

Imagine!



August
2014

Imagine the worst! As human beings we are sometimes inclined to pessimism about the turn of events. Imagination can act like a virus dissolving our normal cheerful disposition, capturing us in melancholy or worse. Atheist pundits accuse Christians of living in an imaginary world of escapism. Marx famously accused us of peddling opium to the people. Yet can these clear-eyed realists offer hope for a world that watches daily the horrors of the last few weeks?

It goes without saying that it can be a sign of madness when a person starts to imagine things compulsively. On the other hand, imagination can be a powerful springboard for change to the good. It has been said that we are the only creatures who can imagine. A chimpanzee tends not to absorb his mind for days in a Danielle Steel novel!

At the Herts and Souls Community Choir workshop last weekend a group of amateurs learned the extraordinary power of meditation as an instrument of change. Michael Cantwell invited us to use our imaginations to get under the skin of a pauper in 1830s Paris, and then experience the way it changed our performance of the discontented crowd at the start of *Les Miserables*. It had a powerful impact. A crowd of Soulsters were soon angrily finger-pointing at the rich in their carriages (in our imagination of course!).

When we follow in Christ's way we are living in the expectation of a changed world in which Christ will come into his Kingdom. Can we allow our imagination to help bring about this change? The present age has always been desperate. Marx's "*Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions*" has a resonance with Romans' "*The whole creation groans and travails in pain together*". We cling to the hope that Christ saves us from that pain and travail. .../cont

By imagining how Christ can transform us, we can open our eyes to new paths in which he can lead us. If we fix our eyes on Him we can strengthen our resolve, see beyond the despair of the present moment and start to imagine a new world into being. As Paul says in *2 Thessalonians 2 v 16-17* "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word".

Alan Wheeler

PILOTS

www.facebook.com/pages/Stansted-Pilots



Well done to Nicola, the Pilot Leaders and the Pilots involved in the service on 22nd June. It was a most enjoyable and uplifting occasion, with many parents adding to our usual congregation.



WHAT'S ON IN AUGUST

Worship at Stansted Free Church

- 3rd 10.30 am Andrew Brown - New Directions
10th 10.30 am Rev'd Stuart Veitch
17th 10.30 am Rev'd Jan Bisschoff - Communion
24th 10.30 am Richard Lewnsey
31st 10.30 am Rev'd David Mullins



The next **Traidcraft** stalls will be after the service on Sundays 24th August and 21st September. If you would like any Fairtrade goods at other times, just give me a call. Catalogues are in the church foyer.

Brenda

FACELIFT WORK AT THE CHURCH IN AUGUST

Work on the church and hall begins on Friday 1st August and is expected to finish by the Bank Holiday.

During this time, church activities will continue as usual but the

CAR PARK WILL BE OUT OF USE ON WEEKDAYS

to allow access for the builders' vehicles.

All aboard for the Bluebell Railway & Sheffield Park Gardens Sat 6th Sept depart Stansted 8.45 am return approx 9.30 pm

Arranged by Water Lane URC but Stansted Free Church and Saffron Walden URC are also invited. Cost £30 (incl coach travel and evening meal). Afternoon at leisure with choices as follows (group rates are not being offered, in order to give flexibility):

Sheffield Park (National Trust) £9.00 (NT and RHS Members free)

Ride on **Bluebell Railway** £16.50 or access to station platforms, engine sheds etc only (ie not travelling) £3.

This is a wonderful opportunity for our new pastorate to share fellowship, have fun (and eat of course). For more information please contact me.

Marion

Stansted Free Church

Methodist / URC

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Contacts

Minister

Our new minister joins us in October. For church enquiries please contact the secretary.

Church Secretary

Betty Francis

Email: info@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Church Notices

Marion Pretty

Lettings

Mike & Marion Dyer

Email: lettings@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Newsletter Editors

Alan Wheeler Mike & Marion Dyer

Email: news@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Treasurers

Alan Wheeler Marion Dyer

Email: treasurer@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Fairtrade

Brenda Veitch

Email: fairtrade@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Sunday Service

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

Pilots Children's Work

Monday (monthly - term time) 6 pm Pilots for children aged 5 - 18

Valerie Trundle Tel 813433 Email: pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

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

Every Wednesday and Friday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

Email: theplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk