

Baptismal blessings

HUNDREDS of baptisms have taken place in Baptist churches across the country in recent weeks.

Easter Sunday is traditionally a day when many choose to profess their faith in Jesus through the waters of baptism, and this year was no exception. The number of baptisms communicated to *The Baptist Times* has already exceeded that of 2013.

In London members of the Royal Docks Community Church followed the example of the first Baptists in England who 400 years ago who conducted their baptisms in the River Thames. Mikey Mann (pictured) and Joey Allgood both took to the water in Lyle Park, West Silvertown, while a further three baptisms also took place in the Britannia Village Hall in Canning Town where the church meets each Sunday.

At Bridgnorth Baptist Church in Shropshire the Revd Stephen Derges shared how two women with 'completely different experiences of salvation' were baptised on the Sunday evening.

Kim Edmunds was a total stranger to Christian thinking and had dabbled in spiritualism and the occult, but then had a 'marvellous experience' of Jesus.

Debbie Wellings had Christian parents who attended another church. She went through a painful



divorce which left her 'angry and unforgiving until she finally understood the forgiveness Jesus gives'.

'Remarkable stories, remarkable Jesus,' said Stephen.

A moving morning service took place at Grangetown Baptist Church in Cardiff on Easter Sunday, when Darren Hiatt, 40, was baptised

'His declaration of faith in Jesus was clear,' said church elder Elfed Godding. 'Having lost his sight as a child Darren has had to face many challenges, but his faith in Christ is a living example of the hope of the Gospel.'

On Palm Sunday yet more encouraging baptisms took place at Newbury Baptist Church. Teenagers Bethany Buckingham

and Bethany Edwards invited more than 30 friends to witness their baptism. Married couple Toby and Linda-Jean Ford and were were also baptised.

A week earlier both Bethanys had had been interviewed on BBC Radio Berkshire.

'The baptisms have been a great opportunity for us to celebrate together as a church family the amazing journey that they have been on and the work Christ has done in their lives,' said children's and youth worker Scott Perchard.

'It was also a fantastic opportunity for the girls to talk to friends about their faith, and seeing more than 30 teenagers packed into the baptism service, many for the first time, was a huge encouragement for the whole church, going to show that often our most gifted youth evangelists are our young people!'

Around 3,500 baptisms are reported to our Union via the annual returns each year. Baptisms we are notified of are reported in *The Baptist Times Weekly Round-up* each week, and on the *Baptists Together* website.

If you would like to share any recent baptisms, please contact phobson@baptist.org.uk

Building our gospel witness

THE first phase of a Baptist church's ambitious refurbishment project has been completed.

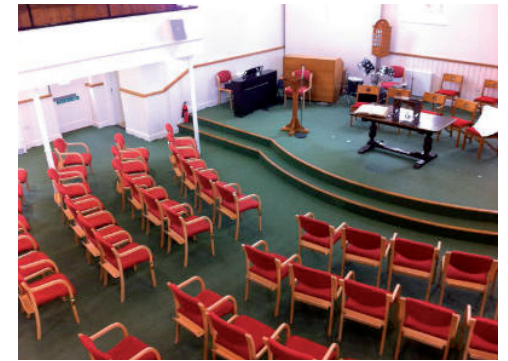
After months of work the congregation at Princes Risborough Baptist Church in Buckinghamshire was able to worship in its main church building this Easter.

The project, which has been more than eight years in the planning, has seen the worship area completely refurbished to create an attractive and flexible space for Sunday services and other activities. The fixed pews have been replaced with moveable chairs and a new audio visual system has been installed.

The church has an extensive suite of buildings on its site including the main worship area and two sizeable halls, all of which are in regular use each week.

Phase two aims to link the whole worship area with the foyer to include further meeting areas.

Minister the Revd Richard Allwood said, 'The passage of time and changing patterns of church life have meant we needed to make alterations to our



buildings so that they best serve our needs in the 21st century.

'We have wanted to create a space which will be attractive, comfortable and flexible for our Sunday Services and other activities.

'We believe this building and refurbishment project will help us to reach out to Princes Risborough and beyond with the Good News of the message of Jesus. In addition we want to have premises which will continue to be attractive to different community groups and organisations.'

The refurbishment will also help the church fulfil its vision

of performing more dramas and delivering other contemporary performances.

A celebration and thanksgiving service for the refurbished premises will take place at the church on 24 May at 3pm followed by tea and refreshments. It will include a dramatised presentation of 'Voices from the Past; Words for Today.'

The Old Well, which fed the original baptistery, has been retained as a feature of the renovations, with a glazed top and soft lighting. The theme of the thanksgiving service will be 'Old Well, New Springs'.

Practical demonstration of faith

A SOMERSET town benefited when 40 young people from Spring Harvest visited to make a difference in the community.

The youngsters hopped on the train from nearby Minehead to spend an afternoon in Watchet on a range of good deeds, such as gardening at a local school, picking up litter on the play fields, clearing up the community allotments, helping to run a

family craft afternoon and washing cars.

It was organised by the Spring Harvest youth team alongside the Christians Together in Watchet and Williton group, which includes the Revd Carl Smethurst, minister of Watchet Baptist Church.

He said, 'It went brilliantly and has been received really well by the local community.

'The point was to demonstrate in practical ways that the message of the Christian faith actually affects our outlook on life; the things we think, how we act and what we do are important. It was also a lot of fun!'

Spring Harvest made a video of the event and showed it across the site the following day.

Visit <http://youtu.be/Ig-AFYb3kNQ>

'Missed disarmament opportunities'

THE LEADERS of the Methodist Church, United Reformed Church and our Baptist Union are pushing the government to make progress on disarmament at the Non Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting in New York this week.

They are concerned that the UK government has failed to live up to commitments made at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in 2010.

Steve Hucklesby, Policy Adviser for the Methodist Church, is part of a World Council of Churches delegation attending the PrepCom meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The delegation will meet with representatives of governments around the world. 'The UK's report outlining four years' work is woefully thin,' he said.

'Our government appears happy to talk about a commitment to encouraging progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons but then acts against some of the most promising initiatives.'

Leaders of seven UK Churches wrote to William Hague, the



Picture:
Nuclear
Sign /
digitalart

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, in March outlining a series of missed opportunities for progress on promises made in 2010. The UK Government boycotted the Oslo and Nayarit inter-governmental conferences, held last year and earlier this year, on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

In his letter to Church leaders, Mr Hague said, 'We concluded that the objectives of the (Oslo and Nayarit) conferences were at best unclear and that many supporters of the conferences appeared to have as their goal a nuclear weapons convention or other treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons outright.'

In response to Mr Hague's letter, Mr Hucklesby said, 'There is no adequate explanation from the Secretary of State as to why an examination of the relationship between nuclear weapons and International Humanitarian Law is such a concern to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.'

'The Oslo and Nayarit conferences did not focus solely on the disarmament agenda; such conferences have the potential to strengthen the Treaty as a whole. The NPT has been the cornerstone of efforts to constrain non-proliferation for decades, but it will be under threat unless the nuclear weapons' states take their responsibilities seriously.'

need more pragmatists like Adam Smallbone

<http://bit.ly/1mdfYQN>

> Immigration, truth and justice: struck by negative portrayals of Romania as it became a full EU member, Phil Jump reflects on kingdom values

<http://bit.ly/1ilwCJa>

> Thank God for Facebook: examples of Baptist churches engaging with new media

<http://bit.ly/1ktwv3t>

> When the sacred and scary meet: is God in the really unexpected places... like horror films?

<http://bit.ly/1rOHCai>

From the www.
baptisttimes.co.uk

Recent stories and comment pieces on *The Baptist Times* website

> In defence of BBC's Rev: ministry in the inner city is challenging, which is why we

'Extraordinary' resource for youth workers

'RELEVANT, tried and tested, cutting-edge' youth work resources are now available from the new Youth For Christ resources website, which launched this week.

The site has been designed with youth workers in mind, YFC said in a statement. It contains 'the freshest sessions around', while users will have access to thousands of ideas, games, short films, talky bits, Bible bits, icebreakers, discussion starters and more.

The resources are designed to inspire and equip every church in Britain to reach every young person in their community.

The vision was to create 'ground breaking evangelistic resources and dynamic discipleship that helps young people go deep in their relationship with God, live out an authentic faith and share their faith.'

Phil Knox, Director of YFC's Church Resources Department said, 'We are so excited about this site simply because we believe that it will result in thousands more young people hearing about Jesus in an increasingly relevant way.'

YFC National Director, Baptist evangelist Gavin Calver added, 'This site is an extraordinary resource for youth workers. We pray that YFC Resources help thousands of churches reach out to and disciple young people with the message of Jesus.'

Visit www.yfcresources.co.uk

Food poverty inquiry

CHRISTIANS involved with a foodbank project are encouraged to share their story with the parliamentary inquiry into hunger and food poverty.

Co-chaired by the Rt Revd Tim Thornton, Bishop of Truro and launched in April, the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger and Food Poverty in Britain will be holding a series of regional sessions as well as accepting written submissions. It is seeking to gain an understanding of the causes of hunger, and the provision to

alleviate it.

The findings will be published by the end of the year, hoping to inform the debate and campaigns in the run up to the General Election next year.

Regional hearings will take place over the summer in Birkenhead, Salisbury, Truro, South Shields and South Thanet, and written evidence, as well as the terms of reference, can be submitted via the Inquiry's website.

Visit <http://foodpovertyinquiry.org/>

JOBS

Chaplain for South Lincolnshire, Lincolnshire Chaplaincy Services Development/Projects Manager, Quiet Garden Trust Youth Worker, Ampthill Baptist Church

For more details visit: www.baptist.org.uk/jobs

BAPTISMS

Arundel Baptist Church, Sussex: Ann Peachey and Michael MacCarthy . . . 2
Bognor Regis Baptist Church, Sussex: Ratanna Khus 1
Bridgnorth Baptist Church, Shropshire: Kim Edmunds, Debbie Wellings 2
Cannon Street Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham: Cleveland Ruddy, Sharon Watson, Rosmarie Bell, Verna Forrest 4
Colchester Baptist Church, Essex: Louis Pulford, David Stockwell 2
Didcot Baptist Church, Oxfordshire: Guy Kenyon 1
Earlsfield Baptist Church, London: Shanthi Williams, Dorrell Grant, Fred Poole, Nicholas Carvalho-Goldberg 4
Fleet Baptist Church, Hampshire: Samuel Blackwell, Cherie Foster, Carole Ward 3
Godalming Baptist Church, Surrey: Debbie St John and Eileen West 2
High Street Baptist Church, Tring: Laura MacKenzie 1
Hope Baptist Church, Plymouth: Niki Pain, Claire Knight, Jason Lambell 3
Leigh Baptist Church, Lancashire: Mark Dagnall 1
Newbury Baptist Church, Berkshire: Bethany Buckingham, Bethany Edwards, Toby & Linda-Jean Ford 4
Park Road Baptist Church, Peterborough: Margaret Eastwood, Fiona Macdonald, Jo Fenwick 3
Royal Docks Community Church, London: Mikey Mann, Joey Allgood, Natasha Foster, Didi Daudia and Jayne Randall

Send notifications of baptisms, ministerial changes, deaths and testimonies to phobson@baptist.org.uk

(please note there wasn't space to include all recent baptisms - those we have been notified of but not yet published will appear next week)