with the Waterways Chaplaincy.

meet mark

I have been a keen boater for a long time and though I love being on the water, living permanently on the waterways can bring significant challenges. There are many people who live on the waterways out of necessity. What passes for a boat can merely be a kind of floating contraption whose owner is just one step removed from homelessness. Others who live on boats are suffering from really hard times and may have experienced significant loss in their lives. It's common to find divorced men who cannot afford a home on land taking to the water.

or mental illness. These people are unable to cope with life on the water. Often, we are a boater's last resort. They turn to us in a state of despair, having exhausted all other avenues. Our primary role as chaplains is to listen to people and provide pastoral support, but a big part of a chaplain's role is signposting people to public services and making sure they can access necessary help. Chaplains often build a large body of knowledge about access to local authorities, safeguarding teams, foodbanks, benefits and healthcare.



With nowhere left to turn, some are only just surviving. But there is hope!

We meet many people who are struggling in various ways with things like financial hardships or debilitating physical

For some time, I have worked with a boater who suffered a massive stroke some years ago, which put an end to his career and his relationship. He now lives hand to mouth, working in the gig economy for minimum wage. When ill, he is often laid up on his boat in isolation, with very little heating. He is constantly under pressure to move





We try to help people who are precariously balanced on the margins of society or who have perhaps even fallen off the margins of recognisable society.

because of navigation authority licencing rules, but his health, the condition of his boat and other reasons prevent that. I managed to get him registered with a local medical practice, which has improved his state of health but requires him to remain within its catchment area. Receiving benefits can be difficult for him because he will work when he can, making it quite a complicated situation. His is just one case where a long-term solution seems impossible. Sadly, there are many more boaters like him.

Some boaters choose to live outside the so-called rat race or don't feel like they fit into ordinary society. When a crisis strikes, they are invariably isolated and unsupported. Despite experiencing mental health issues and disabilities, they also experience rejection by

many service providers simply because they aren't able to fill in large, complicated forms or give access to detailed medical records that agencies need before they will consider any support. Invariably, they give up and it falls to others to take on the workload of helping them obtain the support that is their right in law. The agencies tasked with providing the support these people so desperately need are the same ones that make it very difficult for them to access that support. That's where the Waterways Chaplains are called to step in. We try to help people who are precariously balanced on the margins of society or who have perhaps even fallen off the margins of recognisable society. By the grace of God and the support of our fellow chaplains and other partners, we try to get them back on track.

- Pray for the Waterways Chaplaincy to grow in parallel with the need.
- Pray for chaplains to find welcoming support from partner churches within walking distance of a navigable waterway and other interested partners.
- Pray for Waterways Chaplaincy to gain proper recognition from navigation authorities for the many hours of welfare support it provides free of charge.
- Pray for a growing body of prayer and financial supporters well beyond existing sponsors.
- Pray for Waterways Chaplaincy to be able to build an accessible network of expertise inside and outside the chaplaincy so that individual chaplains never lack whatever support they need.

**PRAYER
INFOCUS**

2 JUNE - 8 JUNE

CA FUNDRAISING TEAM

The Fundraising Team oversees all aspects of Church Army's voluntary donations and legacies, which are vital to ensure the delivery and sustainability of our frontline work. The team works closely with the Communications Team and with our Projects and Centres of Mission to ensure we connect donors as closely as possible with those who benefit most from the donations and the people who access our services on a day-to-day basis. It's you, our donors, who ensure this important work continues. The Fundraising Team facilitates connection by sending appeals, thank you cards and grant applications and by attending festivals, organising events and so much more. We see fundraising as a form of ministry. The Dutch priest and author Henri Nouwen wrote of fundraising in the way we would hope to write to you now:

- Paul Critchlow - Fundraising Team Leader



We have a vision that is amazing and exciting. We are inviting you to invest yourself through the resources that God has given you – your energy, your prayers, and your money – in this work to which God has called us.

PAUL CRITCHLOW

Fundraising Team Leader

PHIL BROWN

Key Relationships
Manager North

ELIZABETH YORK

Senior Fundraising &
Engagement Lead

TOM FLYNN

Supporter Engagement
Officer



PRAYER INFOCUS

- Pray for the fundraising team as they work hard to engage new support for Church Army.
- Pray for more people to feel inspired to support Church Army and our work across the UK and Ireland.
- Pray for relationships with current supporters and the fundraising team to flourish and deepen.
- Pray for the fundraising team as they attend events and festivals throughout the summer. That they will meet with new people and help to spread the Good News and love of God with those they meet and develop new relationships.

RACHAEL ROOK-WILLIAMS

Fundraising & Engagement Lead

JENNI KEEN

Supporter Engagement Officer

TIM EMERTON

Trusts Officer

MARK LAVENDER

Trusts Officer

MICHAEL COOPER

Senior Fundraising & Engagement Lead



LISA MATHESON

will soon be joining the team as Fundraising & Communications Team Administrator



9 JUNE - 15 JUNE

16 JUNE - 22 JUNE

FAITH PICTURES

As Christians, we want to spread the Good News far and wide. But initiating these conversations can feel overwhelming at times. Faith Pictures is a unique resource designed to help us recognise God's presence in our lives. This empowering tool boosts our confidence to engage with others and nurtures our ability to share our faith in a lively and innovative way. Faith Pictures helps us start transformative conversations and journeys of faith while forging connections and meaningful engagement.

faith pictures leader's box

Many of you will know about Faith Pictures, our resource to help everyday Christians develop language to confidently share their faith. Over the last few months, we've been working on a Leader's Pack, which contains everything needed to run a Faith Pictures course.

We're really excited to see these boxes get out into the wild and to see Christians grow in their ability and comfort in sharing their faith. Like you, we want to see people discover the love and forgiveness that God has for them and we believe that Faith Pictures can be an important part of that journey.

- Jonny Price - Faith Resources Officer





Faith Pictures is a really accessible, enjoyable, easy way for us as individual Christians to begin to think about how we can share out faith story.

Stephen Cottrell



Faith Pictures helped me proactively reflect on how I share my faith story and consider how it may come across from the listener's point of view. Faith Pictures helped me think about sharing my faith in a very creative, relatable and accessible way. What's beautiful is that it can come up naturally in the conversation and not in a self-imposing way. I would definitely recommend it to any Christian who wants to actively witness about their faith, particularly those who find it daunting or difficult to do. It's a great tool to aid personal reflection on our faith journeys, which then helps us to build up confidence when it comes to sharing our faith.

Tommy

To buy your copy of the Faith Pictures Leader's Box, visit:

CHURCHARMY.ORG/FP-BOX

16 JUNE - 22 JUNE

23 JUNE - 29 JUNE

HOPE THROUGH THE MARYLEBONE PROJECT

The Marylebone Project, a beacon of hope for homeless women, stands as the largest and longest-serving centre of its kind in London and the UK, with over 90 years of dedicated service. Our shared vision is to empower women to overcome homelessness and embrace life to the fullest. We provide a complete, wrap-around service of love, education, healthcare, faith and encouragement, often from rock bottom on the streets to independent, fulfilling lives. We strive to transform individual stories into tales of happiness and self-sufficiency, inspiring a supportive community at every step. Through inFocus, we share regular updates of all the incredible work that is happening at Marylebone but also keep you informed of the desperate need for the service, which sadly continues to rise.

valentine's day

At the Marylebone Project, we aim to show each woman just how wonderful, precious and loved they are. But, sadly, Valentine's Day can bring up difficult emotions for some of our women, particularly those who have faced violence within their relationships. We took this opportunity to come together and show our love and appreciation for each other and share some tea and cake. Thank you to Chancerygate for generously donating decorations, goody bags and delicious food for the event.

homeless crisis

Recent data reveals a staggering surge in homelessness on London's streets. A shocking **4,389** people were found sleeping rough over a three-month period – the highest figure in a decade. More than half of those people were experiencing homelessness for the first time*. Sadly, these figures don't surprise us. Our 24/7 service, The Sanctuary, saw an enormous 21 per cent increase over the winter months compared to the same time last year. The need is desperate, but with your ongoing support, we will continue to provide a safe haven to women around the clock.





Here, you feel like you belong. You feel that you are loved... and that's a good feeling.

forsters partnership

We are delighted to announce a new partnership with leading London law firm Forsters. With strong female leadership within the firm and being driven by their values to do what really matters and support everyone to achieve, they are a perfect fit with us. They hope to directly support us through fundraising, material donations, social activities and volunteering. Longer term, we hope our partnership will raise awareness of our vital services and of the experience of homeless women in London, as well as providing skills-based support and empowering women to live fulfilling, independent lives.

fresh hope

We want every woman who comes to the project to know there is hope for them – hope for a different future, hope for healing and hope for a home of their own.

J-Lo tells us a little bit about their experience:




Marylebone Project has given me a chance to develop a new skill, because in life you have to have options. It's a dream come true for me to learn how to sew and I am learning here. Here, you feel like you belong. You feel that you are loved... and that's a good feeling.

PRAYER INFOCUS

- Pray for new and ongoing partnerships to develop and flourish. Pray that these may create a wider understanding of the problems faced by homeless women.
- Pray for staff and volunteers at the project to feel secure, safe and valued and for each of them to be supported and strengthened.
- Pray for God to be at work in those who are exploring faith and those who are yet to engage. Pray that they may know the unconditional love of God.
- Pray for funding and resources to be available as the need for the services of the project increases and is set to continue to rise.
- Pray for each person who supports the project, that they may know how truly valuable they are and understand how many lives they are helping to transform.

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

Over the next few months there are some changes taking place to formal membership of the Church Army Mission Community. This will mean some people will be saying goodbye to Church Army and others will be moving from being Community members to Mission Partners. This has meant that the usual daily listing that is repeated three times each quarter has been changed for this issue and we have presented the names for each week.

The following named people are some of those who are either Commissioned Evangelists (working or retired), members of the Community, or employed staff, as at the start of March. Although some may have changed their relationship with Church Army over this quarter, we still pray for each one and give thanks for their witness and service in the mission of God's kingdom here on earth. Please pray for two or three each day if you pray regularly during the week, or for all at once - we all value your prayers and thank you for your support.

- Captain Neil Thomson CA - Chaplaincy Team

week 1*31 March – 6 April*

Janet Jackson
 Vanessa Kirby
 Alison Knights
 Susan Melbourne
 Linda Preston
 Wendy Saunders
 Neil Ward
 David Wells
 Glenda White-Miller
 Debbie Wilkinson

week 3*14 – 20 April*

Dan Burrows
 Marie Clarke
 David Coleman
 Angela Jarvis
 Graham Miles
 Sue Moore
 Peter Rouch
 Heather Thomas
 Alan Wallace
 Yvonne Williamson

week 5*28 April – 4 May*

Stephen Adamson
 Keith Bell
 Mary Bittles
 Julia Crathorn
 Brian Fletcher
 Ros Haines
 Kelvin Knowles
 Gordon Lamb
 Irene Lees
 John Worsfold

week 2*7 – 3 April*

Tim Anderson
 Jacob Ankrah
 Cora Connell
 Steve Eccleston
 Aaron Jones
 Peter Meenagh
 Sue Nutt
 Gemma Payne
 Mark Russell
 David Worley

week 4*21 – 27 April*

Carrie Bowman
 Diana Burton
 Dorothy Bush
 Brian Duckworth
 Ken Gaskell
 Cameron Macdonald
 Steve Martin
 Gary Shirley
 David Sutton
 Doreen Wheatley

week 6*5 – 11 May*

Keith Blinston
 Ron Bradford
 Stephen Caple
 Ian Chapman
 Richard Diamond
 Gaynor Drost
 Peter Grieve
 John Hotchin
 Michael Joint
 Paul Knight
 Leslie Tennant

week 7*12 – 18 May*

Yvonne Bradbrook
 Andy Falconbridge
 Gladys Finlayson
 Craig Grocock
 Tom Keightley
 George Lings
 Simon Mason
 Venessa Pedro-Pinto
 Alan Rainford
 Howard Schnaar
 Brian Wisener

week 10*2 – 8 June*

Deb Battersby
 Jo Bowyer
 Collette Dorgu
 Jane Emson
 Mike Griffin
 Kate Hatton
 Martin Joss
 Tim Rourke
 Sheila Samuels
 Pete Tomkinson

week 13*23 – 29 June*

Fiona Duke
 Jon Durley
 Paul Fitzpatrick
 Kinder Kalsi
 Howie Pickering
 Stephen Ramshaw
 Karen Saunders
 Neil Thomson
 Robin Webb
 Alan Williamson

week 8*19 – 25 May*

Janet Arnold
 Gordon Banks
 Don Egan
 Eve Elmes
 Cynthia Kerr
 Heidi Lewis
 Ian Maher
 John Marrow
 Alan Roberts
 David Thorp
 Kevin Wren

week 11*9 – 15 June*

Sean Andrews
 Martha Botros
 Gerry Dillon
 Jane Duckitt
 Chloe Lefore
 Joanne Milns
 Mike Reeder
 Nick Russell
 Josh Smith
 Tony Williams

week 9*26 May – 1 June*

Lynda Alsford
 Michael Angus
 Colin Brown
 Martin Hartley
 Val Joss
 John Menagh
 Phaedra Pamphilon-Green
 Ade Prescott
 Ray Viney
 Neil Walpole

week 12*16 – 22 June*

Jonathan Brooks
 Mike Dare
 Heidi Frisby
 Steven Grasham
 Ruth Hills
 Neil Obbard
 Hannah O'Neill
 Daniel Ortiz
 Andy Wier
 James Wilkinson

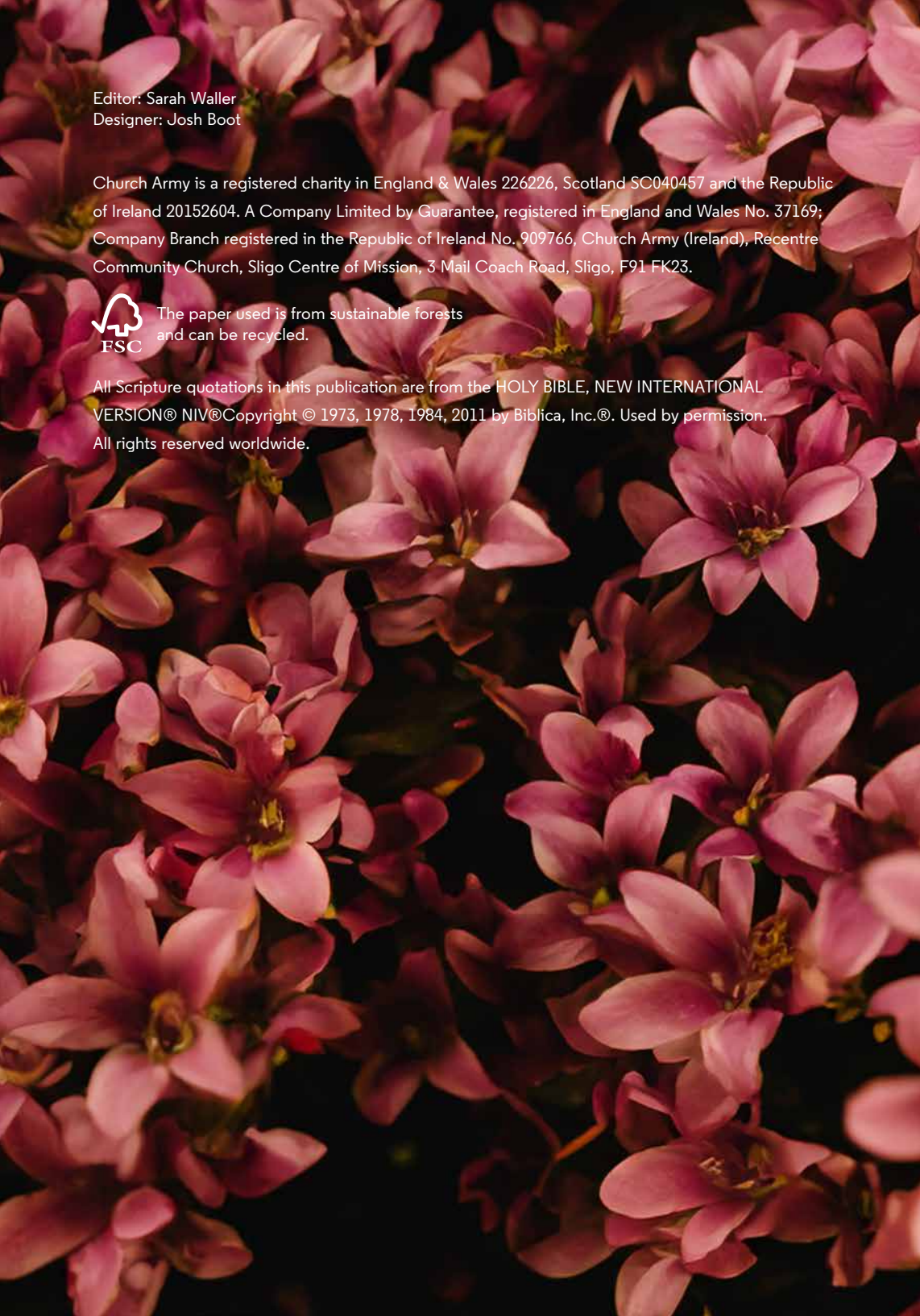


DEATHS

We were saddened to hear the news that Mr. Bill Wade, wonderful supporter and friend of Church Army, has passed away. Bill was featured in the October 2023 issue of CA inFocus. He was a wonderful man and will be sadly missed by many friends and family. We send our condolences to his family at this time. Please join us in prayer for Bill's family.



Church Army,
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The background of the entire page is a dense, close-up photograph of numerous pink flowers, likely geraniums, with dark centers and delicate petals. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the petals against a dark background.

Editor: Sarah Waller
Designer: Josh Boot

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