



## Hearing the Word

*'I'm very aware that when I do an audio book it's for partially sighted and blind people'*

**T**orch's Communications Coordinator Grace Davis recently had the chance to speak with actor David Suchet about his new recording of the NIV Bible, now available on DAISY and MegaVoice....

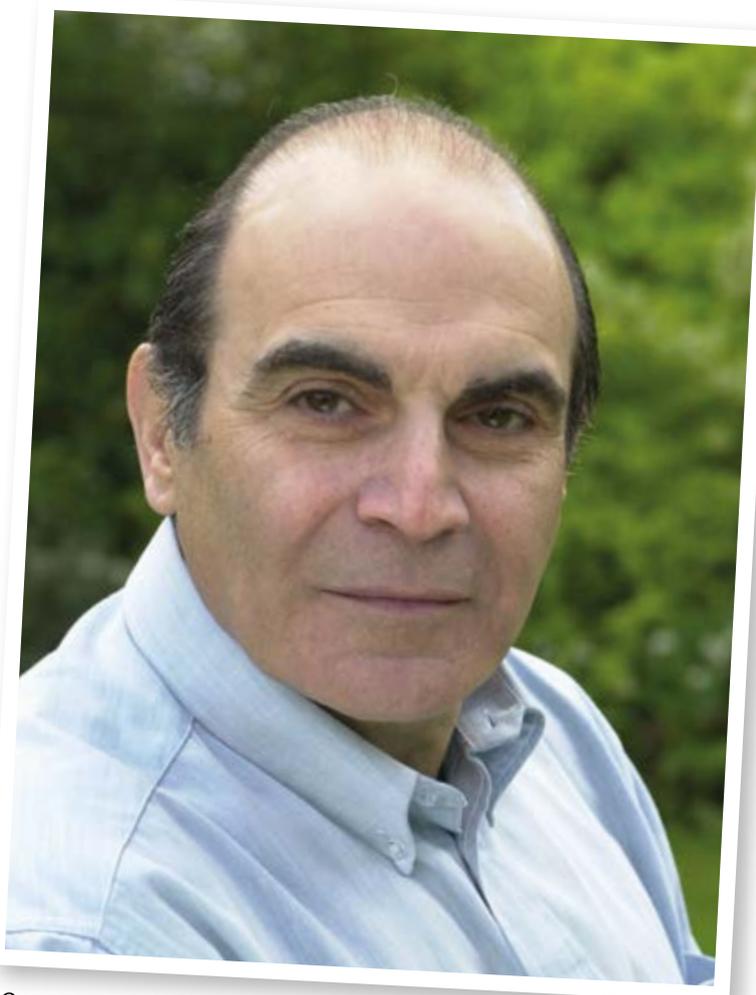
**Grace:** David, why did you want to do this project?

**David:** I think there are a couple of answers to that. One was because as an actor, and for many, many years when I was a young actor, before my Christian conversion in 1986, I've always held the belief that some of the most dramatic and extraordinary stories ever to be written were to be found in the Bible. And I read some of those stories as a young actor; we also read them at drama school every now and again to improve the way we read stories. And it was something that I think began then, and then after my Christian conversion I thought: well you know, I am an actor and I do have a voice, and I understand scripts and texts and it would be a wonderful thing

to get the Bible out of its covers and into the open – hearing the voice of God and hearing the word of the Lord, which is what you keep reading about in the Bible.

**Grace:** And hearing can be so important to people who don't see...

**David:** When you open the Bible and read it you never see the words 'read the word of the Lord' and I think that's because a lot of people for whom the Bible was written were probably illiterate, but what it does say is 'hear the word of the Lord' and there's a great difference between hearing and reading ... the thing about hearing is that you actually take in the sounds and the meaning and the words. When I was recording [the Bible] for example, I was hearing it as well as speaking it which was the most extraordinary



sensation! So those two reasons, a long answer to your question forgive me, but as a young actor the most dramatic stories ever written were in the Bible and I've always wanted to speak it and then as a Christian I wanted to give to the Christian world – and the non-Christian world as well.

**Grace:** And having done this whole project, do you feel like it's given you a fresh sense of what the Bible as a whole is saying?

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## Here to help you

### Client Services

01858 438260

### Library

01858 438266

### Holidays

01273 832282

### Prayer Line

01858 438277

### Reflections

for responses to our radio broadcasts: 0333 123 1255. Go to [www.torchtrust.org/reflections](http://www.torchtrust.org/reflections) for details of how to listen to **Reflections**.

### TORCH NEWS

is also available in audio CD, braille, email and large print (17-, 20-, 25- and 30-point) and can be viewed on the Torch website.

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### ► Hearing the Word

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**David:** Well I think what it has given me, apart from anything else, is what a lot of people never get the chance to, or don't do, which is read it from beginning to end.

In my own experience, and this is certainly not a criticism, but in my own experience of meeting many, many, many Christians the Bible is still a closed book – apart from several passages – it has never actually been read from beginning to end. Of course, in the preparation of my reading my eyes were even more opened because I couldn't just pick the Bible up or the books or the various pieces I was going to read and just read them, because that would have been very immature and wrong of me. So I had to study each book in great detail as to when it was written, who may have written it, what was its purpose, who were they writing for, and putting it into its context before recording one word of each book. So I gave myself unwittingly a complete Bible course as well as recording it.

**Grace:** Wow, it sounds like an absolutely huge undertaking! What was the process like for actually doing it, how did you organise that?

**David:** Well it was very, very difficult because when I decided to record it ... I was in the West End at the time, doing 'Long Day's Journey into Night' which is a three and a half hour play in the West End, and I started recording when I had the odd bit of daytime free. But I found that with the preparation, because each book would take me – oh at least a week to prepare, and so with all that preparation and then going into reading I found myself so exhausted I really was not doing the play much good! I was too tired. And I believed that I wasn't really doing that well reading the Bible because I wasn't fully concentrating; I got to a state of total exhaustion so I had to stop. I went in after the Poirot series had finished ... and did it again and then I was able to complete the reading.



A fuller version of this interview will be broadcast over two of our **Reflections** radio programmes.

**Reflections** is available on Premier Christian Radio and RNIB Insight Radio. Find out more on page 8.

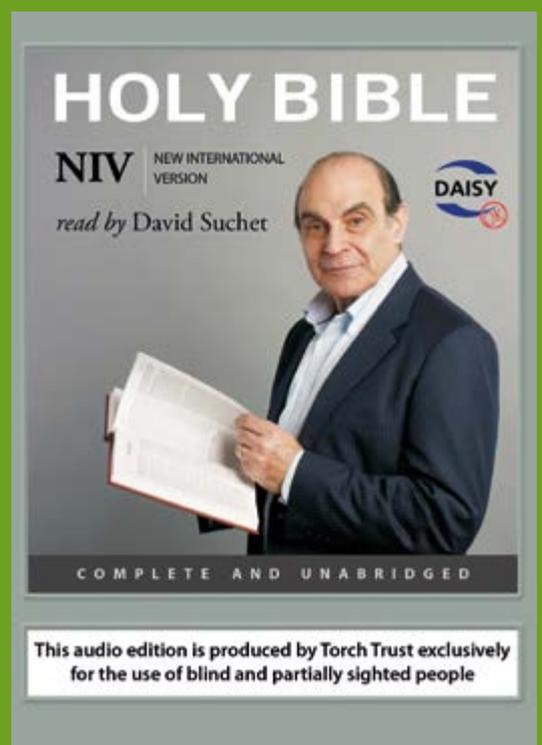
**Grace:** And while you were recording it, did you ever have in mind that it might be useful to blind and partially sighted people, is that something you thought about while doing it?

**David:** Certainly did! I certainly did! This is an extraordinary question you've asked me – because part of my drive was for partially sighted or blind people. I do a lot of recording books, you know, and audio books, and I'm very aware that when I do an audio book it's for partially sighted and blind people. And of course, suddenly being able to listen to the Bible ... must transform their experience.

**Grace:** Thank you very much, David.

**David:** Well I pray that, I really do, I pray that it is used. I do this and let it go ... I prayed it away and I'm just overwhelmed by the [response] ... it's just exploding around the world now and that's something I never expected or dreamed of so it takes my breath away! ■

To purchase a copy of David Suchet's recording of the NIV Bible on DAISY (£15.99) or MegaVoice (£50 with charger, £40 without), please contact Client Services on 01858 438260 or email [info@torchtrust.org](mailto:info@torchtrust.org)





# Where can I find a Bible I can read?

*Torch CEO Gordon Temple reports on the provision of accessible Bibles...*

It's a question that is among the most common asked of Torch:

'Where can I find a Bible I can read?' and it's one that we are delighted to answer over and over again. It's impossible to understate the importance of the Bible. This is God's glorious, diverse, comprehensive and life-transforming message to us who are created by him and for him.

Just as it's an outrage for any human being to live without the food necessary to sustain their body, it is an outrage that any human being should live without access to the Bible, vital food for the soul. For blind and partially sighted people that means having a Bible in large enough print, or in braille, or in audio, or in an electronic form that access technology can make accessible to them.

Often working in partnership with others Torch has long been a major player in making the Bible accessible to people with sight loss.



Over the years Torch has produced many thousands of giant print Bible volumes and is now working with Biblica (translators of the New International Version or NIV) and Prospects (a partner with Torch in the Churches for All network) towards a new accessible Bible edition that combines the 'easy English' of the New International readers Version (NIRV), with large print size and easily navigated layout.

Braille Bibles in English are available from a number of sources, and at Torch we are happy to recommend those providers, but with Torch Trust

International in Malawi we produce the Bible in nine African languages and easy English too.

The arrival of the DAISY audio reading system opened the opportunity for a truly accessible audio Bible, one where the reader can select book, chapter, paragraph and verse, looking up a reference as quickly as in a standard print Bible. It was Torch, working with the RNIB, that made that prospect a reality. RNIB now tells us that the Bible has been, very definitely, the best selling DAISY audio book.

Now we are launching our third complete DAISY audio Bible, the current edition of the NIV (2011) read with extraordinary beauty and power by actor David Suchet. Simultaneously we are launching a new version of the solar-powered MegaVoice pocket audio Bible with the same recording.

Often we think of audio Bibles as a last resort for people experiencing sight loss – for those who can't see large print or read braille. David Suchet makes the point that though the Bible quite often says 'Hear the word of the Lord' it never says 'Read the word of the Lord'. He's right that the Bible was written in a time when few people could read it for themselves; they heard it read. So hearing it read well and thoughtfully can be an extra blessing.

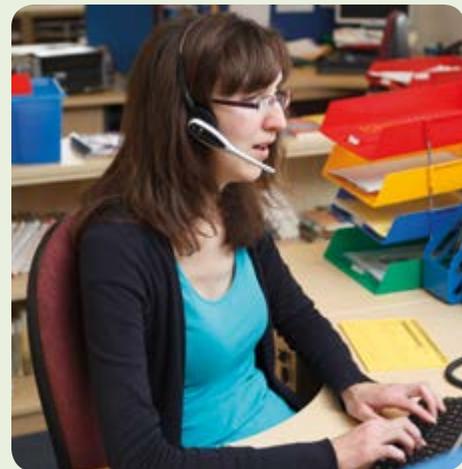
Our vision? That those who are denied access to a standard Bible by visual impairment should be able to have a Bible in a format they can access. ■



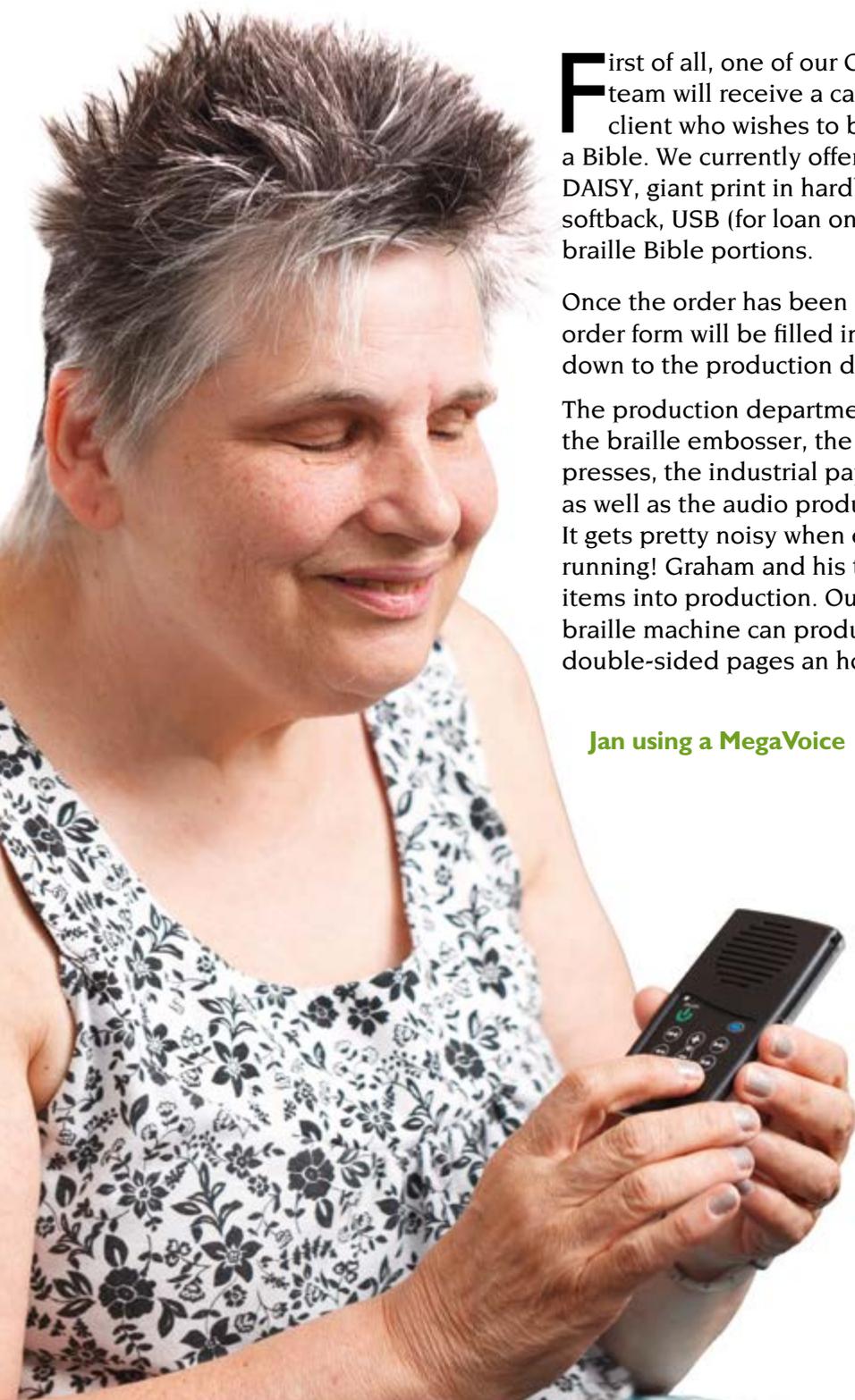
To find a Bible in an accessible format try visiting Torch's Bibles webpage ([torchtrust.org/bibles](http://torchtrust.org/bibles)), where we draw together information about accessible editions in all formats and versions. We have recently improved and updated it with the aim that we will help more blind and partially sighted people find a Bible they can read.

# A Bible I can use

*Here at Torch House, we produce and distribute a wide range of accessible Bibles. But what exactly happens to bring those Bibles to our clients? Our Communications Coordinator Grace takes us behind the scenes to find out...*



Client services receiving call



First of all, one of our Client Services team will receive a call from a client who wishes to buy or borrow a Bible. We currently offer MegaVoice, DAISY, giant print in hardback and softback, USB (for loan only), as well as braille Bible portions.

Once the order has been received, an order form will be filled in and taken down to the production department.

The production department houses the braille embosser, the printing presses, the industrial paper guillotine, as well as the audio production office. It gets pretty noisy when everything is running! Graham and his team put the items into production. Our Interpoint braille machine can produce over 1000 double-sided pages an hour!

Jan using a MegaVoice



Sheila reading a braille Bible portion



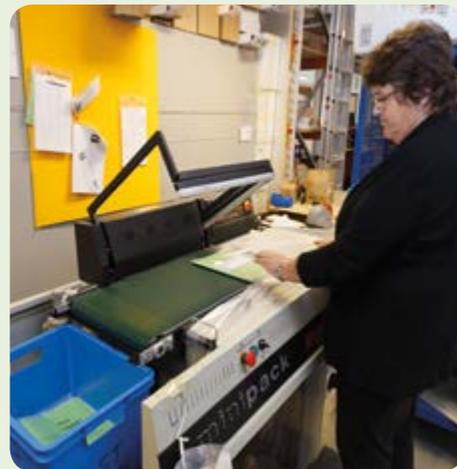
Micky using a DAISY player



**Order form taken to Production**



**Interpoint braille machine**



**Packing in the despatch area**

Once the items are ready, they are sent to the Despatch area. Here, they are sealed into plastic covers, along with address labels. We also have a stock area where we store items that are ready for future orders.

Orders are sent out regularly, reaching our clients across the world! But what does it mean for people to receive Bibles and other books that are designed for them, and work for them? 'My world would be such a different place without Torch helping me through my spiritual path in life', said a client who wrote in from Manchester.

James from Nigeria was especially pleased to receive books in braille; his hosts in the UK wrote in to say



**Trevor reading a large print bible**

'Our friend James asked us to thank you for providing braille books! He told us what a joy it was to be able to read for himself and not rely on others reading to him.' James was unable to bring his own Bible over from Africa and felt that being able to borrow one from the Torch library made all the difference. 'He read through the Psalms about ten times over the summer!'

Having access to the Bible can mean so many different things, to so many different people. For some it means a way to belong; 'I no longer feel like an onlooker, I can join in with everyone else', for others it means being able to contribute to home groups and Sunday Schools, and for others it simply means companionship; 'I spend many hours on my own and I have been so blessed by the Bible readings you have sent me.' Amen! ■



**Jan using a USB player**

## Finances

Torch's finances are an ongoing miracle of God's provision. All our bills have been covered but there remains a weekly challenge to our faith as there are no reserves to fall back on. As it usually does, donation income has slackened during the summer holiday season making it that bit tougher. It is surely the faithful prayer of many that sustains us as we trust God to meet every need. To learn more about Torch Trust finances contact Rev Michael Heaney on **01858 438260**.



# Reaching out to Africa

**Accessible Bibles can be a great help to people much further afield than the UK, as these testimonies from Malawi show...**

**L**ameck Tomasi lives in Malawi with his wife and two children. He is blind and came to faith shortly after losing his sight. 'I don't regret having gone blind, but I do thank God for the spiritual sight I received in exchange', he explains. Lameck became a Christian after hearing a speaker tell the story of Bartimaeus at a local Torch Fellowship Group. 'I felt like him, I cried for Jesus and I have seen a change in my mind towards the loss of my sight... the Lord has touched my heart and spoken to me in a special way.'

**Lameck Tomasi (right)**



Lameck longed to read the Bible, feeling that as a new Christian it was very important, but he didn't know if he would ever be able to. 'God has his own ways of doing things. In 2014 I had the privilege of being given a MegaVoice Bible in Chichewa which is really helping me!' Chichewa is the national language of Malawi, and is the first language of over 12 million people across Africa.

So what does Lameck think of his new Bible? 'I am so happy that I can hear the word of the Lord. I see my life growing spiritually every time I listen to it. It is my closest friend.'



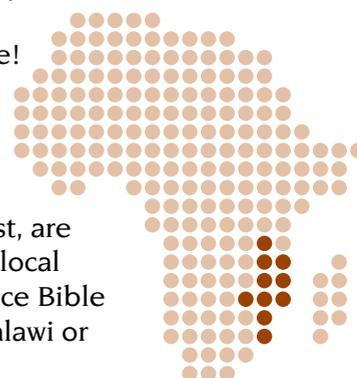
**Elizabeth Machinjiri**

And it's not just audio Bibles that are important. Elizabeth Machinjiri also lives in Malawi; she has albinism and, as a result, is partially sighted. Elizabeth works with the Malawi Council for the Handicapped at Bangwe Weaving Factory. She had previously struggled to participate at church, and attempts at reading the standard print Bible had left in her in tears. Elizabeth says that 'I depended on other people to read for me and help me share the word... with a giant print Bible I don't need to bother others and I can share at will!'

Elizabeth is now able to teach other members of her church and helps out during devotional hours in workplace chapels. She explains that, '... giant print library books help me to broaden my knowledge and increase my spiritual life.'

Torch Trust works to provide people in Malawi and across Africa with accessible Bibles in whatever format best suits them. Bibles can be produced in local languages and can really be a blessing for blind and partially sighted people. People using these Bibles have also found that they can now be the ones to share with and teach other people!

The proceeds from each sale of a MegaVoice Bible in Britain, through Torch Trust, are used to provide a local language MegaVoice Bible for someone in Malawi or Mozambique. ■



If you would like to support our Braille Bibles for Africa Fund, £4 covers the cost of a single Bible volume; £50 pays for a complete braille New Testament (14 volumes).

# Celebrating friendship with Disability Sunday!

*This year's annual Disability Sunday event took place on July 5th, Hazel Groves, Regional coordinator for Kent, reports on the Disability Sunday event she held at her church...*

**T**his was the first time I had organised an event like this,' explained Hazel, 'but I was really pleased with how everyone joined in and got different things from the evening.' About 30 people attended from Hazel's church, as well as visitors from a couple of other local churches.

Hazel used material from the Disability Sunday pack put together by Churches for All, a network of Christian disability-focused organisations of which Torch Trust is a partner, together with the *Enabling Church* book by Gordon Temple with Lin Ball. 'Having been partially sighted since birth and having other people with various degrees of sight loss in my immediate family I felt I had lots to contribute in this area – but my knowledge of other disabilities was not as great. The material from Churches for All enabled me to cover a wider perspective'.

The theme for this year's Disability Sunday was friendship, and also looked at how disabled people crave genuine relationships with other people in their congregations and communities. 'I was able to share experiences from my own life where my needs were met in a practical sense, e.g. large print material, but where socially I was isolated'. Hazel talked about Jesus' encounter with Bartemaeus: 'I think the most important thing is, like Jesus, not to assume you know what someone wants or needs but to ask what you can do help and to include them'.

Hazel split her group into three smaller teams to take part in different activities. These included a quiz looking



**Hazel Groves and her fellow church members**

at different disability statistics, a prayer wall with views from different disabled people on how they do or do not feel socially included, and an activity simulating a social situation in which members of the group held a conversation with one person blindfolded, covering their ears or sitting while everyone else was standing. 'People were surprised by how high the percentage of people who admitted to avoiding someone with a disability was. They really engaged with the prayer wall and thought about other people linked to our church with various disabilities. One participant commented how the simulated disability activity really made him realise how hard it is to participate in normal conversation without all five senses'.

And it's not too late to take part: Disability Sunday can take place on any day that suits you and your church! To find out more, or to download a pack, visit [churchesforall.org.uk/disabilitysunday](http://churchesforall.org.uk/disabilitysunday) ■



## Would you like to get involved?

We are looking to recruit new volunteers in the form of Regional Coordinators. Attending exhibitions, supporting local Torch Groups, and alerting people with sight loss to the services Torch offers, are just some of the possible forms the role can take. We are specifically interested in working with Christians located in London, Surrey, Sussex, Buckinghamshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Shropshire and Gloucestershire. We offer our Coordinators support, resources, and training, as well as covering all expenses.



# Reflections CD and podcast

Torch is pleased to announce that we are now able to offer a monthly CD and podcast of our weekly Reflections radio programme.

Featuring all of the episodes from each month, the CD is available free to anyone who can be registered blind or partially sighted.

The show is also available as a podcast. The podcast is free to listen to on SoundCloud, by visiting [soundcloud.com/torchtrust](http://soundcloud.com/torchtrust).

For more information, and to sign up for the CD, call Client Services on **01858 438260** or email [info@torchtrust.org](mailto:info@torchtrust.org)



Marilyn Baker, **Reflections Radio Show** presenter, says 'I'm so happy that the show can now be revisited in this new way!' ■

## Come and say hello at CRE Midlands!

Torch will be having a stand at Christian Resources Exhibition Midlands. The event will take place on the 7th and 8th of October, at The NEC, Birmingham, West Midlands B40 1NT. Free tickets are available from Torch, please contact Client Services.

## Keep in touch

You can keep up to date with what's happening at Torch via our Facebook page and our Twitter feed. Just search for 'Torch Trust' (and, on Facebook only, 'Reflections from Torch Trust') and receive regular updates, Bible verses and prayer topics!

You can also follow our Daily Prayer Guide on our website. This is produced to engage our supporters in prayer for our staff and volunteers. If you require a printout of this, please call us.

## Join the Torch team!

We have three vacancies at the Torch Holiday and Retreat Centre which urgently need filling. We are looking for a Chef/Catering Manager, a General Assistant for a short term contract, and a Hospitality Assistant for a short term contract. If you are interested, do contact Sarah Hamilton, our Personnel Coordinator ([sarahh@torchtrust.org](mailto:sarahh@torchtrust.org))

## Greetings cards!

Once again this year Torch will benefit from the sale of Christmas cards and the other cards and gifts available from Gospel Cards, etc.

20% of their Christmas card sales and 5% of the sale of other items will be given to 26 Christian organisations including Torch Trust.

Produced to a very high standard, the calendars, books, etc. make excellent gifts for children and adults, while the cards are perfect for sending to family and friends.

Full details of the cards, etc. are on their website [www.GospelCardsEtc.com](http://www.GospelCardsEtc.com) or, to receive a catalogue, telephone **01656 647551**, or write to Gospel Cards, etc. 15 Brackla Street Centre, Bridgend, CF31 1DD. ■



## Thanksgiving

This year's Annual Thanksgiving Celebration will be at Torch Holiday and Retreat Centre on Saturday 19th September at 2pm. Come along for tours of the house, a chance to learn more about the work of Torch, delicious refreshments and a wonderful thanksgiving service in the chapel.

## Scripture Text Calendar

We will once again be selling our Scripture Text Calendar for the year ahead, available in giant print and braille. The 2016 calendar will cost £3.50 or £10 for three and will be on sale from 1st October. ■

