

VIDEO: Widow Forgives, Prays for Husband's Murderers

The widow of a church organist who was brutally murdered on Christmas Eve has said she forgives the men who killed her husband.

Maureen Greaves, a committed Christian, says it was one of the hardest decisions of her life to forgive the men, but she hoped "God's great mercy will inspire them to true repentance."

Alan Greaves, 68, was walking to a midnight service to play the organ, as he had done for 40 years, when Jonathan Bowling and Ashley Foster, both 22, beat him to death in a motiveless attack.

The pair were said to be out "looking for trouble" when they set upon Greaves in the vicious attack in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, England.

Maureen Greaves, who is the mother of four and a grandmother, says, "Alan was a wonderful man who is so dearly missed. Our lives will never be the same again.

"Alan was a man who was driven by love and compassion, and he would not want any of us to hold on to feelings of hate and unforgiveness. So in honor of Alan and in honor of the God we both love, my prayer is that this story doesn't end today.

"My prayer is that Jonathan Bowling and Ashley Foster will come to understand and experience the love and kindness of the God who made him in his own image and that God's great mercy will inspire them to true repentance."

Bowling and Foster were sentenced at Sheffield Crown Court last week. Bowling was convicted of murder and sentenced to

life in prison with a minimum term of 25 years. Foster was jailed for nine years for manslaughter.

In March, a Christian woman whose husband died after being hit by a car spoke of her forgiveness for the driver. Patricia Machin, 74, told BBC Radio 5 Live she never blamed the driver and even wrote a letter in his defence.

In 2009, the Christian parents of a boy who was killed by an out-of-control drug driver said that with God's help they could forgive the woman convicted of his death by dangerous driving.