

Imagine!



Imagine someone carrying all your burdens

Imagine going into the supermarket to do your weekly shop and being confronted by rows and rows of bottles, tins, packs, cartons each looking remarkably similar because they have no labels. How would you know what to look for, where it comes from, what the ingredients are, whether the fat content is high or low, and whether it is organic?

Labels help us identify things and inform us about them. They are part of our everyday lives. They make sense of our world and enable us to choose one from another. Whether it is shopping, homes, schools, political parties, sexuality, churches, other faiths, ethnic groups, nations, or indeed the people round about us, we have a label that fits. And so our world is compartmentalised, divided up and ordered according to our own tastes - and even prejudices. We know where we are with labels! They help us maintain clear boundaries, strong borders, and separate identities. We love our labelled world!

But imagine a world without labels. Imagine a world where "there is no longer Jew nor Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (St Paul, Galatians 3:28). Imagine a world where 'Names and sects and parties fall: Thou, O Christ, art all in all' (Charles Wesley). Imagine a world where the God who created all that exists placed his blessing upon it and 'saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good' (Genesis 1:31). Imagine a world where despite a lack of trustful response, God continues to make do without labels, and places his trust and blessing on the whole human family, on every one of us.

This is the world we know - it is full of labels colouring our views and separating us one from another and yet God invites us to see it with his unlabelled eyes as a place where all persons are truly brothers and sisters belonging to one marvellous, diverse and richly blessed human family. Imagine that!

David Mullins



Care Time



Please remember in your prayers the family of Bessie Armitage who died recently, especially her daughter Jane, son William and their families who live in Scotland, and Bessie's sister Kath Kent who lives in Stansted. Bessie was a very generous and loyal member of our church for many years and will be sadly missed.

Others of our Church family who need our prayers are: Miss Tame who has been in hospital following a stroke and is now at the Moat House Care Home at Great Easton; Arthur Law who has also been in hospital with heart problems; Phyllis Harrison who has had a fall but is recovering well; Phyllis Little; and James King. We send our love and prayers to them all.

Allen & Daphne

We are pleased that Allen & Daphne are settled into their new home at 39 Clover Avenue. They have very kindly invited us to their Open House on 20th September - see page 7, where you will also find details of their telephone number and email address.

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The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on Sunday 31st August. Please submit articles by Friday 22nd August to: 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

What's on in August

Sunday Worship at Stansted Free Church

3 rd	10.30 am	New Directions in Worship
	2.30 pm	Rev David Mullins
		<i>followed by tea in the foyer - all welcome</i>
10 th	10.30 am	Andrew Brown
17 th	10.30 am	Rev Allen Morton - Holy Communion
24 th	10.30 am	John Banks
31 st	10.30 am	Rev Allen Morton

Morning worship is followed by coffee except the first Sunday in the month, when tea is usually served following the afternoon service.

Other Activities

Sun 3 rd	3.30 pm	Outreach Tea
Tue 12 th	9.30 am	Church Oversight group in the Foyer
Sun 17 th	11.30 am	Fairtrade goods on sale after service
Mon 18 th	2.30 pm	Monday Club in the Hall

Uttlesford Mind Open Afternoon - all welcome
Tuesday 5th August 2 - 4 pm Quaker Meeting House

Church Anniversary

Sunday 7th September will be our 2nd anniversary of becoming a joint church. Our service on that day will be at 3 pm and will be led by both our ministers. We are very much looking forward to this, as it will be the first time that David and Allen have led a service together. The service will be followed by tea in the hall. Please join us!

Harvest Festival

Sunday 21st September is our Harvest Festival, led by Allen Morton, and will include the presentation of the Pilot Plaque (see page 5).

Islands of Prayer
Sat 6th September 10 am - 4 pm
Chrishall Methodist Church
Music, prayers and readings led by Brenda & Stuart Veitch
See posters & booking forms on the noticeboard

Pilots

Three Very Different Evenings

At Pilots this term we have been very fortunate in having several visitors to our sessions. Both children and helpers are always pleased to welcome friends, parents and church members, for this shows that we are supported in the work we try to do in engaging young people in Christian values and thereby encouraging them to live their lives in a meaningful way.

On 16th June, Michelle King who is one of our officers and also the local area representative for Mission Aviation Fellowship, gave us another insight into the great work of this organisation, and presented to us some amazing examples of their dedication to improve the lives of people who are in great need, who live thousands of miles from our own shores and who only survive through the love, care and support they receive from the MAF team. Also on this evening a visitor from Bishop's Stortford URC, Ken Larman, gave a short talk and demonstration about his work as a navigator. His visit was much appreciated and we hope to have a further visit from Ken next term.

On 30th June, Catherine Dean came to visit us and share our evening. She is the local representative for Christian Aid and gave us all some food for thought on the much needed work of this organisation, and some ideas where we could improve our own carbon footprint. The children watched a DVD about the work of Christian Aid and completed some tasks set by Catherine.

To end our sessions for this term, Jan, Roger and Dipper (Dips) came to visit us once again on 14th July. Dipper, Jan's Golden Labrador Guide Dog, was patted by many Pilot hands and admired for his



dedication to all the needs of his owner. It was easy to see how he had passed the many guide dog tests that he had to achieve before becoming Jan's 'eyes'. We saw a DVD showing the work of guide dogs and how they have to train with their owners for a long time before becoming fully fledged. We want to thank Jan, Roger and Dipper for being with us on that evening as they were moving to Swindon the very next day at 8.30 am.

Allen Morton, our new URC minister, also paid us a visit during this session, and got to know some of the children, helpers and parents. Allen told us of one of his hobbies (painting) and brought along some of his art work to show us. Next term when we have one of our craft evenings, Allen is going to come along and join in our activities, and we are all looking forward to his being with us once again. As usual Cherry and Michelle produced some great refreshments which we all enjoyed very much. We have been helped by Sarah Godfrey for the last few sessions and we hope to see her again next term.

Future Events

During the Church Harvest Festival on 21st September, the Pilots are being presented with the Pilot Plaque which is to be placed somewhere (not yet decided) on the church, where visitors and friends can see that we have an active group of Pilots at Stansted Free Church. We hope to see as many of our Pilots as possible at this service and to involve them and make them feel part of the wider church. Sylvia Payne and Henry Playle will be with us to present the Plaque to the Pilots and the Church.

Pilot Sessions for the Autumn Term

September 15th & 29th

October 13th

November 3rd & 17th

December 1st & 15th

All Church Members and Friends are very welcome to come and join us for any of our Pilot Evenings. Your support would be much appreciated as we all feel this is a possible way of introducing Pilots and their families to a closer relationship with our Church family.

Valerie

Church Deacon Vacancy

As detailed in last month's Imagine, we have a vacancy for a deacon to join the Oversight group from September and we would ask all church members to prayerfully consider whether they should take on this role. If you would like to know more about what is involved, please speak to one of the present deacons: Valerie, Catherine, Mike, Betty, Janet, and Marion (Pretty). Anyone wishing to be considered must be nominated by another church member. Please hand any nominations to Betty by the end of August.

From the Church Meeting

During the recent church meeting, Allen suggested the idea of a **prayer chain** – something which had worked well in his previous church. Anyone can join the chain, as long as they can be contacted by telephone. When a prayer need is identified, the first person on the chain is contacted, who then makes contact with the next person on the list and so on. If a person on the list cannot be contacted, then it goes to the next person, so there is no necessity to be always available. Anyone is welcome to request prayer, and the need is not just limited to people connected with our church. Janet Townsend has agreed to be the first person in the chain and if you are willing to be part of the **prayer chain**, please contact Janet as soon as possible, or if you would like to know more, please telephone Allen on 757635. All prayer needs are confidential.

There was also discussion about how we could make the **intercessions** during our Sunday worship meet the needs of our



fellowship and the local community more effectively. Two ideas were discussed: writing prayer requests in a book; and writing prayer requests on slips which would be available in the church (with pens!) and then collected up during the service. The book or the prayer slips would be used by the person leading worship as the basis for the intercessions. The book would be a permanent record and would stay in the church; the slips would be kept and passed to the ministers each month. It was felt that the slips would be better and the Church Oversight group will discuss the idea further at their next meeting in August.

An Invitation from Allen & Daphne

This is my first article for Imagine being written from the delightful new URC Manse at 39 Clover Avenue. We are off Oriole Way, which can be reached either from the roundabout with the Villiers sùr Marne Avenue, or from the top end of Great Hadham Road if you come via Bishops Park Way. There is also a bus service that stops on Oriole Way a few yards from our turning. After much delay, we are now on the telephone: 757635. My email is allenmorton@tiscali.co.uk (a slight change to my previous one) or minister@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk (this email address also goes to David Mullins).

As you may imagine, Daphne and I are very happy to be in our new home, and truly appreciate all the hard work that has gone into making our move a smooth one, as far as moves ever can be! We greatly look forward to welcoming members from both Stansted and Water Lane fellowships (and members of the other churches) to tea and cakes at the manse on Saturday 20th September from 2.30 to 4.30 pm. As it is the SHINE fortnight in Stortford, we shall also take opportunity to welcome our near neighbours. You see we are already getting involved in local events!

As part of the house warming it would be good to make the occasion a blessing of the house, as it is new to the church. It seems fitting to ask God, who made all things, to encircle and fill the house with the divine love, dedicating it for God's work.. So from about 4.00 to 4.15 there will be a short reflective service for the blessing of the house, in the Celtic style, to which all are welcome.

Allen Morton



Ride and Stride Saturday 14th September

Could you spare an hour between 10 am and 4 pm to sign the sponsorship forms for those who visit our church? If so (and I hope so!) please let me know by 31st August so I can prepare a rota. Thank you. Janet

Meetings of the CTS Forum continue to be well attended and are very positive. We are hosting the next forum (chaired by Catherine Dean) on Tuesday 7th October at 7.30 pm - all welcome.

There will be a village Harvest Supper and entertainment on Sunday 12th October from 6 - 8.30 pm in St John's Hall. Tickets from Marion & Mike.



CHURCHES
TOGETHER
in STANSTED

Stansted Free Church

Methodist / URC

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Sunday Services

1st Sunday in each month

10.30 am New Directions in Worship

An informal, participative service for all ages

2.30 pm Afternoon Worship

followed by outreach tea

All other Sundays

10.30 am Morning Worship

Children's Work

Alternate Mondays 6 pm Pilots for children aged 5 - 18 years.

Valerie Trundle Email: pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk