

## A new name for a new age



**Our centenary year was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on BRF's past, present and future: to trace the golden thread that connects us to our roots and carries us forward into a new century. We gave thanks for the past, celebrated the present and prayed about the future.**

In recent years BRF has evolved and expanded,

drawing new ministries into our growing family. Today, Anna Chaplaincy, Living Faith, Messy Church and Parenting for Faith are each making a unique contribution to people's lives, while sharing our overriding passion to inspire people of all ages to grow in Christian faith. As we talked and prayed about the future of BRF, we wrestled with the fact that our name, however loved and recognised, no longer fully reflected what we are today.

We consulted widely amongst supporters, stakeholders, staff and other organisations who have helped us to improve how we describe ourselves and our work. It was an immensely valuable and creative process, and I'm grateful to everyone who contributed their time, insights and ideas.

The outcome from this long and prayerful process is that we have adapted our name for a new age. From September 2023 we will be called BRF Ministries, reflecting the fact that BRF is the home of

an exciting family of bold and pioneering ministries that people know and love.

Something that sometimes gets lost when people encounter BRF is the fact that we are a charity, dependent on the generosity of our supporters. To put it bluntly and honestly, we need to raise £1.8m this year to maintain BRF Ministries. While some of our income comes from sales of resources, like our hugely popular range of Bible reading notes, we could not sustain let alone expand the work of our ministries without a steady stream of donations and gifts in wills. Every single donation, no matter how small is welcomed and valued.

As a Christian charity, BRF Ministries inspires, equips and supports people of all ages to grow in faith. Please support our work in any way you can: by giving, by praying and by spreading the word about what we do.

*Thank you.*

**To donate to BRF Ministries go to [brf.org.uk/donate](https://brf.org.uk/donate)**

## Festival of Prayer

The rain was no deterrent for the 150 delegates, 11 speakers, 14 stewards and spiritual directors who gathered for our 11th Festival of Prayer at Ripon College, Cuddesdon in July. David Runcorn gave a warmly-received keynote address entitled 'We do not see what we shall become'. The buzz in the stunning Edmund King Chapel before the closing reflection spoke volumes about the riches of the day.



*'Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths.  
Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my Saviour,  
and my hope is in you all day long.'*

PSALM 25:4-5 (NIV)

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## A new prayer for a new age

Martyn Payne has written a new BRF prayer to capture BRF's evolving sense of identity. Please join with us in praying:

*Faithful God,  
thank you for growing BRF  
from small beginnings  
into a worldwide family  
of ministries.  
We rejoice as young and old  
discover you through your word  
and grow daily in faith and love.  
Keep us humble in your service,  
ambitious for your glory  
and open to new opportunities.  
For your name's sake.*

*Amen*

**Our prayer resources can be found at [brf.org.uk/pray](https://brf.org.uk/pray)**



# Hello from Julie and the fundraising team



Many thanks to all of you who have supported our ministry so far this year through your prayer, by making a donation, or purchasing greetings cards.

Alongside our everyday card range, we now have a beautiful new range of

Christmas cards available for 2023. I am pleased that we have been able to offer these at the same price for the last four years. We are very grateful to our supplier for the excellent service they provide. We have had no option other than to increase the postage price for orders in line with Royal Mail charges. Christmas cards are a very important source of income for us but my hope is that those who choose to buy and send them are pleased with the quality and value of the cards.

Following the success of our virtual gifts project last year, we are offering this again for those who wish to support BRF Ministries by making a donation instead of sending a Christmas gift to a friend or family member. Last year we were able to send 22,200 BRF books and Bible reading notes free of charge to a variety of community groups. This year, virtual gifts will be used to support our four ministries as they continue to grow and impact many lives.

Watch out for this year's Christmas message mailing, which will arrive in the post in November.



Sending very best wishes from Julie and the fundraising team.

*Julie*

Julie MacNaughton, MCIOF (Dip)  
Head of fundraising

## Christmas cards

Our range of Christmas cards for 2023 is now available. You can order online at [brf.org.uk/cards](https://brf.org.uk/cards), via the order form, or by calling our friendly fundraising team on **01235 462305**. Sales of these cards help us to continue our vital work.



## Virtual gifts

For the person who has everything this Christmas, order a BRF virtual gift online or via the order form. You can make a donation towards our ministries and give them a card to pop under the tree when the big day comes.

Find out more at [brfonline.org.uk/virtual-gifts](https://brfonline.org.uk/virtual-gifts)



If you are thinking of purchasing flowers as a gift, please check out The Real Flower Company (who produced the beautiful BRF Rose). They give £5 to BRF for every order received using the code **BRF5** at checkout.\*

To use your code go to [realflowers.co.uk](https://realflowers.co.uk)

\*Does not apply to gifts such as sparkling wine and chocolates etc.



# The power of singing



**Anna Chaplaincy in Barrow-in-Furness is a thriving, ecumenical ministry with a number of local churches involved, two Anna Chaplains (Babs Lowes and Janis Preston) and a dedicated team of Anna Friends and volunteers. This summer they ran a very successful 'Holiday at home' across four churches and Babs Lowes told us about two other initiatives: 'Hospital to home' and 'Singing therapy.'**

'We're involved in a six-week pilot for a "Hospital to home" project at Furness General Hospital, in which Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends work in partnership with hospital chaplains to offer spiritual support to people in transition between hospital and home.' If successful, this will be rolled out in two other hospitals in the region and initial signs are that the ministry is having a huge impact. 'Even people who have no faith are accepting prayer,' says Babs, 'and I know God is going to work through this as he is working through our "Singing therapy" ministry. "Singing therapy" started before the hospital project, and it's on a much bigger scale. It's God's work and it's just amazing.'

'Singing Therapy' sessions take place at a facility called Abbey View, on the Furness General Hospital site, which is a halfway house between hospital and home or care home, and at the Parkview Gardens Care Home in Barrow, where the team have been 'welcomed with open arms by the manager and staff'.

At Abbey View, sessions take place on the first Friday of every month, for an hour during visiting time. There's 20-25 minutes of singing, led by singer Phoebe, who decides on the songs. 'They're all "golden oldies,"' says Babs, 'and the response is just amazing. There are so many stories I could tell you and they're all incredibly moving, but one really stands out.'

'There was a man in a hospital bed, close to the end of life, completely still and unresponsive. He had three young visitors, grandchildren. It was a beautiful day and they pushed his bed out into the garden where they could still hear the singing.'

'After the singing, I went out to speak to them. Amazingly, the man had a huge smile on his face and had been singing along. One of the youngsters told me he used to be a chef and I said, "Oh, I bet you're just like that galloping gourmet." Right away, sharp as a tack, he said, "Yes, but you don't get any wine here!" Everyone started to laugh. The singing had woken him up completely.'

'Before she left, his granddaughter came to find me. "I just want to thank you so much for what you do," she said, "We came thinking we were going to have a really morbid time and had no idea what we were going to say to him, but we've had such a blast, reminiscing with him." And that's the power of music! I could sit here for ages talking about different stories!'



So, from all these stories and experiences, how does Babs sum up the impact of Anna Chaplaincy's ministry in Barrow?

'People appreciate it so much: having someone listen to them, empathise with them, pray with them. It's difficult to put into words, but it's such a great privilege to be an Anna Chaplain. It's an such an emotional ministry; it's a joyful ministry and it's such a blessing for everyone.'

**Read more about the Holiday at Home here: [annachaplaincy.org.uk/holiday-at-home](http://annachaplaincy.org.uk/holiday-at-home)**



## Knitted angels

**Knitting has seen a huge resurgence in recent years both at home and out on the streets with the popularity of 'yarn-bombing' or graffiti knitting. Last year, Anna Chaplaincy coordinator in Cheltenham, Gill Ford, organised a huge project to send Christmas angels knitted by volunteers to care home residents throughout Cheltenham and the Bishop's Cleeve area of Gloucestershire.**

Gill is planning a similar project this year, but instead of angels her volunteers will be knitting mini-Christmas stockings. Previous gifts have included knitted Easter crosses (2021), Easter chicks (2022) and Easter baskets (Easter 2023). Gill says: 'Our volunteer knitters/crocheters are expanding in number as the message has got round, with church, and even care home, craft groups getting involved. Not only do we now have volunteers asking what the next project will be, but we have reportedly had care home residents wondering what they might be receiving next!'



'The angels were so appreciated by so many people,' says Gill, 'both the volunteers who made them and people who received them.'

**See Debbie Thrower's blog at: [annachaplaincy.org.uk/christmas-angels](http://annachaplaincy.org.uk/christmas-angels)**



# Three generations, one Messy Church

**Megan Sutherland grew up in Leyland Methodist Church. She met her husband there. Her mum and her mother-in-law are both part of the church and so are her children. So ever since the church started its Messy Church in 2013, it's been an intergenerational affair. Megan told us how it all began.**

'Sunday mornings get so busy for families, with football practice or swimming lessons, so we wanted to have something that was church, but outside that traditional Sunday morning service time. We went for a Saturday morning. It really filled a gap in what the church was offering at the time and our focus has always been that it's not just for children, it's for all ages.'

That commitment to make Leyland Messy Church a home for all ages is reflected in the range of people who come and the range of helpers who make it happen. 'We've got a wide variety of helpers,' says Megan. 'We've got some with young families who have come to Messy Church and are now helpers, all the way through to people like my mum and my husband's mum. Then, at the other end, my son and daughter, who both grew up in Messy Church, now come and help as well. I didn't twist their arms, they volunteered! It's been ten years now, so they were toddlers when they started coming. When my son got to about eleven, he kept asking: "Can I be a helper now? Can I be a helper?"'

'Now he's 14 and he's very happy to come down and help. He usually does the Lego table and he loves that, chatting to people and helping them.'

Megan's husband completes the family team. He helps to set up the hall but his main role is chatting to people, especially the men who've brought their children. 'If there's a man who feels a bit unsure, my husband will just sit down and start chatting with them and make them feel at home and included.'

So what, for Megan, is the key to the success of Leyland Messy Church's ministry?

'I think it's the more relaxed atmosphere that attracts people. When your children are little, as a parent, you don't feel you have to keep them quiet. If they want to wander off, it's fine; you don't feel they're going to disturb anyone. You don't have to sit still and listen for hours. There's no long sermon. People can come in and sometimes they don't even realise they're coming to church.'

'If you said to some of these people "I'm gonna go to church," they wouldn't walk

into the building. But they come here with their children for what might look just like Messy play but then some of them get interested in the underlying aspects as well... they hear stories about Jesus, they hear about God's love... We're not trying to push them or say you must come on a Sunday morning. We just say come when you want, if you're late to the session, it doesn't matter, and if you want to leave early that's quite okay as well. To see people coming back month after month is really nice and sometimes somebody you thought maybe didn't enjoy it one month comes back. Then you think, something must have resonated with them, and they want to come back and hear more. That's really special.'

**'You think, something must have resonated with them, and they want to come back and hear more. That's really special.'**

**For more information about Messy Church go to [messychurch.org.uk](http://messychurch.org.uk)**



This treasure-trove of session material is now being published in annual volumes containing twelve session outlines for Messy Churches. Running through the year from September to August, here is everything you need to run your Messy Church, including activity photos, mealtime cards, social action ideas and templates, all downloadable from the Messy Church website. With an introduction by Messy Church ministry lead, Aike Kennett-Brown.

■ To find out more about Get Messy! go to [brfonline.org.uk/new-get-messy](http://brfonline.org.uk/new-get-messy)





## God is in the detail



**Emma White has been the family and children's pastor at Parkhead Nazarene Church in Glasgow since December 2020,**

**though she and her husband, Dave, have been part of the church since they married 17 years ago. They have three children, 13, 11 and 8. Emma's role is broad and busy: preaching, running a mums' 'life group' and a toddlers group with 50-60 little ones, numerous nationalities and adults of all ages. Emma is an enthusiastic champion of**

**Parenting of Faith resources, having run both the Babies and Toddlers course and the original eight-session course, but how did she first find out about Parenting for Faith?**

'That's a good story! As we went into the second lockdown, I was at home going, "What am I even supposed to be doing with this role?" I really didn't know where to start but then I went to an online seminar led by Rachel Turner as part of a conference called "Deep Impact". It was a light bulb moment. I thought, wow! a) I wish I'd known this when my kids were younger and b) what an amazing perspective, to see how God is already

ministering to our children and our families.'

When she came to run the courses herself, Emma loved seeing other people respond in the same way:

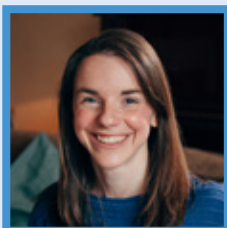
'As a parent, the weight of discipleship can be very, very heavy, and it was really interesting to see the same thought processes happening in the mums in that group. Again, that relief of "Oh, I could do that!" I'm already chatting away to my baby or singing over them, or, praying with them, or pointing out things that they could then chat to God about, but giving them the language to do that really helped their confidence as parents in the world of faith.'

'The courses helped us to identify where we are in our own faith, and then how to lead our children to their own faith. It feels that everyone's grasped just how much God is in the detail of every day.'

**'It feels that everyone's grasped just how much God is in the detail of every day.'**

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

## A nudge from God



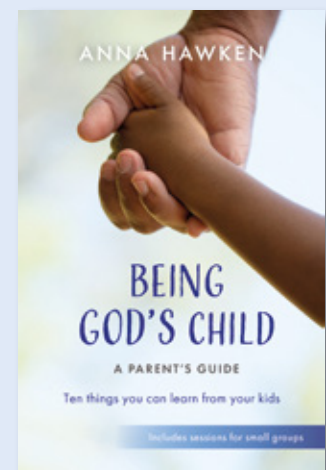
**Parenting for Faith lead Anna Hawken shares the story of writing her first book**

It was on my second maternity leave in 2017 that I first felt a nudge from God to write a book. I pushed the thought to the back of my mind. But five years later, I felt that nudge again. More insistent and compelling this time.

I had just returned to work at BRF and taken on the leadership of the Parenting for Faith ministry, now with three children in tow. I reasoned with God that I didn't have the time to write. If he wanted me to write something, when would I do it? I heard him say, Thursdays at 8.00 pm. There was no real other way to interpret that! So despite my misgivings, I sat down for an hour every Thursday and began to type whatever I felt he was sharing. Turns out he had plenty to tell me! All I had to do was listen and write, and I came to treasure that time with him.

A few weeks later, Olivia Warburton, BRF's head of content creation, mentioned they were looking for new titles. 'Did I know anyone who'd consider writing a book?' God had set me up again. I sent over the first chapters and an outline. Before I knew it, I was deep into researching, writing and editing.

I wanted to explore how to enjoy and fully benefit from the amazing invitation to be God's child (yes, even as a busy parent!). I asked God what children were good at, that I needed to relearn. He showed me all sorts of things, like how they ask lots of questions; they mess up but don't give up; and they celebrate and appreciate the little things. These ideas formed the basis of each chapter. As I tested them out with other people, small group notes evolved too.



This book is for busy parents and carers like me. Whether we're new to faith or just tired from all the demands of day-to-day parenting, God has so much more for us. It's easy to become focused on giving our children what they need and forget that we have the most amazing heavenly Father to care for us too. As I wrote, God reminded me that my connection to him was still the most important thing in my life.

**Find out more and order at [brfonline.org.uk/beinggodschild](https://brfonline.org.uk/beinggodschild)**



## Refresh



Caroline Montgomery's new book *Refresh* offers a tried-and-tested format for café-style meetings designed to engage with the adults at toddler groups, introducing them to faith in Jesus in a gentle, accessible and relevant way with a five-minute thought for the day.

'Refresh has been such a blessing to the families in our community,' she writes. 'My heart and purpose for writing this book is to encourage and equip you to grow your own Refresh ministry in your church; to create a space in the week where families are welcomed, where the children are happy and where you can invest in refreshing the adults physically, emotionally and, most importantly, spiritually.'

■ Find out more at [brfonline.org.uk/products/refresh](https://brfonline.org.uk/products/refresh)

## Looking to Advent

In the words of Martyn Percy, author of our 2023 Advent book, 'Advent is the season of planning, organising and practising. Of "preparing the way of the Lord": making the crooked paths straight; levelling the landscape; seeing the glory of the Lord manifest in the kingdom of God that is to come.'

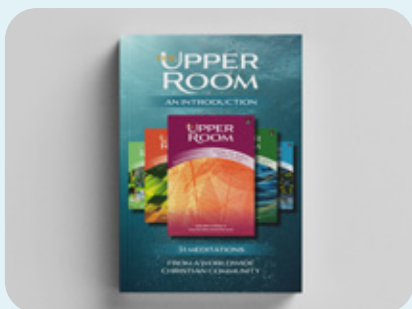
In *An Advent Manifesto*, Martyn explores the message of the kingdom of God: a world turned upside-down; an ecology of equality and peace and an economy of justice, inviting readers to 'to pray and practise that most ancient Advent prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus, come."'

Go to [brfonline.org.uk/advent](https://brfonline.org.uk/advent) to explore our whole range of Advent and Christmas books, including:

- *At Home in Advent*
- *Celtic Advent*
- *Journeying through Advent with New Daylight*

And new this year: *Christmas Voices*, a heartwarming and uplifting collection of reflections, carols, poems and prayers for the festive season, compiled by Claire Musters.

■ Explore our Advent collection at [brfonline.org.uk/advent](https://brfonline.org.uk/advent)



## The Upper Room writing competition 2023

Our popular Upper Room writing competition returns this month with a deadline of 30 November 2023. You'll be invited to write a short Bible reflection, on any subject you like, for our *The Upper Room* Bible reading notes. The prize for the winner and runners-up is publication and a year's subscription to *The Upper Room*. A number of past winners have gone on to write regularly for BRF.

■ Go to [brfonline.org.uk/writerscomp](https://brfonline.org.uk/writerscomp) to find out more or email [writingcompetition@brf.org.uk](mailto:writingcompetition@brf.org.uk)

As a charity, we rely on fundraising and gifts in wills to deliver Anna chaplaincy, Living Faith, Messy church and Parenting for Faith. Your gift helps us impact thousands of lives each year. Please help more people to do the same.

[brf.org.uk/give](https://brf.org.uk/give) +44 (0)1235 462305



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