



11 January, 2017

News:

'A growing need for Night Shelters'

Nearly 2,000 people were welcomed into church and community based Winter Night Shelters across England and Wales in 2015, according to a new report by the National Christian homeless charity Housing Justice - and that number is expected to rise

In its fourth year of reporting activity, the Housing Justice Night Shelter Impact Report demonstrates the contribution made by churches and faith communities when it comes to Night Shelters and the guests they serve.

The shelters typically run between November and March and involve a circuit of churches, community groups and places of worship of different faiths and denominations, each taking a designated night of the week to provide shelter on their premises to between 12 and 35 guests. Each shelter provides an evening meal and a bed for the night, and breakfast in the morning.

The latest report shows homeless guests were accommodated in more than 500 venues last winter, with more expected in this current season.

A total of 1,920 guests visited the night shelters during the 2015 season, a slight reduction in the number of the previous year of 2,171, with anecdotal evidence that this is partially because some guests are staying for longer.

The report shows volunteers gave 490,063 hours to church and community night shelters; an average of 14,850 hours per shelter. This is an increase of more than 112 per cent on the previous year.

The estimated value of the time according to these figures is £6,174,805, based on ONS average earnings.

The night shelters do more than just provide a welcome and basic accommodation. More than 500 (506) of the guests moved on from the night shelter into their own home and 137 of them found formal employment.

Whilst regretful of the need for Night Shelters, Housing Justice is seeking to give thanks for the work of thousands of volunteers across the country.

The Rt Revd James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester and Chair of Housing Justice Trustees, said:

'This report highlights the continuing and growing need for Night Shelters. While this fact is no cause for celebration – rather the opposite – it is very good that an increasing number of Shelters have sought the Housing Justice Quality Mark over the last 12 months. The Night Shelters team at Housing Justice supports and equips local faith communities across England and Wales to offer the highest possible quality of provision. The team looks forward to awarding the Quality Mark to more projects in the coming months.

'Each Night Shelter is an expression of God's love in action, providing dignity for the most vulnerable in our communities. I am deeply grateful to all those volunteers who give of themselves so willingly through the work of the Shelters. They work unsociable hours, offering food, shelter and other practical care; they embody love for neighbour and generosity of heart.

'Whatever the politics around homelessness, the church's calling puts Christians at the centre of this loving service.'

New Team Leader for Eastern Baptist Association

The Revd Beth Powney, currently the minister of Sandy Baptist Church in Bedfordshire and a former occupational therapist, will take up her appointment on 1 September 2017

She will succeed the Revd Richard Lewis, who is retiring in the summer, and will work alongside the current Regional Ministers, the Revds Simon Goddard and Nick Lear.

The EBA shared the news to its churches in December.

'This is an exciting and important time in the life of the Association,' said Linda Turner, moderator of the Association. 'Beth's skills complement those of the other regional ministers and together they will lead the Association into the new missional phase of its life.'

There was 'a real sense of God working in and through our conversations' at the end of the day of interviews, added a member of the nominating panel.

'As we went round the group for the final time, God had spoken through his people, and there was an overwhelming sense of God directing in the nomination, and subsequent appointment, of Beth as the EBA Regional Minister Team Leader.

'I am truly excited by what I have heard and seen, and believe wholeheartedly that Beth will bring the best out of Simon and Nick and together they will form a very strong Regional team, continuing on the excellent work of previous Regional Ministers.

'Thank you for your prayers for us – God heard and answered.'

Beth is no stranger to the Association. She moved to Essex with husband Stephen in 1980, where she worked as an occupational therapist for the NHS. The couple became members of Billericay Baptist Church as their family grew.

In 2001 she was called by God into full time Christian ministry, accepting the role of Gap Year Co-ordinator with Viz-A-Viz ministries.

'I had a delightful and exciting seven years with them as I worked both with the young people on their Gap year and more widely with the leadership of the charity,' she said.

In 2008 God led Beth into pastoral ministry, and she started training with Spurgeon's College to become an ordained minister. It was at this time that the family moved from Billericay to Sandy Baptist Church.

'In local church ministry in Sandy I have loved working with our community, with the other churches across this rural area, as well as forming relationships with many people who are seeking to grow in their knowledge of Jesus,' Beth said.

'God has been good to us here, but the time is right to move on and see what new challenges lie ahead.

'I look forward to what the future may hold as we work together to further God's kingdom across the diverse region of the EBA.'

New Year's Honours for Baptists

A church secretary who founded a youth charity, and a charity supporter whose work has made a difference to 'thousands of vulnerable lives' were among the Baptists receiving New Year's Honours recognition

Stuart Cornwell - OBE

Stuart Cornwell of Stockton Baptist Tabernacle was made an OBE (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) for his services to charity.

Stuart is the chairman of Spurgeons', the national children's charity, and is particularly involved with A Way Out, which focuses on vulnerable women, and Safe

Families for Children. He also works with the church's overseas mission to Kenya and Uganda among Aids-orphaned children and prisoners.

After a varied working life which included a career path in the Navy and senior appointments in the probation service and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, Stuart said he wanted his retirement to be 'meaningful'.

He added that his faith underpins his work.

'What I do in supporting these charities is part of the calling God has given me,' he said in an interview with Premier Christian Radio. 'Each of the charities I worked with has a Christian identity and ethos, and in its service attempts to be honouring to God in all it has done.'

'The greatest award I have is to know the Lord Jesus Christ and to know that I have eternal life. That supercedes any of this, although this is still exciting and meaningful.'

'The important thing for me was to not retire, but to continue to serve the Lord in whichever way I could, and that goes on.'

In a statement, Spurgeons' said Stuart's work over the last decade has made a difference to 'thousands of vulnerable lives', both here in the UK and overseas.

Ross Hendry, Spurgeons' chief executive, said, 'The team at Spurgeons is delighted to see Stuart's dedication and hard work within the charity sector recognised with such a prestigious honour.'

'He has worked tirelessly to support not just us, but also that of a number of other organisations, to help the world's poorest and most vulnerable children. This honour is most definitely well deserved.'

The charity celebrates its 150th birthday in 2017.

Clive Furness - BEM

Baptist church secretary and local councillor Clive Furness was awarded a BEM (British Empire Medal) in this year's honours.

The BEM is awarded for 'hands-on' service to the community through charitable or voluntary activity. Clive, Clive secretary of Memorial Community Church in Plaistow and a Newham councillor since 1997, has been honoured for making 'a significant difference to the lives of young people' in Newham, said a council statement.

He is the founder, secretary and trustee of youth charity The Swift Centre next door to the church. The Swift Centre runs a number of regular clubs and activities that broaden the horizons of young people. These include football festivals, performing

arts and dance programmes, cycling challenges and weekend outdoor expeditions. There is also an annual summer camp and aid missions to far flung parts of the world including Kenya, Ethiopia and Nepal. More than half of the adult volunteers at the centre are former young members.

In addition to his youth work he helped to set up Newham Night Shelter in the early 1990s. Previously he was a barrister giving free representation on employment and immigration tribunals, and has been a trustee at Helping Hands and Real Life Parenting, for families with disabled children.

He told the Newham Recorder, 'I have pleasure in accepting the award not just for me, but also in recognition of the hard work and sacrifices that so many others, including my partner Jill, have made and continue to make to ensure young people are safe and healthy and have the best start in life.'

Mayor of Newham, Sir Robin Wales, said Clive's BEM was "thoroughly deserved".

'He has given outstanding service to the residents of Newham not just as a councillor but also over many years through his dedicated work in support of young people. We can all be delighted for him,' he said.

Mexborough Baptist Church

- **The Memory Café, was launched in October 2016 in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Society**
- **They take worship out of the church and into the community**
- **A long-standing volunteer received Senior Volunteer of the Year Award from Doncaster Council**

At the YBA we love to hear stories from our churches! One of our Home Mission-supported churches in South Yorkshire – Mexborough Baptist Church – has been really inspirational over the last year in the way the church has connected with its community and is building on those links.

Pastor Denise Lancaster (pictured) takes up the story:

"It's so exciting being a Home Mission church. We're acutely aware of our restrictions and, frustratingly at times, lack of funds to grow God's kingdom on Windhill in Mexborough. Yet the Great Commission is to the small and large church alike, the same commission whether we're rich or poor, and to the best of our ability we connect with our community, businesses and organisations in the town.

"The Memory Café, which launched in October 2016 in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Society, is going well. As a church, we felt it was our moral duty to help a group who have no money to spend on rent, and let them use our building for a year

rent-free. One of our members, a retired nurse, is being trained as a volunteer with the Alzheimer's Society, and will be our link person with the Memory Café."

The Memory Café

Denise says she had also been invited to present Christingle services in two mental health rehabilitation centres.

"This is the fourth year I've been asked to do this. I took one person from church with me to each of the services and it was great to be able to share the good news of Christmas with the patients and pray with those who asked for prayer.

"For Advent Sunday the Scout leaders, with the help of 25 pieces of card and a washing line, took us through 25 aspects of Advent – the adventure of expectation looking forward to Christmas.

And Mexborough Funeral Service - interested in our Advent theme - offered to donate Advent calendars for all the children."

Some of the calendars were shared at another of the church's ministries, continued Denise.

"We had some calendars left, and took these to our monthly service at a supported housing complex and repeated the 25 days of Advent with the residents. After this we were all treated to fruit cake and cheese by one of our regular attenders. We've been leading the service for a couple of years now. It came about because one of our members is a resident there and can no longer come to church. We approached the housing complex to see if we could bring the service to him and any others who might be interested.

"The small group of residents call it their church and it's interesting how it's developed. One regular attender made a wooden cross, others the communion tray - and others provide the tea, coffee and cake. They really own it, and one gentleman who, due to his condition hadn't been to church for so long, looks forward to church every month. He felt alone and abandoned, hardly ever visited by those he thought were his friends. He meets with one of our team every week who has taken him on a journey of finding Christ for himself.

"We have the church's Christmas dinner at the same supported housing complex and this time 66 people attended - the largest proportion from the Royal British Legion (I was asked to lead the British Legion Remembrance service at the Mexborough War Memorial this year). There was also a group from our own Scout leaders, plus people from the supported housing and our own church people. It was a great afternoon with quizzes and carols after the dinner.

"Avalunch – the community café which meets at the church – also had their Christmas dinner with about 80 customers, some of whom attended the Christmas

Community Communion as well. Avalunch has recently started supplying lunches to a local day centre. And in 2016, Avabrecky was introduced and is running once a week to provide breakfast to the local community, anything from a slice of toast and a cup of tea to a full English!

"At a recent Doncaster Council for Voluntary Services event, one of our long-standing volunteers, Peter Moore, was recognised and received the Senior Volunteer of the Year Award. We were all so excited by this that we presented the award to him again at the Sunday service!

"We're looking forward to 2017 and to seeing what opportunities the Lord is going to open up for us to let the people of Mexborough know that we are here and, more importantly, that Jesus loves them."

Baptisms

Dover Baptist Church, Kent: Carolyn Dixon

Paignton Baptist Church, Devon: Linda Axford

Streatham Baptist Church, London: Jennae Lee-Boreland, Hyacinth Smythe, Philippa Angus, Nicoletta Spiriades, Juuko Samuel, Jennifer Sentongo

Tabernacle Baptist Church, Penarth: Daisy Lawrence and Jamie Lawrence

Walsworth Road Baptist Church, Hitchin: Rohan and Julani Goonasekara, Will Henton Pusey

Deaths

WOODS, the Revd Stan

Stan Woods, Pastor to many, went to be with the Lord on 26 October. Many have said how they appreciated and 'enjoyed' his funeral service which was a very fitting tribute to a life well lived and in service to his Lord. More than 300 attended the service from far and wide, including a coachload from Canon Street Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, who also ministered in song.

A tribute was given by his sons Bob and David covering his life which included four pastorates, missionary work in South America and working with the Yorkshire Baptist Association, including his Bible Times exhibition. Of course there were plenty of snippets of family life and a feel for his, and the families, sense of humour.

It goes without saying that Stan impacted so many lives not only here in the UK, but worldwide. He had a real Pastor's heart with the passion of an evangelist.

After 61 years of marriage Stan is survived by his wife Brenda, two sons, four grandchildren and 6 great grand children.

GILLIES, the Revd Thomas Paterson (Tom)

Died 1 January 2017 aged 88 yrs. Beloved husband of Arderne. Formerly Minister of Pinchbeck, Gosberton & Sutterton Baptist Churches in Lincolnshire. Retired and living in Chorleywood. No flowers please but donations if desired to Chorleywood Free Church (Baptist). For details please contact James Peddle Ltd. Funeral Directors, Tel: 01923 286102