

New General Secretary inducted

THE Revd Lynn Green has been inducted as the new General Secretary of our Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Guests from all over the UK travelled to the West Midlands to share in the uplifting service at Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church on Sunday.

The service saw Mrs Green (pictured, alongside Paul Hills and Ernie Whalley) make a series of induction promises relating to her new role. Promises to support her ministry were in turn made by her husband Stuart, members of the Transitional Steering Group, and church, Association and college representatives. Ecumenical guests were also invited to share in the promises.

Her new ministry was then prayed for as she was surrounded on stage by friends, family and people representing the life of our Union, which deliberately included young people and children.

Following this she was then declared, to much applause, 'inducted to the office of General Secretary of our Union' by current BUGB president the Revd Ernie Whalley.

Mrs Green shared something of her personal journey, thanking 'all the churches that have allowed me to practise on them' and stressing her reliance on God and openness to His calling.



She had not pursued the role, she said, but her name had been put forward as a potential General Secretary by colleagues she trusted. At the same time her family had begun the process of becoming special guardians for two young girls.

The two paths seemed to be 'mutually exclusive', she said, and there followed a period of 'waiting and deep trust'. In May, both were confirmed.

'What has enabled me to embrace this role?' she said. 'It is undoubtedly from God.' She asked those present to keep praying 'and I will try my very best to be faithful to God's call.'

The induction covenant was shared, with churches encouraged to share it with their congregations at an appropriate moment.

The two hour service featured

a range of worship songs, led by the Revd Dave Ellis, minister of Small Heath Baptist Church and a TSG member. Chosen by Mrs Green's family, they ranged from Be Thou My Vision to modern worship songs such as 10 Reasons (Bless the Lord) and the Rend Collective Experiment's Come Set Your Rule and Reign.

The Revd Paul Hills, regional minister team leader of the Eastern Baptist Association, (and a former minister of Mrs Green before she herself became a minister) delivered the sermon, with John 15: 1-17 as the text.

He based the address around the theme "I chose you" (v 16). To be chosen means to be affirmed, is a sense of privilege and shows God values us - but we must remain in Him, Mr Hills said. Urging prayer for Mrs Green and her family, he encouraged those present to tell their congregation that something has changed, that this is a new beginning for our Union.

'This has been a fantastic service,' he said, 'please tell people something different has happened here, something unique. I sense it's something more than just a human endeavour. God's sovereign will is happening.'

Addressing Mrs Green, he said 'Lynn, God says I have chosen you for this time, for His purposes.'

Reaction to Pakistan church bombing

THE double suicide bombing at a church in Peshawar on Sunday has been widely condemned – and Pakistan's authorities urged to offer more protection to its religious minorities.

More than 80 people were killed and 120 injured when suicide bombers detonated two devices at All Saints' Church in Peshawar, in north-west Pakistan, as hundreds of worshippers were leaving its morning service at midday.

The attack has 'broken the hearts of God's people in Pakistan', according to partners of Release International, which serves persecuted Christians around the world.

'Release is appalled by this latest onslaught against ordinary Christians in Pakistan,' said chief executive Paul Robinson. 'Our hearts and our prayers go out to the victims.'

The double bombing has been claimed by militant groups said to be linked to the Pakistani Taliban. They claim to be acting in response to the ongoing, US-led drone attacks in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and have pledged to continue targeting 'non-Muslims' until the campaign ceases.

Nationwide protests have taken place, with both the Christian community and civil society more widely condemning the attacks and criticising the provincial government, led by Imran Khan's party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Criticism has centred on the failure to provide adequate protection for religious minorities or to tackle religious intolerance effectively.

Christians make up less than three per cent of Pakistan's 180 million people.

Mervyn Thomas, chief executive of Christian Solidarity Worldwide, said 'there can be no justification for killing of this kind.'

He added, 'We support the country-wide calls for those responsible to be held accountable and for both the provincial PTI government and the federal government to implement measures for increased security around minority places of worship.'

'We urge the PTI government to promote dialogue to counteract the deeply misguided view that Christians are agents of the West and somehow therefore constitute legitimate targets.'

'We further urge the federal government to challenge and punish those who spread messages of division and violence along religious or sectarian lines.'

Senseless killing's role in Civil Rights Act

A CONGRESSIONAL Gold Medal has been awarded posthumously to four young black girls who lost their lives in the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, on 15 September, 1963.

The senseless, premature deaths of Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley as they prepared for Sunday school galvanised the civil rights movement, and sparked a surge of momentum that helped secure the enactment of both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

A Congressional Medal is an award bestowed by the United States Congress and is



the highest civilian award in the United States.

'The 16th Street Baptist Church remains a powerful symbol of the movement for civil and human rights, and the ultimate sacrifices made by these girls are emblematic of many others who have lost their lives for the causes of freedom and equality,' said a spokesman for

the United States Mint, which designs the medals.

The design features the silhouette of four young girls, with the words: *Pivotal in the struggle for equality.*

The reverse depicts a view of the 16th Street Baptist Church with the quote: *Killed in the bombing of the 16th St Baptist Church.*

Exploring the labyrinth

A church's contribution to its town arts festival proved surprisingly popular, Jenny Few reports

Every year for three weeks in September, Wirksworth stages an arts, architecture, drama and music festival that has increased in size, scope and popularity over the years.

Crowds of people visit the Derbyshire town, especially the first weekend for the Art and Architecture Trail, which is a glorious mix of art exhibitions, photographic displays, and interesting sculptures in curious places, such as people's gardens and kitchens, shop windows, and every public space there is.

For local people it's a glorious opportunity to see into houses and gardens that are normally not open to the public. All the churches are involved, providing venues for art or quilting or photographs, as well as offering refreshments and good loo!

This year, some members of the newly combined Methodist and Baptist congregations (Wirksworth and Bonsall Baptist Church) wanted to do something else as well. The Methodist sanctuary, where the joint congregation worships, has a carpet and chairs which can be moved to provide a wonderful sacred space, just right for the East Midlands Baptist Association prayer labyrinth.



It was offered as a 'spiritual art installation' for visitors whose senses were being bombarded by images and sounds all over the town, and who might welcome an alternative experience: quiet, reflective, sacred, a means of being close to God.

We had no idea how many people would climb the steps to the church, attracted by the posters, so we produced about 30 specially written leaflets, as well as more specifically Christian meditations, lit the candles, put on the Taizé CD and waited.

To say we were overwhelmed is an understatement; the leaflet was reprinted many times during the day and we estimate that over 250 people spent time in the church. Not all became pilgrims, walking the labyrinth's convoluted, symbolic pathway, but many who did were moved to write a prayer or words of thanks.

Some were moved to tears,

others said how much it had helped them. It was probably the only quiet place in the town, and many people sat for a long time, shoes off, reading the leaflet, listening to the music.

We had not thought enough about children! Some who came in with their families wanted to treat the Labyrinth like a parachute game; one little boy delighted in blowing out all the candles, others were noisy. But some walked intently round the white lines, and knelt or sat in the centre.

It was a last minute idea, and if we repeat it next year, we will be better prepared. But what has awed and delighted us is that for many visitors and locals alike, it was a meaningful experience of the presence of God, in keeping with the spirit of the Festival.

The Revd Jenny Few is a Baptist minister

THE Revd Simon Goddard has been appointed to serve as a Regional Minister of the Eastern Baptist Association

Mr Goddard, minister of Lode Baptist Chapel in Cambridge, will serve the Central Sector of the Association. The announcement was made by the Eastern Baptist Association Council, which had been authorised by the Association Assembly

in June 2013 to act on their behalf.

The interview panel and Council members were 'unanimous' in their decision, and 'look forward to the future and the gifts, skills and enthusiasm that Simon will bring to the team and the wider Association.'

The appointment will commence on 1 January 2014.

CS Lewis lecture

NEW Road Baptist Church in Oxford is to host the annual public lecture of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship, which this year focuses on CS Lewis.

2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the death of the writer and scholar.

Dr Michael Ward, Senior Research Fellow at Blackfriars Hall, University of Oxford and author of *Planet Narnia*, will be the guest speaker.

Dr Ward's talk will be entitled *Imagination, Reason, Will: A Perspective on the Legacy of C.S. Lewis*.

He will try to form an overview of Lewis's legacy, focussing not on particular works but on his general approach to the life of the mind and the life of faith.

Graham Hedges, Secretary of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship, said, 'C.S. Lewis is well known as a writer of children's fantasy novels, science fiction, popular theology and as a scholar of English literature. We are pleased to be celebrating his contribution.'

The lecture is to be held on Saturday 19 October 2013 in the New Road Baptist Church, Bonn Square, Oxford, OX1 1LQ, from 2.30 – 4.45pm.

Admission is free and there is no need to book in advance. Further details of the lecture, and the wider work of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship, can be obtained from The Secretary, Graham Hedges, 34 Thurlstone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU or 020 8599 1310, www.librarianscfc.org.uk

JOBS

New jobs posted on www.baptist.org.uk

Ecumenical Facilitator and Social Justice/Inter Faith Development Officer, Churches Together in Lancashire (Two half-time posts)

Regional Minister, Eastern Baptist Association

For more on these posts visit www.baptist.org.uk/jobs

NOTICES

The contact details for **BUILD**, the Baptist Union Initiative with people with Learning Disabilities, have changed.

For enquiries please contact buckinghamdames@gmail.com. Previous addresses are no longer in use.

For more visit the website at www.build-together.org.uk

The latest edition of the audio ministry **Baptist Voice** is now available to listen or to download.

To listen, visit: <http://bit.ly/1b5DtGX>

To download, visit: <http://bit.ly/19zeczC>

INDUCTION

At West Bromwich Baptist Church in the Heart of England Baptist Association, Michael Woodall was ordained as a Baptist minister on Saturday 7 September. Following the ordination he was inducted as minister to West Bromwich Baptist Church. Regional Minister Revd Adrian Argile conducted the Ordination and Induction Services.

His ministry commenced the following day with a baptismal service where the candidates were Mrs Moira Ann Steel and Miss Michelle Bird.

BAPTISMS

Albany Park Baptist Church, Bexley: Helen Alliston 1
Amesbury Baptist Church, Wiltshire: Tony Bevis, Sarah Ballard, Jessica Lewis 3
Bridgnorth Baptist Church, Shropshire: Bertie Saad, Tom Ford, Mark & Susie Triggs 3
Colne Avenue Baptist Church, Southampton: Margaret Boyt 1
Cornerstone Baptist Church, Oswestry: Georgia-Louise Lawson; Kathryn Gregg 2
Holly Lodge Baptist Church, Ipswich: Lorna Cameron 1
Milford on Sea Baptist Church, Hampshire: Robert Haddow and Lara Hellsten 2
Monmouth Baptist Church: Jeff Bowman, Fabi Lorenz 2
Potters Bar Baptist Church, Hertfordshire: Clodagh Davidson 1
Thatcham Baptist Church, Berkshire: Sue Corp 1
West Bromwich Baptist Church: Moira Ann Steel and Michelle Bird 2

Send notifications of baptisms, ministerial changes, deaths and testimonies to editor@baptisttimes.co.uk