

THE BAPTIST TIMES



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Jonathan's GS term ends

THE Revd Jonathan Edwards has now concluded his term as General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Mr Edwards was appointed to the role in 2006, succeeding the Revd David Coffey. From September he will become the first executive ambassador of the Christian charity Prospects.

His seven-year spell encompassed many highlights, including the Baptist Union Apology for the Slave Trade, and the many well received and attended Baptist Assemblies. At the most recent gathering, in Blackpool in May, Mr Edwards received a standing ovation following his final address.

He was a great supporter and encourager of local churches, regularly preaching Sunday morning and evening at different congregations throughout the country. A deeper call to prayer was also a constant theme throughout his tenure.

Mr Edwards led our Union through a challenging time in its history. Global financial troubles saw the need for an overhaul of the pensions system. Then in 2012, in part prompted by a financial shortfall, our Union took the opportunity to look afresh at how to fulfill the call to mission in a rapidly changing world.



This became known as the 'Futures' process, and resulted in the call for a new-style General Secretary, combining elements of the current General Manager role. It was a move Mr Edwards fully supported, and he has spoken warmly and graciously about the suitability of his successor Lynn Green to this new position.

Such qualities were highlighted when a number of colleagues spoke to *The Baptist Times* about Mr Edwards' ministry.

The Revd Ernie Whalley, President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, said the Baptist family was 'deeply indebted', explaining that Mr Edwards has been 'a great encourager of churches and Kingdom projects, consistently promoting our Union's theme of encouraging missionary disciples.'

He added that it was a measure of Mr Edwards' integrity and character that he gave 'unstinting support' to the future plans of our Union 'even as he sensed this

might not be a future in which he took a direct role'.

'He was able to do this because of his graciousness and deep spirituality,' said Mr Whalley.

The Revd Jez Brown worked alongside Mr Edwards as Regional Minister in the South West Baptist Association, and explained the qualities that he would go on to show as General Secretary were much in evidence then.

'I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked alongside Jonathan and learnt much from him. He had the ability to retain and recall important details about churches and their personnel which meant that people felt valued when Jonathan was in contact with them.'

Bringing all these themes together Jenny Royal, moderator of BUGB trustees, wished him well for the future. 'Jonathan has given so much of himself over the years as a local church minister, as a regional minister and as General Secretary,' she said. 'He has touched the lives of many of us and we wish him well in this next phase of his ministry.'

To read an interview with Mr Edwards visit <http://bit.ly/13PNd2s>

This is your life for popular minister

THE last day of July was a sad day for a Warwickshire village church as they said goodbye to their much loved minister.

The Revd Jill Cheverton is retiring after just over ten years working in the Church in Binley Woods, which is in partnership with both the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Church of England.

To mark the occasion, a community party was held during which Jill was treated to a surprise "This is Your Life" book presentation.

Members from all walks of life in the village contributed to the book which relates some of the happy and the sad, the funny and the poignant moments of the last ten years, from the nativity at the Roseycombe pub that nearly went up in smoke to Jill's antics at the annual holiday club and her school assemblies. Another surprise leaving event was a mystery tour in Harrington's vintage coaches round many of Warwickshire's beautiful villages.

Jill will be moving to Selby where she looks forward to being a member of a local church; she also hopes to carry



on working with adults with learning difficulties and the disadvantaged. Central to her life and ministry is humour, compassion, faithfulness and helping people at difficult times in their lives.

Jill has previously worked in the Royal Air Force as a nurse and in the NHS as a health visitor. She had never heard of Binley Woods before coming, but it was clear that this was God's plan for her and for Binley Woods.

She said, 'It has been a

blessing to be here and an amazing privilege to receive the trust of so many people.'

'The highlight has to be sharing in people's faith journeys, and to see God using different parts of their life to connect with others and their needs.'

'She will be missed by people right across the village community, because God used her to touch so many lives and in so many wonderful ways,' said Shân Dobinson on behalf of the Church in Binley Woods.

Church pays tribute to selfless couple

A SOMERSET church has paid tribute to a couple who have been arranging its flowers and delivering them to a recipient in need each Monday for nearly 70 years.

Only health reasons have forced Les and Stella Yarde to stop this act of service they began at Radstock Baptist Church in 1946.

Les, a life long deacon and Stella have contributed

enormously to the life of the church, and members helped Les celebrate his 93rd birthday on Sunday.

Minister the Revd Andrew Stammers said, 'Humble service, commitment and dedication are all characteristics that as pastors we try to personally strive for and lead our congregation members or members of the community to show God's love.'

'It was remarkable to discover

that the weekly arranging of flowers and the subsequent pastoral delivery had been undertaken by the same faithful couple - Les and Stella Yarde - since 1946!

'In these days of dwindling levels of commitment such an act of service is of great encouragement and inspiration to us all. As a church we want to recognise their service and on going love for the fellowship.'

Christian leaders send Eid greetings

REPRESENTATIVES of the UK's Christian denominations, including the Baptist Union of Great Britain, have sent a message of greetings and peace to their Muslim neighbours to mark the festival of Id ul-Fitr (Eid).

Eid is an important religious holiday celebrated by Muslims worldwide that marks the end of Ramadan. It takes place on Friday (9 August).

In a statement facilitated by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and Churches Together in England, and supported by the Christian Muslim Forum, the denominations said they recognise Eid 'as a day of good news and celebration - the fast has been completed and the feast begins!'

The statement continued, 'We have been encouraged by two key initiatives this Ramadan - the 'Big Iftar' and Channel 4's Ramadan Season. These have enabled many people to experience the hospitality of UK Muslims in mosques around the country as well as raising awareness positively of the



meaning of Ramadan.

'As representatives of the main Christian traditions in the UK we assure you of our goodwill towards you, and our commitment to peace and justice in the society that we share together.

'Aware of the recent attacks on mosques and Muslims, we want to stand with you against any discrimination or violence targeting any community or person because of their faith.

'Instead, we want to work for more positive interaction between Christians and Muslims, demonstrating the love for God

and neighbour to which we are called. "Id Mubarak!"

The statement was signed by the Baptist Union of Great Britain, Church of England, Mar Thoma Church, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Quakers in Britain, The Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain (of the Oecumenical Patriarchate), The Church in Wales, The Church of Scotland, The Council of African and Caribbean Churches, The Methodist Church, The Moravian Church in Great Britain, The Salvation Army and The United Reformed Church.

Holiday club fun in Caversham

"OO-ARGH me hearties" was the cry that could be heard across Caversham as more than 150 children, all dressed as pirates, descended on Thameside school for the annual Caversham churches' summer holiday club.

The week-long event in the Reading suburb took over every part of the school as the classrooms were re-decorated with the pirate theme and the main hall became the treasure

island. The children were entertained by the landlubbers youth band from Caversham Baptist Church which led with songs and actions from the front. They also enjoyed junk modelling, treasure boxes, lighthouses and bandanas to enhance their costumes.

During the afternoons there were opportunities to take part in sports activities such as basketball with the Reading

Rockets, football with elite soccer schools and a pirate glee, singing and drama club.

Becky Lovatt, minister from Caversham Methodist Church said, 'This week is what the job is all about, helping the children to understand the stories of Jesus, working alongside those with special needs and seeing them dancing to and singing the songs, and imparting the seeds of God's love through those stories.'

From the editor

I hope your summer is going well. Having returned from two week's leave the office is in full swing gearing up for an exciting autumn.

September will see the launch of a completely redeveloped Baptist Union of Great Britain website. As well as providing the support, advice and resources our churches need, it ultimately aims to reflect our new restructured Union.

It will be a one-stop place for information about Baptists, with more about our colleges and Associations, and greater integration with *The Baptist Times*. It has a new, image rich contemporary design and will hopefully be more easily navigable.

September also sees the launch of a new Baptist magazine, to replace Baptist Life and Transform. Like the website it aims to be a place where people can find out about the rich diversity of what's happening Baptist circles, and as well as sharing their own story.

These are two big pieces of work, and there is a natural knock-on effect. *The Baptist Times* website has not been featuring as much content as usual. In addition the Weekly Round-up will be produced on a fortnightly basis for August, and revert to normal come September. The next two editions will be 21 August and 4 September.

Contact Paul Hobson on 01235 517677, editor@baptisttimes.co.uk



Free film resources

DAMARIS, the Christian educational charity, has launched free new resources for the next Richard Curtis film.

About Time is a romantic comedy starring Domhnall Gleeson, Rachel McAdams and

Bill Nighy, and is in UK cinemas from 4 September.

Richard Curtis is the director behind *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and *Love Actually*.

For more visit www.damaris.org/abouttime

JOBS

New jobs posted on The Baptist Times website

HR Manager, Baptist Union of Great Britain

Worship and media interns, King's Church Durham

South Sudan, Marol Academy Secondary School - couple needed to head up school

For more details visit: <http://www.baptisttimes.co.uk/index.php/jobs>

INDUCTION

Lindsay Park Baptist Church, Kenton, are pleased to welcome the Revd Marion Pengelly-Phillips (formerly of Droitwich Baptist Church) to be their new minister. The Induction Service is on Saturday 7 September at 3 pm.

DEATH

LAWSON, the Revd John T. John enjoyed pastorates at Dudley, Felixstowe, East Plumstead and Kingston before retiring to Sheffield where he died on 15 July, aged 81, after a long illness. I'm sure he will be remembered by many for his gracious ministry.

BAPTISMS

- Attleborough Baptist Church:** John Bolton, Sandra Boardman and Muriel 3
- Basford Road Baptist Church, Nottingham:** Tracy Ball, Heidi Vizzard 2
- Bretton Baptist Church, Peterborough:** Sue Laver, Jonathan Lee, Charlotte Merrell, Judith Merrell, Dave Stancombe, Pat Stancombe, Jasmine Thursby 7
- Burton Latimer Baptist Church:** Joyce Yeomans, Jeff Mills and Ron Meakins 3
- Colchester Baptist Church:** David Sydenham 1
- Ebenezer Baptist Church, Scarborough:** Sharon White, Kristen Hulme, Miriam Shipley, Adam Stride, Mark Phipps, Ceri Biers 6
- Farnworth Baptist Church:** Emily Bradbury, Sandra Baker, John Forrest 3
- Fishponds Baptist Church, Bristol:** Jessica Martin, Danielle Hewitt 2
- Lumb Baptist Church, Rossendale:** Jane Nicholson, Dave Howarth 2
- Newport Pagnell Baptist Church:** Debbie Parlor 1
- Somersham Baptist Church (Cambridgeshire):** 3
- Upton Vale Baptist Church, Torquay:** Jovie Bicknell, Jonah Maloney 2

Send notifications of baptisms, ministerial changes, deaths and testimonies to editor@baptisttimes.co.uk