

## Welcome



One of the things I most enjoy about talking with others is sharing the things we've been enjoying. The conversation might be with old friends or with someone I've only just met. I find myself regularly recommending books, films, music, places I've visited – a whole range of things that I've enjoyed and think the person I'm talking to might also enjoy. And I couldn't begin to count the number of times I've followed up a recommendation I've been given and been so grateful for it.

I'm enormously grateful too for all the introductions I've been given over my years with BRF Ministries: introductions to a whole range of people who have played a significant part in the unfolding story of the charity. Personal introductions have led to key people joining the staff team; individuals and charitable trusts have become hugely generous supporters; and numerous others have opened doors and provided unexpected opportunities to take our work forward.

And I'll always be thankful for my friend Jo, who in my second term of university thought I might be interested to hear a talk on the cross and resurrection, and invited me to go along. It was part of a mission to the university. I almost didn't go, but I'm so glad I did because that night I committed my life to Christ and it changed the whole course of my life.

Ask any group of Christians how they came to faith or first started coming to church and the majority will say it was through a friend or family member: someone who cared enough about them to introduce them to faith, invite them to church or recommend a book or Bible reading notes.

So, if you value BRF Ministries, if you enjoy reading our Bible reading notes and other publications, or if you're involved in some way with Anna Chaplaincy, Living Faith, Messy Church or Parenting for Faith, would you help us by introducing us to your family, friends, colleagues and church communities. It will help us enormously and who knows what impact your introduction might have on the people you care about.

**Richard Fisher**  
Chief executive

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and more...

### Pray with us...

In the words of Jonathan Arnold, in his new book *The Everyday God*\*

*God of judgement and of mercy, we praise you for the good news you proclaim of justice for the least, the lost and the unloved. May we hear your voice and respond, so that we might sing your song of justice and proclaim the gospel of justice, joy, compassion and peace in our broken world. Amen*

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

\* [brfonline.org.uk/the-everyday-god](https://brfonline.org.uk/the-everyday-god)

## Welcome to Jules Morgan

We're delighted to welcome Jules Morgan as our new head of people and operations. Having been New Wine's executive director and director of the national network UCAN, Jules has joined us at an important time in the life of BRF Ministries and she's already making her mark. Following a postdoctoral career in neuroscience, Jules moved to executive leadership in the charity sector. She brings her years of experience in people practice and executive leadership to ensure our most valuable asset – our people – develop, perform and flourish. Read more about Jules' passion for people over the page.



*This is what the Lord Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against one another.'*

ZECHARIAH 7:9-10 (NIV)



# Hello from Julie and the fundraising team



A huge thank you to everyone who bought our Easter and everyday cards. Greetings cards are a such a valuable source of income for BRF Ministries – last year we raised £27,605 from card sales.

It is also much appreciated that many of you have made a donation

alongside purchases of our greetings cards; a remarkable extra £8,855 was received in 2023. We are so grateful to Iain and his team at Dash (UK) Ltd for all their work in ensuring our cards are packed and despatched on time. We love their designs and the quality of their cards, and the fact they are produced and packaged using sustainable materials.

Plans are already underway for the production of this year's Christmas card designs. These will be available online from July and paper order forms will be included in the September issue of BRF Ministries News.

Meanwhile, this issue of BRF Ministries News includes our annual appeal. Last year's appeal raised a fabulous £37,077.17 for which we are very grateful.

We need to raise £24,000 per week to fund our ministries and as always, we value your prayers for the fundraising team and all the activities we undertake to enable us to continue delivering our remarkable ministries. I hope that you are able to help us with a gift this year. Your support makes a huge difference and we appreciate every single gift.

Every blessing

Julie MacNaughton  
MCIOF (Dip) Head of fundraising



Take a look at our wide range of everyday cards available at [brfonline.org.uk/everyday-cards](https://brfonline.org.uk/everyday-cards)

## Pastor Cassie's story

Pastor Cassie Biggin runs a Messy Church in Bradford and often uses BRF Ministries resources with groups that meet at her church. One of our Bible reading notes subscribers wanted to support BRF Ministries in a new way at Christmas and also make a difference to families attending a drop-in session at Cassie's church, so this subscriber bought some copies of our *The Christmas Story* books and some of our Bible reading notes. Cassie included the books in goodie bags for some of the families and added one of our Christmas cards to make each gift bag more personal.

This is just one of the lovely stories we've heard recently. As head of fundraising, Julie MacNaughton says: 'We're hearing fabulous stories from people who supported our centenary book giveaway and are now taking the idea into their own communities. Purchasing our books to give away is a great way of supporting our ministry while helping others receive a book that they might not be in a position to purchase themselves. We also run a virtual gift scheme whereby

you can make a donation in lieu of a birthday or Christmas gift and help us to make more resources available to people attending church groups like Pastor Cassie's.

*The Easter Story* books and our other resources are all available to order from our website [brfonline.org.uk](https://brfonline.org.uk) or ring our friendly fundraising team on 01235 462305.



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Contact our fundraising team at [giving@brf.org.uk](mailto:giving@brf.org.uk), call us on 01235 462305 or drop us a line at the address on the back page.



# Word of mouth

Anna Chaplain Philip Head, in Cornwall, has his own story of the importance of introductions:



Philip with Pastor Deniz Carey, the pastor of Cleerway Community Church, near Liskeard, Cornwall, on his commissioning as an Anna Chaplain.

*'I was introduced to Anna Chaplaincy by an existing Anna chaplain, who told me about the ministry and gave me the Anna Chaplaincy Handbook to take home and read. The introduction led me to pursuing training as an Anna Chaplain which led to me being commissioned in June last year.'*

*'There are many avenues to be pursued as an Anna Chaplain, but as I am in my retirement years, I wanted to be careful not to take on so much that I became ineffective, so I have chosen to pursue two avenues only; they are home visiting and the conducting of a monthly service in two local care homes which care for residents with dementia as well as those without dementia. I am also available for prayer, in times of bereavement and to serve staff and families in the care home environment.'*

*'This has meant that I am able to share my faith, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ and to be available for those who have no other spiritual input in their lives. The ministry provides an avenue for chaplains of all ages to continue serving for as long as they are able.'*



## Anna Chaplaincy: a ministry of relationship

**We are so accustomed now to 'hard sell' advertising and grand promises made by global companies! And yet our lives are ultimately based upon relationships of all kinds; we live interdependently, and our interactions with friends, families and fellow Christians carry great importance for us all.**

How encouraging, then, to know that Anna Chaplaincy has been built upon such foundations. From one Anna Chaplain – pioneer Debbie Thrower – this is now a UK-wide grassroots movement, involving over 350 individuals serving among older people in their communities. This number doesn't include the hundreds of volunteers who serve alongside each chaplain: truly, this is a ministry that has spread quickly and has a ministry of presence that positively impacts whole communities and people in later life, for good.

In almost all cases, individuals approach the national team or local network

members, having heard about Anna Chaplaincy from a friend or church leader. I have lost count of the times we have heard this, and it is so encouraging. This is a wonderful way in which the Spirit of God illuminates a vocational journey, prompting a heart response to engage in ministry among older people, perhaps for the first time.

The Anna Chaplaincy network, then, is truly a web of relationships, fostering encouragement and inspiration in an ever-growing number of localities. And the journey usually starts with a personal introduction.



A rare opportunity for staff to get together in person.

## A passion for people

**Our new head of people Jules Morgan explains why she's so drawn to 'the people profession':**

I've been leading teams, and working in HR for decades, and recently felt called by God to work as the head of people at BRF Ministries. It would be safe to assume that I like people. I do! And I don't.

# A personal invitation

Growing up, I was the child with the unpronounceable name. On top of that, for several summers, my mum insisted that my sister and I should have summer 'crew-cut' hairstyles because of the hot weather. I remember once being introduced as, 'This is Ache – now move up and make space for this lad.' This was the ultimate humiliation for the shy six-year-old Aike – mispronounced and mistaken for a boy! It didn't just happen the once, but all the time. I felt embarrassed and not noticed for the person I was.

Psalms 139:1 reassures us that, 'You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.' How wonderful to know that we are fully loved and known by our creator God. How can we extend this sense of being known and loved into our church settings? At Messy Church, hospitality is one of our core values and starts even before someone walks through the door.

While posters, flyers and social media posts are great adverts, there's something different about being invited individually to a gathering. It shows you've been noticed. Even tagging someone on social media who's liked a post is a way of noticing someone digitally. Perhaps the thing that might introduce someone to your church is by offering transport or to arrange to

come together, as nobody likes to be on their own at a party, even less at a church event.

On the day, some Messy Churches have team members out on the street, welcoming people in. As being known by name is so important (and for those that remember faces and not names, like me), having name badges for everyone (not just the children), really helps. It's so much easier then to introduce a new family to another group.

In today's culture, it turns out my parents were ahead of the game, giving me a gender ambiguous name that could be from a variety of cultures (Japan, Germany, Nigeria). My top tip if you are introduced to someone with an



unusually written name is to humbly ask, 'How would you like me to pronounce your name, please?' Then make sure you say the name aloud at least three times to fix it in your brain. When I've forgotten (yet again), I say, 'I'm really sorry, I want to get this right, as your name is important – please can you remind me?'

Save the date!  
Merry Church  
Conference:  
20–22 June 2025

Have you ever been to the Merry Church Conference? Last held in 2022, it's a brilliant chance to gather together with Merry Church leaders from around the world to share inspiration and ideas and celebrate all things Merry. We'll be gathering together at High Leigh Conference Centre from 20–22 June 2025. Time to get the date in your diary! Keep an eye on the Merry Church website and social media for updates.

If we're honest, there are people in our lives we find it hard to like. Some we like, connect with easily, and some we're indifferent to. Some we find it impossible to like, no matter how hard we try.

Yet Jesus taught and modelled to love everyone regardless of whether we like them. Why? Because every person has worth. Every person is important to God. To love them isn't easy, but as I look at the story arc of the Bible, I see God teaching his people to do exactly that. If we look to Jesus and ask for his sustaining Spirit's help, we can learn how to love others.

Harmony and unity can, at times, feel impossible to achieve – in families, teams, churches and workplaces. Unity is NOT uniformity, and by nature we're drawn to those like us, and we're more guarded towards those we're different to. The apostle Paul urged the Corinthian and Ephesian disciples to 'make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit' (Ephesians 4:3) and to strive for restoration and unity (2 Corinthians 13:11) – because he knew these things don't come easily to us – even in the church, or a Christian workplace.

It's one reason the people in our lives are important. Difference is such a gift! The beautiful tapestry of difference in the

people around us shapes us to become healthier, better versions of ourselves – if we allow it. When we enable everyone's voice to be heard, and if we value others experience as much as our own, we learn and grow, and we increasingly reflect Jesus in our interactions.

This is why it's a privilege to work in the people profession. People are inherently important and have value. People – I love them. And sometimes I don't. And when I don't, God reminds me that they're important to him and need to be important to me. I hope you're reminded today to look afresh at the people God has put around you and to notice how valuable and important they are.



# The power of an introduction



I was a Parenting for Faith ‘punter’ many years before I joined the team. Back when I was a new parent, my sister-in-law mentioned how moved and challenged she had been by Rachel Turner’s excellent book *Parenting Children for a Life of Faith*.

I didn’t read it myself at that stage, but

a few years later I was contacted by Anna Hawken to ask whether I’d review the book and course on my Christian parenting blog. You could say I became a bit of a fan at that point: our mums’ group has done the course three times, and I’ve now read most of the Parenting for Faith titles!

When I asked other Parenting for Faith fans how they heard of us, it was fascinating to hear the variety of answers:

*‘Through a Google search in 2020. It was love at first sight.’*

*‘A Facebook search for help with Sunday school!’*

*‘Through a friend recommending the Parenting as a Church Leader course.’*

*‘My wonderful boss and friend took me to the Forge [retreat for children’s, youth and family leaders]. Changed my ministry completely!’*

When you’ve found something good it’s natural to want to share it with others you think would appreciate it. After all, they might not have seen the trailers, or heard others talk about it. How will they know if you don’t tell them? So, if your life has been impacted by BRF Ministries, don’t leave it to chance: tell someone else who would want to know!

That nephew who’s currently a youth intern at his church – does he know about Parenting for Faith? Your church leader who’s exploring creative ways to reach into the community – does she know about Messy Church? Your friend who is increasingly concerned for older folk nearby and is wondering how to help – does she know about Anna Chaplaincy? That new Christian at church who’s eager to read the Bible – does he know about the wide range of Living Faith resources available for him?

If you don’t tell them – who will? Maybe your introduction will be the start of a beautiful relationship!

**Lucy Rycroft**  
Parenting for Faith lead

## Messy Church sponsors the Green Church Awards!

Messy Church is proud to be an official sponsor of this year’s Church Times Green Church Awards. The awards have two objectives: to celebrate the remarkable efforts made in recent years by individuals and congregations to offset the damage being done to the earth, and to set good examples before others who might be inspired to follow suit. These aims chime perfectly with the work of Messy Church Goes Wild, as Messy Church lead Aike Kennett-Brown explains:

*‘Messy Church has been a trailblazer in mission and we are passionate that Christian faith is lived out with respect to care for creation. Education and training are the heart of understanding the problems of climate emergency. Messy Church Goes Wild, our initiative to help churches address our environmental responsibilities, offers people of all ages the chance to take their part in changing behaviours and attitudes, providing the opportunity to encounter God through nature. These awards raise awareness of the urgency of climate change but give churches an opportunity to respond positively to the challenges. The more we can share our experiences and care for God’s world around us, the greater the impact.’*

Watch out for more developments in the coming weeks. There are seven categories and entries close on **30 June 2024**.

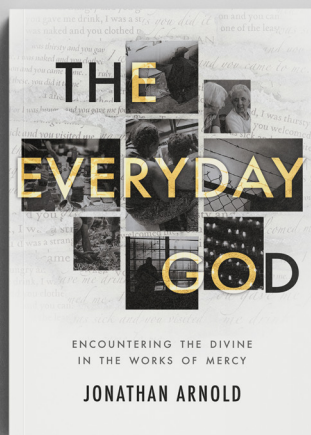
To find out more and enter your Messy Church, or other green initiative for the award, go to [churchtimes.co.uk/green-church](https://churchtimes.co.uk/green-church)

## PARENTING TEENS FOR A LIFE OF FAITH

This brand-new course from Parenting for Faith is perfect for churches to run for their parents of teens and tweens. You can download and run it yourself from our website – or why not join our hosted course instead? It runs on six Tuesday evenings, starting 4 June, from 8.00–9.00 pm BST. Simply book on, invite parents, be ready to get discussion going in your breakout room and we’ll do the rest!

To book go to: [parentingforfaith.org/parenting-teenagers](https://parentingforfaith.org/parenting-teenagers)





# The Everyday God



We're excited to publish *The Everyday God* by Jonathan Arnold. Launched on 24 May, it's a book borne out of Jonathan's experience of a variety of innovative and creative social justice projects in the diocese of Canterbury. Through a tapestry of real-life stories, he unveils the power of practical faith, illustrating how it can ignite transformation among the homeless, refugees, the poor and vulnerable, imprisoned and marginalised, as well as those living with dementia, disability and disease. But what was his starting point?

In many ways *The Everyday God* is a product of the Covid pandemic. A few months before lockdown I had taken up a position directing a diocesan department engaged with community outreach, social justice and environmental action, working with refugees, the homeless and the marginalised, in south-east England and northern France. As you can imagine, lockdown had a profound effect upon this work. The absence of community activity and encounter prompted me to reflect upon how God is active in our everyday lives, in our pain, our loss, our suffering. But also in our joy, hope, anxiety, boredom, loneliness, drudgery, contentment, in the everyday. I began to reflect upon Christ's humble and sacrificial life of service, teaching and

healing, which suggested to me that Jesus most especially identified with the poor, the oppressed and the suffering.

And so, I set to work writing about how we can connect with, participate in and be 'in tune' with the divine action of God in the world, with some help from the vocabulary of music. Concepts and images from the musical world form a metaphorical backdrop to the stories and theological reflections. As the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote, 'Christ plays in ten thousand places, lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his.'

*The Everyday God* explores, through an extended biblical reflection upon Matthew 25:34-44, how works of social and environmental justice and mercy have helped transform people's lives.

Through true stories of everyday lives lived courageously and generously in the service of one another, *The Everyday God* shares observations of lives transformed through the dedication of ordinary people seeking to follow Christ. Through projects with the homeless, refugees, the poor and vulnerable, imprisoned and marginalised, as well as those living with dementia, disability or disease, I reflect upon Jesus's words in Matthew's gospel that we are called to feed the hungry, clothe the naked (shelter the homeless), give drink to the thirsty, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned and welcome the stranger. I also include the traditional work of mercy concerning burying the dead and an additional work of mercy: to care for the planet.

I hope readers will find the book helps to break down the barriers, in our minds and in our society, between the privileged and the oppressed, the rich and the poor, the benefactors and the beneficiaries of charity. And that to live fully as a Christian is to see and hear where God is acting, whether inside or outside our churches, and to join in. This is the true *Missio Dei* and our mission on this earth.

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 support our work.

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



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