

Imagine living and sleeping on London's streets, the temperature below freezing and your clothes ineffective against wind and rain. Imagine Christmas, cold, hungry and alone, with all around you exchanging presents, enjoying family parties and over-eating. What a difference it would make to have a place to go where there is warm food, a hot shower and clothes - clean, warm clothes!

Whitechapel Mission was founded 130 years ago to care for London's poor and homeless in their struggle against hunger, poverty, disease, prejudice and exclusion. Today over 3,000 volunteers serve refreshments, collect and sort clothing and fund raise. What if those volunteers were not there? The Mission could not function, and the street people would have to look elsewhere for food and clean clothes.

We are not trying to stimulate you into giving more to Whitechapel Mission (we know you give generously already), but to reflect on the poverty that exists in every community including Stansted. Maybe not the material poverty experienced by the street people, but other forms of poverty are just as prevalent. Being housebound can be as depressing as being homeless. Loneliness can affect all of us even in a crowded town.

Surely an important part of our church's mission is to reach out with love to our neighbours, regardless of their race or religion. Thankfully that is already happening, but there is still much to do. Imagine what our church will be like in 130 years time and let's make that our target now!



Care Time



A number of our church family have been unwell recently, and we ask you to remember them in your prayers.

Dora Camp has returned home following a spell in hospital over Christmas, and is slowly getting better. Mary Ecclestone is in hospital following a fall, but is making progress. Mary Heuch and Rose Trundle, in Broome End, have been unwell. Sue Petch is having an operation on her neck.

We are pleased to report that Valerie Trundle and Arthur Law have both been given the 'all clear' following their treatments. Hazel Fuller who is in Humfrey Lodge, Thaxted says "Thank you for all your good wishes at Christmas. Glad to say I am still on my feet. Kindest regards to everyone".

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The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on Sunday 25th February. Please submit articles by 18th February. If you have email access, then we would prefer your articles to be sent to: news@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk.

Alternatively, please pass to one of the editors, or send to 23A Bentfield Road, Stansted CM24 8HP. If you have any queries, please telephone us. Thank you.

All Change

Farewell ...

Last month you will have read that **David Simpson**, our URC minister is to retire at the end of March. His last service with us will be on 18th March, when Keith and David will be leading the communion service together. This will be followed by a church lunch, and we do hope you will join us. If you know of any 'past' members who may like to attend, please let Betty know.

Methodist Ministers are appointed for a fixed length of time, and sadly, **Keith Page**, our Methodist Minister is also due to leave us this year. Keith, Fran and Ros will be moving to the Southend and Leigh circuit, where he will have responsibility for three churches, including New Road, the famous 'Fishermen's Church'. Keith's last service with us will be on 15th July.

Welcome ...

In Keith's place, we shall be welcoming Rev **David Mullins**, his wife **Louise**, and their two teenage daughters. David is currently superintendent of the Muswell Hill Circuit in London. David's welcome service will be at 6.30 pm on Sunday 2nd September in Bishop's Stortford and will be led by the Methodist District Chair, Rev Anne Brown, who participated in our special celebration service on 5th November. More details about David and his family will follow.

We are delighted that Rev **Stuart Veitch** and his wife **Brenda** have retired to Stansted. Stuart is an active supernumerary Methodist minister, which means that from time to time he will be taking services at our church and the other churches in the Bishop's Stortford Methodist Circuit. Stuart and Brenda are joining our church, and we shall be officially welcoming them during our communion service on 18th February. As a minister, Stuart's membership is held 'centrally', but Brenda will be transferring her membership to us. Brenda will be the first 'new' member to join our joint church.

What's on in February

Sunday Worship

4 th	10.30 am	Mike Dyer & The Free Team - All Age Worship <i>'Ordinary People - Extraordinary God'</i>
4 th	2.30 pm	Rev David Simpson <i>followed by tea in the foyer - all welcome</i>
11 th	10.30 am	Ken Mark
18 th	10.30 am	Rev David Simpson Communion & welcome to new members
25 th	10.30 am	Nigel Courtman

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

Please join us!

Other Activities

Sun	4 th	3.30 pm	Afternoon Tea
Mon	5 th	6.00 pm	Pilots in the Hall, for children aged 5 - 18
Sat	10 th	10.00 am	Church Meeting in the Hall
Mon	12 th	8.00 pm	Shalom in the Hall
Mon	19 th	12.30 pm 6.00 pm	Monday Club Lunch Pilots in the Hall, for children aged 5 - 18
Mon	26 th	8.00 pm	Shalom at 7 Blythwood Gardens

From the Secretary

I've lots of dates for you this month. Again this year there will be an afternoon and evening **Lent Course** organised by CTS. We shall follow the York course; each week will have a different theme so if you can't make all the meetings it won't matter, just pick and mix whichever suits you. We will all join together for an Agape meal on Sunday 1st April at 6.30pm.

Evenings 8pm at our Church.

Feb: Tue 27 March: Fri 9th Wed 14th Mon 19th Wed 28th

Tuesday Afternoons 2pm at 49 Recreation Ground (the Dean's)

Feb 20th March 6th 13th 20th 27th

Now for various dates for the rest of the year.

David's last service will be on 18th March at 10.30 followed by a **church lunch**. Please can I have names for the lunch and any donations for a gift to me by 18th February, if possible please.

On **Maundy Thursday evening**, 5th April, you have the choice of joining with Water Lane, Bishops Stortford or Bishops Stortford Methodists; the times will be in next month's newsletter. The 10.30 **Good Friday** service here will be led by Keith, and **Easter Sunday** by Rev Stuart Veitch.

After the 'leaving dos' for our two ministers, it will be nice to have a happier occasion to celebrate, so we are planning a tea on September 2nd for the **Church's 1st birthday**.

Finally, our **Harvest Festival** will be on September 30th followed by lunch. We are hoping that David and Louise Mullins will come to the lunch and it will give us a chance to get to know them.

Nearly forgot, the next **Church Meeting** is at 10 am on 10th February. We have changed the meetings to Saturday mornings during the winter so that people do not have to turn out at night. Please come if you can; it really is important to have everyone's input when we are making decisions. Anyone who attends the church is welcome to come (but only members can vote).

As always, everyone is welcome at all these events - hope to see you there.

From the Ministers

Scene - David and Keith in a café sharing lunch.

Keith: Well David, it's one of those times in which we seem to be looking at the past as well as towards the future. You are going in one direction, and me the other.



David: Yes, you to Leigh on Sea and me to Princes Risborough. It's a strange time of waiting - an 'in between' time. I'm not looking forward to retiring and leaving dear friends behind, but at the same time it's exciting wondering about what the future might bring. Yes, first a sabbatical, in which to listen to what I may be called to next.

Keith: Yes, that's interesting. For me, of course, it's a new appointment - I've had my sabbatical - thank you very much! I'm still here until the summer, so that's my focus, but once and a while my mind reflects on what is to be. Establishing the LEP at Stansted has been hard work but rewarding.

David: Absolutely. We have planted the seeds - it's time for others to take it from here. It's time for the church and those who take our place to take it on and run with it. Knowing this church, I am sure they will grasp the opportunities as they are presented.

Keith: Just as we are looking forward, so the church must also be looking forward to its future. Stansted's changing in a big way. What will it be like, I wonder, in 5 or 10 years time?

David: Yes, Keith, it's not just about the church - it's about the community in which it's placed. I hope in 5 years time the church will have developed to meet these changes.

Keith: It's good to dream a bit. Just think - families, young people, continued growth, work in the new housing developments - perhaps some younger faces to help share the workload.

David: Yes, new ideas and new gifts too. The church has so much to offer and so much to receive. In other words, getting on with the things that really matter.

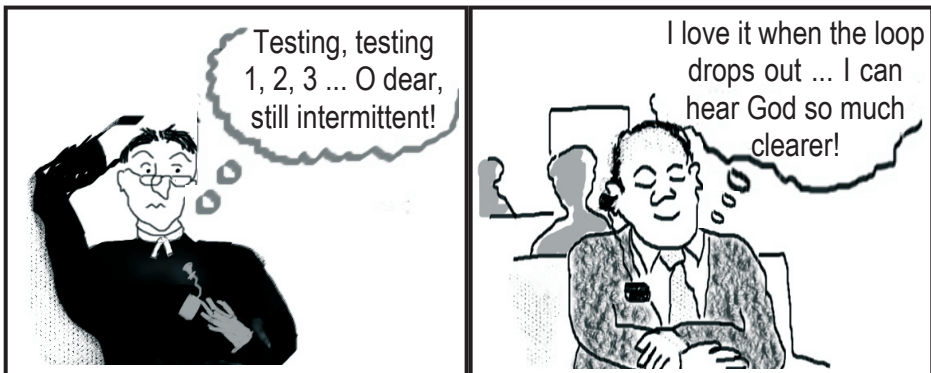
Keith: Like God's love and that every human being is precious.

The waitress brings the bill.

David: I don't know about you Keith, but I sense a real spirit in the air at Stansted Free Church and if I'm right, this church is about to be completely transformed - it's an exciting thought!

Keith: Amen to that! I feel that it has made changes in me. But there is still one thing of great importance that still needs to be sorted - who's turn is it to pay the bill? I'm sure I paid it last time

David: You always say that! O dear - a Scot and a Jew arguing over the bill, we'll be here all night!



New directions in worship - 7th January 'Getting changed'

A new year's resolution is about changing some aspect of your life. We have now had the third of our morning services which endeavour to change an aspect of our worship. When we joined together as one church it gave us an unexpected opportunity to have both a morning and afternoon service on the first Sunday of each month. The morning service would be something different - inclusive of all age groups, more informal and would try out new ways of engaging together with God's message.



For example, you are likely to be given something to read or asked a question about a biblical character. Dotted around the church there are likely to be pictures related to the theme of the service, which, at some stage the children will collect from you and pin on a frieze at the front of the church... but all in a very comfortable setting. So comfortable that someone is likely to point out your shoelace is undone or rescue a ladybird! And all in a natural feeling way!

Our first 2007 service was called 'Getting Changed'. In a relaxed informal setting we discussed whether we had kept our new year's resolutions a week after making them. Was it even realistic that we should keep them? Jesus says you can't just change inconvenient parts of your life willy-nilly! When we try to change we can't see ourselves as God or others see us, so we don't always know how to change. We sought some clues from well known people who changed, looking at each in turn via the medium of pictures of key turning points in their stories:

The Wise Men changed. Change is sometimes *unexpected*. We must be prepared for this. The 'thing' that the wise men found was not what they expected at all. Change also involves being *wise* to those around us who would frustrate change. Herod wanted the status quo to remain and was prepared to enforce it ruthlessly.

Jonah met change with *anger*. He also found that change was *frightening*. Imagine the claustrophobia inside the whale! Ultimately change meant *obedience* to God. The dialogue between Rachel, Zacchaeus' wife and her neighbour brought home that change doesn't just affect ourselves. We need to be sensitive to others around us as we change.

With Peter, change involved a roller coaster ride of misunderstanding & insight, loyalty & betrayal, impulsive behaviour & thoughtful letter writing, fear & martyrdom... amazing polarities of experience! "Peter you will be taken where you don't want to be taken", Jesus told him.

Change is essential for our spiritual health. It can be a frightening experience. Like our four models we need to trust that we will stay safe and we need to obey. As our final hymn said "There's no other way".

Alan Wheeler

Why not join us as we discover how our
'Extraordinary God' uses 'Ordinary People'?
Sunday 4th February at 10.30. All welcome.

Monday Club

On 19th February, we are meeting at 12.30 for a 1 pm lunch.
On 19th March we return to our usual time of 2.30 pm, when our speaker will be Ted Pretty

Pilots

African Evening

At the end of the Christmas term, our session took the form of an "African Evening". This followed several sessions that had been focused on some of the problems of that continent. Michelle, one of our leaders, brought in various items of interest regarding the varied cultures, including clothing and wooden carvings. North Africa was represented by a small group of dancers that included some of our own Pilot members. Their costumes were very colourful and the evening was enjoyed by everyone!

Easter Term

We will be meeting on the following Mondays from 6 - 7.30 pm:

5th & 19th February

5th & 19th March

Our projects for this term are:

Deck Hands and Adventurers:

Collectors Crest: Stamps, Coins, Banknotes and First Day Covers plus any collection owned by the Pilots.

Service Crest: 'Serving the Pilot Company' itself by planning part of an evening for the whole company.

Voyagers:

Service Seal: 'Serving the Pilot Company' itself by planning an entire evening for the younger children.

For all groups:

A Village Quiz walk.

For further information about Pilots, please contact me.

Valerie Trundle (Captain) 813433
Email: pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



Answers to last month's questions

1 If I had a white stone what would be written on it?

Revelation 2:17: "a new name" Reminds us that Jesus knows each of us in a very personal way, to the point that he calls us by a name only shared between us. Greeks used black stones to vote NO, white to vote YES. A white stone is a YES vote for Jesus.

2 Which word was wrong with the Temperance Seven?

The Temperance Seven were formed at the Royal College of Art during 1957. The band usually had nine members (one over the eight!) which could of course mean temperance was wrong as well!

3 A kumquat means golden yellow but in which language?

Chinese (Cantonese). It comes from the Chinese kam = gold and kwat = orange.

4 Why does hair go grey?

The follicles at the base of the hair shaft cease to produce melanin. Genetic makeup determines the timing. Lack of vitamins or disease can accelerate the process but not stress or shock.

5 Where are the seven deadly sins in the Bible?

Nowhere. Those in Matt chap 5 - 7 and Proverbs 6: 6 - 9 are a different list.



Shalom

On 12th February, Amy Walker will talk to us about her experiences as Youth Worker at Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church. This meeting will be in our church hall.

Then on 26th February, one of our own members, Richard Lavender, will be talking about his work with The Gideons. This will be at 7 Blythwood Gardens.

Both these evenings promise to be very interesting. Meetings start at 8pm and everyone is most welcome – please join us. Tel 81 3579.

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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. Tel 813433