



Updates and Horizons

October 2022



St Paul's
DORKING

Bishop Jo's new role. We are delighted to report that our own Bishop of Dorking, Rt Rev Bishop Jo Bailey Wells, has been appointed to a newly created post: **Bishop for Episcopal Ministry in the Anglican Communion.**

This new post was created following the recent Lambeth Conference, which is held every ten years. It was attended by around 650 bishops from around the world who took part in worship, prayer and Bible studies, and discussions on a range of issues facing the church and the world, including mission and evangelism, discipleship, climate change and the environment, science and faith, safeguarding, and human dignity. Participants say that relationships across the Anglican Communion have been rejuvenated as a result of the gathering.



One unplanned outcome of the Lambeth Conference was a boost to the Anglican Communion's Companion Link programme – partnerships between individual dioceses with other dioceses in different parts of the world.

The new post was agreed by the Anglican Communion's Standing Committee when it met in London earlier this month. The post is designed to "foster a collaborative, engaged, enriched fellowship among the bishops of the Anglican Communion, inspiring ever greater companionship, learning and interchange between provinces," the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, the Right Revd Anthony Poggo, said.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, said: "This year's Lambeth Conference has been remarkable in renewing friendships, relationships and connections across the Anglican Communion. The appointment of Bishop Jo Bailey Wells to this new post will take advantage of the renewed determination of bishops to unite in living out our call – in our many cultures – to be God's Church for God's World. For more information, read this [press-release Oct 22](#)



Providing Support to Syrian Christians.

Christians in Syria still grapple with daily persecution, despite the public threat from so-called Islamic State having largely subsided. In areas where Islamic extremist groups are active, any public expression of faith is dangerous. Sharing the gospel is very risky, and church buildings have often been completely destroyed. The abduction of church leaders continues to have a considerably negative impact on Christian communities.

Meet Pastor Edward, who runs a Centre of Hope in Damascus.

"It's very important for us, as Middle Eastern people, to see the church stay. The church was bleeding," says Pastor Edward, looking back at the decade of persecution, war and pandemic that continues to have a severe impact. "We lost



over 60 per cent of our members; they left Syria. It was so hard. Many of them had positions of leadership in the church.”

All Syrians have experienced hardship in the past decade, but Christians have faced more than most. In many regions, they were targeted by Islamic militants – losing their jobs, their homes and even their lives. Many had to flee, displaced either within Syria or abroad. Those who stayed either had no choice, or decided – like Pastor Edward – to courageously remain with the church.



That’s exactly what he has done ever since. At Pastor Edward’s Centre of Hope in Damascus, a lot of community connection was fostered by distributing emergency food and medicine. “The church has distributed relief items to the neediest. We brought love and care to the people in need, in the name of Christ. We are the ambassadors of Christ in the country.”

[Pastor Edward- Open Doors](#)

Is it getting easier to be a Christian in Syria?

Syria has dropped three places on the Open Doors World Watch List of countries where Christians are most persecuted to number 15 ([World Watch List 2022 - Open Doors](#)), and this is largely due to a decrease in violence. Praise God, there were no reports of Christians being killed for their faith in the past year (compared to nine in the year before). But pressure remains extreme on Christians, and there was an increase in the number of church attacks and Christians arrested for their faith – so our Syrian family still need our prayers.



Sadly, the founder of Open Doors, Brother Andrew, died on 27 September 2022 (aged 94). He was born **Anne van der Bijl** although he was known in English-speaking countries as Brother Andrew. He was a Christian missionary born in 1928

in Sint Pancras, the Netherlands, and noted for his exploits in smuggling bibles into communist countries at the height of the Cold War. For his activities, he earned the nickname "God's Smuggler". He was often described as the founder of [Open Doors](#) but referring to him as this could lead people to picture him as a suit-wearing executive who delivered presentations in a boardroom. That couldn't be further from the truth, as Brother Andrew was Open Door's chief adventurer and lead risk taker. May he rest in peace. For the story of his life, see [Brother Andrew story Open Doors](#).



While Open Doors is one of St Paul's Mission Partners, thereby receiving financial support from St Paul's outward giving fund, you can still help those struggling in Syria via your home group or personally.

Please take part in our Samara collection of filled school bags for Syrian children. The completed bags should be delivered to St Paul's porch, from where they will be taken to Samara's headquarters on 31st October. There are other opportunities to help with financial donations, e.g. transport costs, [Samara Appeal 2022](#).





A Life impacted by the work of New Hope

Stephen made it to 8th grade in Primary school, but Secondary school seemed elusive when his brother was diagnosed with diabetes and required medical treatment. His parents could only afford to send the first born to school and even he had to drop out of school as medical bills rose. Younger son Stephen had no option but to find casual work to help the family.

Stephen had a thirst for education, and he was misled into thinking that someone was going to pay his school fees. When this did not materialise, he felt that his life had no meaning and tried to commit suicide. Thankfully, his mother found him and told him not to give up. Someone heard his story and directed him to New Hope. New Hope took Stephen through secondary school; all they asked of him was that he worked hard, which he was keen to do. Stephen completed secondary school and was then able to move on to study nursing thanks to the generous support of a Hand in Hand* donor. Now a fully trained nurse with responsibilities of managing the night shift team, Stephen goes on to work hard doing further studies and assisting his family, New Hope and others whenever he can. His life has truly been transformed and is transforming others.

*Hand in Hand is a Christian charity based in Chelmsford with whom we co-operate in supporting New Hope. [New Hope- Hand in Hand](#)



Dale Taylor in Poland - Many of you will remember Dale Taylor, a former Dorking resident who moved to Poland, where he has lived for many years with his Polish wife and five children. Carlton spoke to him recently about his involvement with Ukrainian refugees, so do watch [Dale Taylor Sept 2022](#)



For information about any of the above, please contact **St Paul's World Church Team:** Carlton Beasley, Annabel Blanch, Sally Hulbert, Jonathan Papworth, Elizabeth Shaw and Sue Swain-Fossey worldchurch@stpaulsdorking.org.uk More information about our Mission Partners: [A Rocha - Dave Bookless;](#) [Centre de la Réconciliation - Lille;](#) [New Hope Children's Centre - Kenya;](#) [Jenny and Stuart O;](#) [Oasis, Mumbai - India;](#) [Open Doors - Syria;](#) [Penny and Juan Carlos Marcés - Peru](#)