



## A centenary celebration with a difference...



Richard Fisher, BRF's CEO, invites you to an online service of thanksgiving and celebration marking 100 years of BRF.

Who would have dreamt 100 years ago that we might one day worship together online? Who would have

thought even two years ago that online services and prayer meetings would become such a lifeline for so many of us?

### You're invited!

When BRF celebrated the milestones of its silver, golden and diamond anniversaries, services of thanksgiving took place in London, either at Westminster Abbey or St Paul's Cathedral. For our centenary, we're doing things very differently – with a service of thanksgiving and celebration online! This time everyone, wherever they are around the world, will be able join us; and those who can't do so on the day will still be able to watch the service later on YouTube.

### Save the date: Sunday 24 April

We warmly invite you to join us and many others from across the family of BRF ministries for the online service at 3.00 pm on Sunday 24 April 2022. We'll be celebrating and giving thanks for all that God has done in and through BRF over the past 100 years, and committing ourselves afresh to the continuing work and all that lies ahead.

Chair of BRF's board of trustees, Bishop Colin Fletcher will lead the service, with Canon Dr George Lings preaching.

### Please join us

I very much hope you will want to join us. You are so much part of our story – whether you have just started using our Bible reading notes and other publications or have been reading them for decades; whether you're involved with our Anna Chaplaincy, Living Faith, Messy Church or Parenting for Faith ministries; whether you write for us, give to support our work, pray with us or are an advocate for BRF. We're so thankful for you and for our partnership in the gospel and we'd love you to be part of our service of celebration and thanksgiving.

### Bring your friends!

We'd love as many people as possible to join in! Why not invite others to watch the service with you – remotely or in person? Or encourage your church, your home group, your Messy Church or Parenting for Faith course group to watch it together? You could even celebrate with a tea party after the service! Whatever you decide, we look forward to your company as we give thanks together for 100 years of BRF's ministry.

### Check out our new videos!

In the meantime do enjoy our two very short centenary videos – on our centenary prayer and on the story of BRF. Find them on our website and on social media.

**To register for the service and see the videos, go to [brf.org.uk/centenary](https://brf.org.uk/centenary)**

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103 and still finding the Bible reflections relevant!

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## Pray with us...

Please join us in this shortened version of our prayer for our centenary by BRF prayer advocate, Martyn Payne.

*Gracious God*

*Thank you for the Bible,*

*For showing us your faithfulness*

*And turning small beginnings into surprising blessing.*

*Thank you for all who encounter your word, from the youngest to the oldest.*

*Keep us humble in your service and ambitious for your glory,*

*And open us to new opportunities.*

*For your name's sake,*

**Amen.**

For more ways to pray with us and for our work, go to [brf.org.uk/pray](https://brf.org.uk/pray)



Sharing  
the Story  
since 1922

# Hello from Julie and the fundraising team



It is amazing to already be a quarter of the way through our centenary year! In order to continue our vital work we need to raise £25,000 a week, and we are reliant upon fundraising, including gifts in wills.

## Every contribution helps

Please can you help by making a donation, buying our greetings cards, spreading the word about our ministry and praying for us.

## Cards and gift wrap

Thank you to everyone who has already purchased Easter and Everyday cards and gift wrap. There is still time to order for delivery by Easter. All proceeds go to support our work.

## BRF Centenary Rose

It has been wonderful seeing people's centenary roses arriving. Please do share your photos and tag BRF on social media

– we are so looking forward to seeing them in bloom across the UK! If you would like to order a rose for yourself or as a gift visit [brfonline.org.uk/rose](http://brfonline.org.uk/rose).



## Raise funds when you shop

If you are looking to make any spring purchases, please consider using Give as You Live and Amazon Smile – both raise money for BRF at no extra cost to yourself! Find out more and sign up at [brf.org.uk/get-involved/give](http://brf.org.uk/get-involved/give)



Give as you Live®

amazon smile  
You shop. Amazon gives.

## Our annual appeal

Meanwhile, our fundraising team is excitedly preparing our annual appeal which will arrive with you in your May newsletter.

Sending our sincere thanks for your support and prayers,

Julie and the Fundraising Team

## Could you help sponsor our communications?

If you would like to sponsor an edition of BRF News or one of our other publications please get in touch.

Contact Tracey in the fundraising team via [giving@brf.org.uk](mailto:giving@brf.org.uk) or call 01235 462 305

# 'The Bible reading notes were all I had'

**At the grand age of 103, generous BRF supporter Joanne Henderson remembers when the Bible reading notes offered a lifeline in time of isolation and difficulty.**



Born in Hampshire, Joanne has gone to church and read the Bible for as long as she can remember. But it wasn't until she and her mother moved to Worthing that she was introduced to BRF's Bible reading notes by a church member who organised a group subscription. So began a daily habit that has lasted 55 years.

Joanne eventually took over running the group subscription herself until her mother's declining health demanded more of her time.

It was a lonely season. 'The rector visited us every month, but nobody else came as people didn't understand Alzheimer's,'

remembers Joanne. Apart from those visits, the Bible reading notes were all she had to hold on to – 'my faith kept me going.'

Now in later life herself, Joanne remarks on how relevant the Bible readings often are. 'I find it astonishing... when one thinks they were written in a different time, and yet they come to me on just the right day. Reading the notes makes an awful lot of difference,' she confides. 'It helps me feel connected, as I live alone.'

## Could you make a difference to someone's faith journey?

No doubt the volunteer at Joanne's church would be astonished to hear that the Bible reading notes they introduced her to were still sustaining her over half a century later! Turn to the back page to read about one of our current volunteers, Angela, who is helping people in her church get closer to God by telling them about BRF's faith-building resources and opportunities.

To find out about becoming a local church champion contact [jane.butcher@brf.org.uk](mailto:jane.butcher@brf.org.uk) or go to [brf.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer](http://brf.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer)



# Experienced practitioners offer guidance for churches

**The last two years have highlighted the need for better support for older people. So for churches wanting to invest in older people’s ministry, we’ve added two new Anna Chaplaincy training resources to our existing range.**

BRF’s 200-strong Anna Chaplaincy for Older People network is dedicated to encouraging and resourcing others to improve spiritual wellbeing for the older people they care for, in churches, residential homes and the community.

## **Free Easy Guides for older people’s ministry**

Now Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends are generously sharing their cumulative expertise and wisdom through a new

series of short, downloadable Easy Guides, to give others ministering to older people new insights, confidence and skills.

Published this spring, the first eight guides cover issues such as:

- setting up a dementia cafe
- connecting care homes with schools
- how to run a ‘holiday at home’
- Messy Vintage: the creative and accessible Messy Church-inspired approach to worship.

Each two-page download will be frequently updated to ensure the guidance meets robust professional standards.



Find out more at [annachaplaincy.org.uk/easy-guides](http://annachaplaincy.org.uk/easy-guides)

# New course for groups – the Spiritual Care Series

**Karen Laister, BRF’s head of marketing, communications and strategic relationships, previews an outstanding new course for churches wishing to provide spiritual care for older people.**

Spiritual support is vital at any age, but for those drawing towards the end of life it is even more crucial. For them, the opportunity to reflect on their faith and life story with another person can be deeply healing, sometimes lifting the burdens of a lifetime. Yet it takes knowledge and skills to facilitate that kind of meaningful encounter: from an understanding of the ageing process and what spirituality looks like for an older person, to communication skills that create safe spaces in which older people feel comfortable telling their stories.

## **Expert training for churches**

The Spiritual Care Series is a new course to help churches train teams in the skills needed for spiritual care to older people in their church and community. It has been developed by an international team of experts in the field, including Scottish theologian and founder of Aberdeen university’s Centre for Spirituality, Health and Disability, Professor John Swinton. This video-based course is already widely used in Canada and Australia, where the Health Television Network has been working with BRF to introduce it to the UK. Each of the eight sessions includes group discussion, time for personal reflection and online assessments.



To find out more about group training for older people’s ministry, go to [annachaplaincy.org.uk/spiritual-care-series](http://annachaplaincy.org.uk/spiritual-care-series)

# New Messy Church lead confirms her vision

Messy Church's new lead is dedicated to the vision God has given her as she steps into the shoes of its founder.



We rejoice that God has provided such an experienced and gifted successor to Messy Church founder Lucy Moore, who recently moved into a new role with the Church of England. **Aike Kennett-Brown** is a longstanding member of the Messy Church family and, until recently, was mission support officer for Southwark

Diocese, where she masterminded Messy Celebrations at Southwark Cathedral, explored Messy Communion and Baptism and helped organise Messy Prayer activities in Trafalgar Square.

A former local Messy Church pioneer herself, Aike's passion for intergenerational church was already evident as she organised creative initiatives to grow intergenerational relationships, including a small, experimental discipleship group, about which she presented a paper at the first Messy Church International Conference. For some years now she has generously shared her wisdom and skills with the worldwide Messy Church network,

volunteering as a regional coordinator and then as a member of two national and international support teams focusing on training and coaching.

*'I look forward to meeting new and familiar faces, particularly at the Messy Church conference in May 2022. God gave me three words for Messy Church as I fasted and prayed ahead of my interview: sustainable, intergenerational and discipleship. I look forward to exploring these areas together during this next season.'*

**Aike Kennett-Brown, BRF Messy Church ministry lead**

We look forward to seeing what God has in store as Aike steers the ministry into the years ahead.

**To find out more about the Messy Church Support Teams and how they can help your Messy Church, go to [messychurch.org.uk/messy-church-teams](https://messychurch.org.uk/messy-church-teams)**

# TV presenter gets a taste for Messy Church

Last autumn a Messy Church gathering in Dulwich welcomed Gemma Hunt (CBeebies presenter) for the filming of a special BRF centenary episode of BBC's *Songs of Praise*.



TV presenter Gemma Hunt at St Barnabas Messy Church, Dulwich, for the filming of BBC's *Songs of Praise*.

Around 200 adults, teenagers and children gathered at St Barnabas Church to explore the story of Moses being called to set God's people free. Starting with interactive craft and science experiments, we created pyramids from recycled cardboard and Egyptian headdresses to remind us of Pharaoh's cruel rule over the Israelites. It was safety-goggles on for the fire making experiment, remembering God calling to Moses from the burning bush. As we made candles, we recalled his promise to be with Moses

on his mission – and to be with us, too. Other activities included bread making, sand play, nail art, and watching prayers on folded paper that opened up like lily flowers as they floated on water.

## God's world-changing power in us

During the celebration, Revd Rachael Gledhill retold how God gave Moses power to answer his call and set his people free. We wondered what God was asking of us, and how would we use our God-given gifts and talents in this season?

During our mealtime of cheesy tomato pasta, fruit and chocolate cake, the *Songs of Praise* team interviewed some of the children, families and leaders. Nine-year-old Alice felt nervous but lit the candle she had made during the activities, asking God to help her 'Be brave, like Moses'.

We hope that the joy of our Messy gathering will inspire others to explore the Bible in creative ways.

*'Messy Church has transformed the way we are church, the way we relate to each other and the way we relate to our local community.'*

**Revd Rachael Gledhill, assistant curate, St Barnabas, Dulwich**

Adapted from an article originally written for Southwark Diocese e-newspaper, *The Bridge*, December 2021

**Find out more about BRF on *Songs of Praise* at [brf.org.uk/songs-of-praise-the-power-of-the-bible](https://brf.org.uk/songs-of-praise-the-power-of-the-bible)**

\* Arrangements for the event followed government Covid guidelines at the time.



# God is moving!

Youth worker Pipe Figueroa told us what happened when he got together a group of parents to take part in our online Parenting for Faith 'Teens focus' course at Christ Church, Barnet.



I like to keep up to date with new ways to develop my ministry, so when our children's worker recommended the Parenting for

Faith course, I decided to run the special online option for parents with teenagers in my church. It was very easy to organise. I sent out the link for joining the Zoom meetings from home, and shared the notes and comments via email and in our parents' WhatsApp group. It worked really well!

## 'Meaty' sessions

I hosted group discussions for our parents in 'breakout rooms' – every session was so meaty and full of good advice and information: there was always something to talk about! I especially remember the session about how young people can build a false image of who God is, and how can we explore, identify and 'unwind' what is wrong. The illustration Rachel used to explain it will stick in my mind for ages!

## Getting alongside parents

Our parents felt so encouraged and equipped to start deep conversations with their teenagers. They also felt relief when they understood they don't have to be perfect parents or know all the right answers to their kids' difficult questions – they just need to be authentic in their journey of faith and life!

## Fostering better relationships

One night Rachael shared the resource, 'Questions without right answers', to help start conversations with your children. One family started to use it regularly after family dinners to help them get to know their teenagers in a deep and intimate way. They loved it! And, as their youth worker, I loved hearing that too!

## I would love to host it again!

To BRF's Parenting for Faith team, I'd like to say 'Keep doing it!' I have more parents interested in joining and I would love to host it again. Thank you for all the energy and effort you put into this!

To other church workers, I'd say 'You must do it!' It's a great tool to invest

in the families that you are working with. Not just because you're learning something new and enriching, but the relationships that you can develop alongside make it really worthwhile.

Find out more about the Parenting for Faith course at [parentingforfaith.org/course](https://parentingforfaith.org/course)

Pipe has a special word for anyone who would like to donate to Parenting for Faith:

*'Thank you for your support! You are not just someone giving financial support, you are facilitating spiritual conversations at the dinner tables of families... you are enabling parents to feel confident in their journey of discipling their kids! God is moving through what you are doing! Thank you!'*

To donate to Parenting for Faith, go to [brf.org.uk/donate](https://brf.org.uk/donate)

# Building young lives on the rock of faith

When times are tough, and it's hard to see the way ahead, many of us turn to the Bible for encouragement and guidance. So how can we teach the children in our lives to develop this same practice – one that will hold them steady through the storms of life?

How can we help children develop a relationship with God that will help them stand strong in the face of confusion, powerlessness and insecurity – both now and when we're no longer around to reassure them?

Popular author, speaker and founder of BRF's Parenting for Faith ministry, Rachel Turner is also an experienced children's and families worker, and a mum. Her new book, *Comfort in Uncertain Times*,

helps families to discover together who God is and how to stay connected to him in troubled times. By exploring Bible stories of anxiety, loss and transition, and guided by Rachel's discussion notes, parents, carers and children will see how even in the most unsettling of times, just like God's people of old, we too will flourish as we trust God to be at work in our difficulties.

*'It's simple, it's clever and it's profound. I found my own perspective on night-time changing along with my children's.'*

Victoria Beech, GodVenture, about *Comfort in the Darkness*



*Comfort in Uncertain Times: Helping children draw close to God through biblical stories of anxiety, loss and transition*

Paperback, 978 0 85746 628 0, £8.99  
Ebook, 978 1 80039 048 5, £9.99

See inside at [brfonline.org.uk/comfort-uncertain-times](https://brfonline.org.uk/comfort-uncertain-times)



Also by Rachel Turner:  
*Comfort in the Darkness: Helping children draw close to God through biblical stories of night-time and sleep*

Paperback, 978 08574 6423 1, £7.99

# Prayer and personality

BRF's centenary year is also the 10th year of the BRF Festival of Prayer. Karen Laister, head of marketing, communications and strategic relationships, previews this year's festival on Saturday 9 July.

Prayer takes us to the heart of God and our relationship with him. Understanding our personality is fundamental to recognising how we develop a life of prayer. Why not treat yourself to some time out this summer to explore how knowing yourself better can enrich your prayer life?

## Being yourself with God

Our keynote speaker is a trained Ignatian retreat leader and spiritual director, writer, lecturer in pastoral theology at Cambridge and a Roman Catholic sister, Dr Gemma Simmonds CJ. Drawing on the words of Dom John Chapman, 'pray as you can, not as you can't', Gemma will highlight how to pray in ways that reflect our God-given personality and nature – and how to give ourselves permission to do so.

## Space to nourish the soul

Would your prayer life benefit from some fresh inspiration? The Festival of Prayer is an opportunity to invest in your relationship with God in the company of deeply thoughtful and experienced speakers.

If praying in tune with your personality is something you'd like to explore more, Revd Jo Gallant's follow-up session is for you, as is 'The spirituality of being yourself' session, led by Ven Guy Elsmore. For an alternative approach, join 'Prayer and colour' (Jan Palmer), 'Prayer and percussion' (Revd Richard Dormandy) or explore Forest Church with Revd Paul Cudby. Other speakers include BRF authors David Cole, Revd Clare Hayns, Revd Dr Emma Pennington and Tony Phelan, as well as Ann Persson, former BRF trustee and author.

After a two-year absence, the Festival of Prayer returns to the delightful setting of Ripon College in the picturesque Oxfordshire village of Cuddesdon. You'll be encouraged to keep a session free to enjoy this beautiful space with God by praying or reading in the grounds or walking the garden labyrinth.

The Festival of Prayer is a collaboration between BRF, the Diocese of Oxford and Ripon College.

For more information, go to [brfonline.org.uk/festival-prayer-2022](http://brfonline.org.uk/festival-prayer-2022)

# Helping others get closer to God

BRF resources fan Angela Smith explains why she now volunteers as a local church champion.

Angela had heard about the opportunity through one of the BRF conferences she'd attended and was keen to help her church leaders keep up to date with the opportunities and resources on offer from BRF.

'I firmly believe that daily reading and studying of the Bible supports me in, and is the foundation of, my life as a Christian', says Angela.

Angela hopes to 'encourage individuals and groups to get closer to God through regular study', highlighting the resources through individual conversations and updates in the monthly parish magazine.

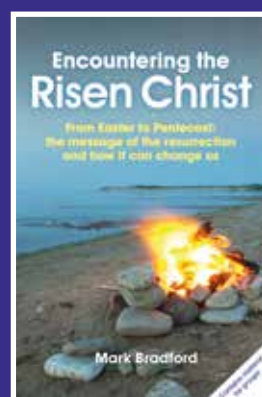
Welcome on board, Angela!



If you're interested in volunteering go to [brf.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer](http://brf.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer)



Its stunning setting makes Ripon College ideal for reflection and restoration.



## Easter isn't the end...

Journey with the disciples from a place of sadness, fear, doubt and failure to a future filled with hope, confidence and restoration, through the seven weeks between Easter and Pentecost with Mark Bradbury's popular book *Encountering the Risen Christ*. Ideal for group discussions or individual reflection.

Paperback, 978 0 85746 428 6, £8.99

Find out more at [brfonline.org.uk/risen-christ](http://brfonline.org.uk/risen-christ)



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BRF, 15 The Chambers, Vineyard, Abingdon OX14 3FE  
+44 (0)1865 319700 | [enquiries@brf.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@brf.org.uk)  
[brf.org.uk](http://brf.org.uk)

