



**I** imagine you are a little girl deserted by your parents. You look around you and nothing seems familiar. You thought Mum went down that street - or maybe it was this street. You are desperate and confused. No help comes. We can all imagine this desperation and the events that might follow if there isn't a happy outcome. Imagine! This happens today, in Syria and other places. Don't we all have an inner dread of losing our bearings, of the familiar suddenly vanishing and being completely lost? Many of us have built a comfortable life for ourselves, our friends, our garden that we cherish and our weekly church service. Shouldn't we be careful how closely we cling to these things? Jesus said "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes even life itself – he cannot be my disciple".

These are tough words but isn't Jesus trying to protect us from holding on too tightly to things, even people? I always think Jesus had a bit of a sense of humour and some of his extreme sayings were to make a point by going 'over the top.' I am hoping there were wry smiles on the disciples faces! I heard a massive thunder clap outside my window just now. I felt suddenly afraid. Fear is never very far from us, is it? Viktor Frankl had, in fact, lost his whole family to the gas chambers when, as he was digging in a cold icy trench in the concentration camp he had these thoughts:

*In a last violent protest against the hopelessness of imminent death, I sensed my spirit piercing through the enveloping gloom. I felt it transcend that hopeless, meaningless world, and from somewhere I heard a victorious 'Yes' in answer to my question of the existence of an ultimate purpose. At that moment a light was lit in a distant farmhouse, which stood on the horizon as if*

*painted there, in the midst of the miserable grey of a dawning morning in Bavaria: "and the light shineth in the darkness."*

We all hope that Jesus is there to hold our hands as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death. As Janet watched her Mum walk that path and agonised over what her Mum was going through, all public services, hospice, nurse, doctors, had failed her. The sufferers were completely alone. At the moment of extreme crisis something unusual happened. At midnight Becky, one of Mum's neighbours, drove into the car park. Janet called her from the kitchen window. With Becky by her bedside, Mum calmed down. The family calmed down. At Mum's memorial we looked at a screen with a picture of footprints on a beach. We recalled the saying "At the times when there was only one set of footprints, that was when I was carrying you!" Don't cling too closely to earthly things but trust in the one who says "Lo, I am with you always".

*Alan Wheeler*



**Wednesdays 9.30 am - 12.30 pm**

**Free Church, Chapel Hill**

**All Welcome ~ No Charge**

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



The Place continues to be very popular, with new visitors arriving every week. From September we are planning to also open on Friday mornings, and we need more helpers to join the rota, either on Wednesdays or Fridays.

If you could spare a few hours once or twice a month to help make coffee or chat to our visitors, please let me know as soon as possible. Thank you.

Marion Dyer  
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[marion@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:marion@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

# What's on in August

## Worship at Stansted Free Church

4th 10.30 am Julie Finbow - New Directions

11th 10.30 am Rev'd David Keeble - Communion

18th 10.30 am Denis Walker

25th 10.30 am Don McGregor

## Other Activities

Sat 17th 4.00 pm Listening Skills Course in the Hall (see below)

Mon 19 9.30 am Church Oversight Group - 7 Blythwood Gdns

Sat 31st 4.00 pm Listening Skills Course in the Hall

### **JUST LISTEN!** Led by Fran Richards

Sat 17th & Sat 31st August 4 - 6 pm in the Hall

**Just Listen!** is a lively and practical listening skills course covering:

Tuning In ~ What kind of Listener am I?

Developing a Listening Attitude ~ Identifying Obstacles

Doorways to Good Listening ~ Ideas to Inspire You.

The course is delivered via video, but is interactive with discussions and activities

Although the course is primarily for helpers at The Place on the Hill, all are most welcome. Contact Fran on 812748 for more details



Due to holidays, the next **Traidcraft** stall will be after the service on Sunday 1st September.

The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on Sunday 25th August. Please submit articles by Friday 16th August 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.

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# Stansted Free Church

## Methodist / URC

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

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### Sunday Service

10.30 am Morning Worship. 1st Sunday - New Directions (Informal)

#### Pilots Children's Work

**Monday (monthly)** 6 pm Pilots for children aged 5 - 18 years.

Valerie Trundle Tel 813433 Email: [pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

#### The Place on the Hill Drop-In (All Welcome)

Every Wednesday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

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