

# Imagine!

April  
2011



**I** imagine what it will be like at the Olympic Stadium at the opening ceremony in 2012. Everything will be at fever pitch and there will be great excitement, huge anticipation and indeed expectations of many victories for us as host nation, in many events. The opening ceremony will have just about every nation on earth taking part, so will expectations be met, will the excitement melt away to be replaced, in the cold light of day by the realism that things are not going to be as the heart wants? Imagine you are in a crowd in Jerusalem two thousand years ago. The word on the street is of a prophet called Jesus who they say is going to overthrow the tyrannical Romans. He will be the new king and there will be Jewish rule again over their own lands and people; imagine the excitement as word spreads of a parade into Jerusalem.

Imagine the almost crushing noise, great vibrancy in everything that is happening. Excitement is at fever pitch and all your senses are being assailed in a very different way to everyday life. All around you people are screaming out hosanna, blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. You look down the street and through the dust you see men dancing and waving their hands in the air, palm branches going up and down and the noise begins to get louder and louder until it reaches a crescendo as a figure appears riding on a donkey; how do you feel now? Imagine your feelings as he trots past. Will he be victorious, is he going to win the gold medal as King, is he going to wear the victor's crown? Imagine the scene just a few days later on a misty hill side. Now there is weeping and wailing as Jesus, Messiah and King hangs limp on a cross. No victory laurel on his head, but rather a crown of thorns so cruelly crushed down on his blood soaked body.

Imagine the pain and emptiness of dreams and hopes dashed again.

Move the clock forward just a couple of days and rumours start to spread that Messiah is not dead after all, but that he has been seen alive again. How? Impossible? But more and more people have seen him; it must be true, please let it be true; don't let it be the end.

Imagine, if you can, where your heart and mind would be at that point. Jesus dead, buried, but now alive! Imagine it is 2012 and the Olympic closing ceremony has just finished. What a fortnight it has been, many winners have been crowned (even some from England) and already the lasting legacy from these games is being spoken about in glowing terms; but only time will tell. At Easter we celebrate the lasting legacy of Jesus Christ who is the Champion for the world, not a sprinter or even a marathon runner, but eternal Champion. These words from the song 'In Christ Alone' say it all:

*There in the ground His body lay, light of the world by darkness slain.  
Then bursting forth in glorious day up from the grave He rose again.  
And as He stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me  
For I am His and He is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.*

Imagine that. Jesus has died for you and me, but now reigns in heaven, sin defeated, eternal life guaranteed. What a legacy!

David Keeble

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# What's on in April

## Worship at Stansted Free Church

- 3rd 10.30 am The Worship Team - New Directions  
10th 10.30 am Rev'd David Keeble  
17th 10.30 am To be confirmed  
22<sup>nd</sup> 10.30 am Good Friday Service  
24<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am Rev'd Stuart Veitch - Easter Communion

### Easter Sunday

During Lent we are using the Lenten Cross to guide our thoughts leading up to Easter. Each Sunday a different item connected with Holy Week is added. These will be removed after the service on Good Friday and replaced with flowers on Easter Day. So that everyone can take part, please could everyone bring a few flowers to the communion celebration service on Easter Sunday? They will be used to transform the cross from the awfulness of the Crucifixion to the Glory of the Resurrection.

## Other Activities

- Sat 9th 10.00 am Biblefresh - B Stortford Methodist Church  
Sun 10th 11.30 am Fairtrade goods on sale after service  
Thu 14th 2.30 pm Daffodil Rally - S Walden Methodist Church  
Wed 27th 8.00 pm Churches Together Forum in the Hall



## LENT GROUPS

Exploring the Word of God in Scripture

(produced by The Methodist Church)

Meet from 8 - 9 pm:

Tue 5 Apr Free Church Hall - led by Mike Dyer

Wed 13 Apr St John's Church - led by Rev Paul Wilkin

This last session will be followed by a glass of wine.

All welcome. You do not have to attend every week. Come when you can!

## Writing out the Bible by Hand

Six of us attended the special *Handwriting the Bible* Day at Bishop's Stortford Church on Sunday 20th March. This was part of the Methodist plan to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the translation



of the King James Bible, and the Bishop's Stortford Circuit was assigned chapters 33 & 34 of Jeremiah. We all did a verse each - hopefully in our best, well at least legible, handwriting at a table set up on the platform.

I found it a really special thing to be part of. It is hoped that the whole of the Bible will have been handwritten by people all over this country by the end of May. It was of course on specially produced sheets of lined paper and will be bound up together and kept for posterity! Those taking part from our church were: Betty Francis, Phyllis Harrison, Judy Colliver, Margaret Silvester, Mike Dyer and Catherine Dean.

*Judy Colliver*

## Saffron Walden Methodist Church 75th Daffodil Rally

Castle Street Methodist Church are celebrating their final Daffodil Rally on Thursday 14th April at 2.30pm, but the church will be open for a 'Sing Song' from 2 pm. The speaker will be Sylvia Thomas and there will be entertainment from the Castle Puppets and others. Refreshments are served after the service. As they would like numbers, please let me know if you would like to attend asap.

*Betty Francis*

## Christian Aid Week 15th - 21st May

A reminder that more helpers are needed for the house to house collections. Please contact me asap if you can help. Thank you

*Catherine Dean*

## Which Way Forward??

Greek has two words for time - chronos and kairos. Christians cherish kairos as the right time, the appropriate time for God's saving acts. Kairos has also been seen as a crossing 'a place where time is made right for God's work to cross our path to bring the world closer to salvation'. If we are at that time of crossing we need to give heed to it and be vigilant as to where we should be going. This is our situation: Here we are, an aging congregation, not growing and with the prospect of gradually declining in numbers over the next ten years. At the same time we are sitting on a sum of money that has resulted from generous legacies and donations from families who loved our church. Is God calling us to walk a new path and do something radically different?

### Please join our discussions at a special meeting 7.45 pm on Monday 27th June

Some of the things we will be considering are:

Our money - is it to be used on material things in our building?

- Restoration of the organ?
- Installation of solar panels to generate electricity?
- New windows for the church?
- What else?

*Or on mission?*

- Supporting street pastors?
- Serving our community - old or young?
- Creating initiatives with the other churches?
- What else?

Our talents - are we equipped to serve our community? Do we really understand their needs?

Our vision - most of all - what shape do we want our church to be over the next few years?

- A holy place for prayer and worship, distinct from worldly places?
- A multi-purpose venue that serves the world by providing facilities that our community needs?

It is really crucial that we hear God's Word for us as we consider the way forward. It's not depressing but exciting. Let's grasp this opportunity, this kairos in which God beckons us forward. We hope to see you at the meeting - please book the date now! *The Editors*



## Methodist Women in Britain MWiB



Women's Network is joining with the British Unit of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW) to become Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB). This will be launched at the Methodist Conference at Southport in July. Jill Baker will be the first national president. (She has written an article in the current Magnet magazine). MWiB will continue to support all women in the church, to encourage, enable, and equip them to take their full place in the church and in the world; to bring awareness of particular issues to the notice of the church and to work to raise funds for projects at home and overseas. Our circuit committee: Brenda Veitch, Sue Haworth, Ruth Banks, Catherine Dean and Lindsey Hughes organises coffee mornings and various events. The recent Hot Supper evening raised £446 for Mission Aviation Fellowship, the current District project. The BEH District and Methodist Connexion also arrange special days and weekends. Future events include:

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May 9.45 - 4.30 Craft Day at Bedford**

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May District Day at Stevenage**

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June 5.15 pm Bring and Share tea and Easter Offering Dedication Service at Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church**

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June 10 am - 4 pm Quiet Day at Chrishall 'Invitation to a meal' led by Brenda and Stuart Veitch**

Please see me for further details of any of these events.

*Brenda Veitch*

### Can you help?

Volunteers are required to meet overseas representatives to the Methodist Conference at Stansted Airport on 28th June and take them to their accommodation in central London, picking them up on 8th July to return them to the airport. Expenses such as petrol, airport parking, trains, buses and meals will be reimbursed. Please tel Sandra Lopez 020 7467 5298 email [lopezs@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:lopezs@methodistchurch.org.uk)



The next Traidcraft stalls will be after the service on Sunday 10th April. If you would like any Fairtrade goods at other times, just give me a call - don't forget that I have a wide range of Traidcraft goods suitable for presents. Catalogues are still available in the church foyer.

Fairtrade Fortnight Big Brew

Many thanks to all who supported my event which raised £56.

Brenda

[fairtrade@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:fairtrade@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

### ***Bald Statements***

An exhibition exploring loss, grief and change

April 2nd: 2-4 pm, 4th: 6-9 pm, 9th: 10-4 pm, 10th: 12-4 pm,  
16th: 2-4 pm, 17th: 12-5 pm, 19th: 6-9 pm

Newport URC, Wicken Road

For more information, please see the church noticeboard



### **Points of Light Synod Retreat**

**10 am - 4 pm Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April Clare Priory**

Led by Mary Irish with inputs from the Clare Priory Community. The theme is 'Reflections on the Cross'. Cost is £13.50 including a simple but satisfying lunch. The programme will cater for those who are new to retreats and for those who have experienced them before. Tel 01223 830770 for details.

The next edition of *Imagine* will be available on Easter Sunday 24th April. Please submit articles by Friday 15th April to: [news@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:news@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk). Alternatively, please pass to one of the editors, or send to:

23A Bentfield Road, Stansted CM24 8HP. Thank you.

Editors: Alan Wheeler and Mike & Marion Dyer

Copies of this and previous editions of *Imagine* can be found on our website [www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](http://www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

# **Stansted Free Church**

## **Methodist / URC**

[www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](http://www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

### **Contacts**

#### **Ministers**

Rev David Keeble

Rev Allen Morton

Email for both ministers: [minister@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:minister@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

#### **Church Secretary**

Betty Francis

Email: [info@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:info@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

#### **Church Notices**

Marion Pretty

#### **Lettings**

**Mike & Marion Dyer**

Email: [lettings@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:lettings@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

#### **Newsletter Editors**

Alan Wheeler Mike & Marion Dyer

Email: [news@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:news@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

#### **Treasurers**

Alan Wheeler Marion Dyer

Email: [treasurer@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

#### **Fairtrade**

Brenda Veitch

Email: [fairtrade@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:fairtrade@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

### **Sunday Service**

10.30 am      Morning Worship

### **Children's Work**

**Alternate Mondays** 6 pm Pilots for children aged 5 - 18 years.  
Valerie Trundle Tel 813433 Email: [pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)