

Information Inspiration and Interaction
Connecting Baptist Churches in Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk

Welcome to FOCUS 36

Dear Friends,

A new day is dawning.

As you can see the article on this page announces the appointment of Beth Powney as my successor as Regional Minister - Team Leader. I am personally delighted that Beth has been appointed and she brings to the role her own special gifts. I believe that Beth, Nick and Simon will work well together and bring a new vitality to the life of the Churches of the Association.

Her home church was Billericay BC one of our larger Churches, and for the past eight years she served at Sandy BC in the Central Association, enabling the Church, through her leadership, to rediscover its missional heart.

As I received the news of Beth's nomination and subsequent appointment, my mind was drawn to that verse in Isaiah which says: "Behold I am doing a new thing." The people in Isaiah's day didn't recognise what God was promising to do and in contrast to this, I hope that we will be open to the change that God wants to lead us into as an Association.

Let us embrace and support those who are now being called to serve as Regional Ministers amongst us as together we seek to Grow Healthy Churches in Relationship for God's Mission.



Richard Lewis — Regional Minister — Team Leader

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Association New Regional Minister - Team Leader



The Council & Trustees of the Association are delighted to announce the appointment of Rev Beth Powney as the new Regional Minister – Team Leader in succession to Richard Lewis. Beth will take up her appointment on 1st September 2017. In the meantime she will start to familiarise herself with the Association, although she is no stranger to it in many ways.

Beth has been asked to introduce herself to the Association, so she writes: *I feel privileged, excited, delighted and challenged to be joining the EBA in 2017. Some of you I will already know, but others I will never have met, and I look forward to the opportunity of both rekindling old friendships and developing new ones. So who am I and how has God led me to this point?*

Stephen and I moved to Essex in 1980 when we were first married, when I was working as an Occupation Therapist for the NHS. We soon settled as members of Billericay Baptist Church and there we remained and our family grew as Emma, our daughter came along and Rich our son, in due course, not forgetting my stepsons, regularly visiting. I returned to work as an OT when the children were older, working in a variety of roles for 11 years.

Then in 2001 the Lord called me into fulltime Christian ministry, when I accepted 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. In 2008 God led me into pastoral ministry as I started my training with Spurgeon's College to become an ordained Minister. It was at this time that we moved away from Billericay and came to live in Sandy in Bedfordshire. Here I have served the local Church for the last eight years, seeing God restore and renew 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 the their knowledge of Jesus.

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.

Commenting on Beth's appointment Linda Turner, Moderator of the Association, said: "This is an exciting and important time in the life 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. All of us who were involved in interviewing Beth were struck by how strongly her sense of calling came through in what she said".

Evangelism Training Course

All of us know that Jesus calls us to tell others about Him and feel a burden to share our faith with friends, family and colleagues who don't yet know Jesus. But sharing our faith with others is not something that comes naturally to many of us. So we don't do it and that starts a downward spiral that can further prevent us from sharing our faith: we feel guilty for not sharing our faith and because we have not done it we convince ourselves that we aren't good at it. So because we think we aren't good at it we don't do it. And because we don't do it we feel guilty for not sharing our faith...

The EBA has rewritten a training course that used to be called *How To Talk About Jesus without Bible Bashing* and simply called it *etc (Evangelism Training Course)*. It's a six session course that you are free to use as you feel will be helpful and is available in the have Events and Training Section of the EBA website. In addition to the course notes and handouts for participants there are Power-Point presentations for each of the sessions.

We hope and pray that you will find it useful and that God might use it to reverse the downward spiral and more people might hear the Good News through us.

Reflections on the Calais "Jungle" in May 2016

by Lynsey Heselgrave, Minister, Colchester Baptist Church



On May 1st I joined a group led by Juliet and Jim Kilpin to visit the refugee camp in Calais often known as the 'Jungle'. It's hard to sum up my feelings about the visit. When someone asked me if it had been harrowing, I hesitated for moment, and then they offered me another word, which seemed to fit much more with how I felt – 'Was it surreal?' Yes, it was surreal. How can one minute you be in a slum, which could have been in Africa or the Middle East, and then after a few hours in the car be back in the comfort of your own home? We went on a sunny day and spirits were relatively high amongst many of the people we met, but once conversations started you realised the reality of their situation.

The entrance to St Michael's



At St Michael's Church we shared lunch with those from the Christian community in the camp. Most of them had travelled from Ethiopia by walking across the Sahara before getting on boats for that deadly journey from Libya into Europe and then making another trek across the continent to northern France. These are the people we call 'economic migrants', as if they just want a piece of the pie, but what drives them on that terrible journey is a desperation to escape poverty and famine that we couldn't begin to imagine.

There's lots I could say about the people we met and what we witnessed, about the enterprise, the 'high street' of shops, restaurant and cafes, the 'gym' on the hill where boxing and martial arts training was taking place, the football tournament, the cricket game, the group from the UK who were building a play park in the family area, the beautiful two year old Kurdish boy who put his arms out to me and let me hold him as we talked to his dad about how they felt so much safer here whilst in the background rats scurried around in the rubbish, the double decker bus where women and children

were cared for, the transport containers which the French authorities had provided as homes in a special fenced off area for those pursuing asylum claims in the UK amongst those enormous white boxes, the wasteland which was once part of the camp but had now been cleared more than doubling the density in the other half of the camp as people were forced to move their tents across.



Inside St Michael's

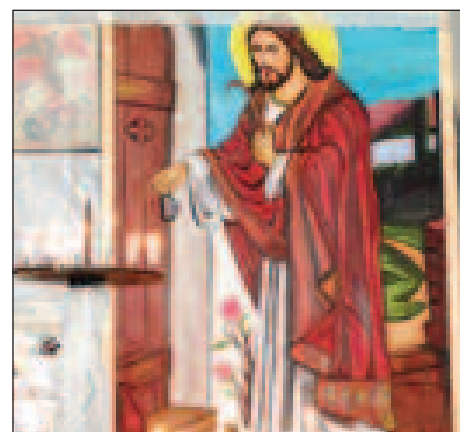
But what I really want to highlight is the church. St Michael's is one of the only structures that remains in that cleared wasteland, having been rebuilt several times. It's the first thing you see as you drive towards the camp, a bright white 'steeple' and cross standing high. And it's possibly the most beautiful church I've been in. We took off our shoes, the ladies covered their heads and we sat silently in the church on what was Easter Day for these Orthodox Christians. There wasn't a morning service, because their ceremonies had happened through the night and at sunrise, and so we were just free to sit, to take it in and to pray. Icons adorned the walls, including a number created by an artist who'd come especially to paint new icons for the church. Most striking was the depiction of Christ knocking at the door which hung directly in front of me. Juliet also pointed out to me the toilet roll wrapped around the

rafters as decoration. After prayers in the church we were treated to a wonderfully generous meal of pancakes, meat and potato, washed down with Coke. And there we had time to chat in the sun and we began to hear the stories of how people had ended up stuck in the 'Jungle' and how they hoped to still one day enter the UK and finish the journey on which they'd set out on many, many months ago.

For now then I'll finish with a reflection that I wrote in my journal as I sat in St Michael's Church...

"Tarpaulin, wood, plastic, loo roll, transformed into the most holy place on earth. This is the church in the Calais 'Jungle' – still standing in a bulldozed wasteland as a sign of life, hope and resurrection. In a community of displaced people this is a sign of another family, another home that we

have been promised and that we can inhabit now. One Father, one Lord, one Spirit. Open our eyes, Lord, to what you do with the plain, ordinary materials of this world – how you make them holy. And help us see our bonds that go deeper than blood, deeper than language, deeper than borders. Across the divides we are untied – brothers and sisters in Christ. Open our hearts to embrace our family and to allow ourselves to be embraced. This is the Kingdom of God."



FIRE CAMP

21st - 25th July 2017

Fire Camp is the collaborative, camping, mini-festival for Baptists and friends on Mersea Island, Essex. It is organised by Baptists in the EBA and open to all.

The 2017 theme is intriguingly called 'Heaven and Earth' and will explore the question, 'What does it look like to welcome Heaven rather than wait for it?'

Tickets are now on sale at: www.firecamp.org.uk

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Training and Events around the region



EBA **Safeguarding Training**

18th February 2017
Shoeburyness and Thorpe
Bay Baptist Church.

25th February 2017
Witard Road Baptist
Church, Norwich

Each session begins with Level 2 at 9.30am and will finish at 12.45pm. Those doing Level 3 bring their lunch. Level 3 begins at 1.30pm and ends at 4.30pm

There is a charge of £10 per person or £40 per church if four or more people from one church attend. This is payable in advance by BACS or by cheque payable to the EBA.

Bookings to Hayley Beckett at:
secretary@easternbaptist.org.uk

EBA Ministers' Conference **High Leigh Conference Centre,** **Hoddesdon.**

20th - 22nd February 2017

Surviving and Thriving in Ministry

Speakers:

Rev. Dr Pat Took,
Former Regional Team Leader, London Baptist
Association and former President of BUGB

Revd. Allan Finnegan, Baptist Minister from
Liverpool and winner of "Hotwater Comedian of
the Year, Liverpool 2015"

Worship Leaders: Stuart and Gill Davidson,
South East Baptist Association

Bookings to: secretary@easternbaptist.org.uk

Let's Get Together!

Eastern Baptist Association Gatherings 2017

Romford Baptist Church
Saturday 10th June 2017.

Cambourne Church, Cambridgeshire
Saturday 24th June 2017.

Keynote Speaker: Revd Chris Duffett, The Light Project

Norwich Central Baptist Church
Saturday 22nd July 2017.

Keynote Speakers : Revd. Dianne Tidball, BUGB President;
Revd. Lynn Green, BUGB General Secretary;
Revd. Richard Lewis, outgoing Regional Minister/Team Leader

**The Gathering at Norwich Central Baptist Church will include the AGM
of the Association and the farewell to Revd. Richard Lewis, as Regional Minister/Team Leader.**