

Imagine!

February
2011



I imagine the state of mind of those Chilean miners, hearing the first attempted drilling miss the chamber where they were trapped deep underground. Later, one of the freed men, an Evangelical Christian, reported how they said now only God could get them out! Known for his professed faith, it was to him the others looked. As their foreman, he gave each a task. Try imagining the utter relief felt by those men at that glorious inrush of clean air; rescue had come nearer than had once seemed possible. Many hailed the freeing of those men as miraculous. In this instance, faith was a combination of hope and discipline engendered among the trapped miners by their temporary 'pastor', paralleled by the determination and skill of the engineers above ground working tirelessly to locate and free their fellows.

Yet, not always and in every case does even the most sublimely persistent faith give the result most desired. Not long after the Chilean miners' rescue, an accident happened in a New Zealand mine; where all the trapped men died. Rescuers could only work to recover the bodies. If we say that God helped the one set of miners, what was God doing for the others? Surely God does not play roulette or lottery with human lives? Some would argue for atheism as the only reasonable answer.

We must start from somewhere else, because this is a 'Why?' question: why, if God cares, does he not care for each and all equally? Rabbi Harold Kushner, in *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, argues from his own personal tragedy that asking 'Why?' embitters. He declared instead, 'Now that this has happened, what shall I do?' Choosing this option opens the door of the beckoning future of the life now to be lived.

Allen Morton



Care Time



Please remember in your prayers:

Gladys Dix, who has suffered several strokes and is in Harlow Hospital; Sue Parker and family; Ivor Thomas, Chris Coetzee and those no longer able to attend church.

Please also remember that the prayer slips are available for Sunday morning worship and if you are unable to be at church, please pass your requests to Marion Pretty or me and we will make sure the preacher for that Sunday knows.

Betty 813977

info@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

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The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on Sunday 27th February. Please submit articles by Friday 18th February 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 February

Worship at Stansted Free Church

6th 10.30 am Rev Stuart Veitch & Worship Leaders - New Directions
13th 10.30 am Rev David Keeble
20th 10.30 am Rev Allen Morton - Communion
27th 10.30 am Janet Bottoms

Morning worship is followed by coffee. All are welcome.

Other Activities

Wed 2nd 8.00 pm Taizé Service at St John's
Mon 7th 6.00 pm Pilots in the Hall
Sun 13th 11.30 am Fairtrade goods on sale after service
Mon 14th 8.00 pm Shalom 7 Blythwood Gardens
Rev David Keeble - Bible Study
Mon 28th 6.00 pm Pilots in the Hall
8.00 pm Shalom At Home 13 Blackbushe, B Stortford
8.00 pm Circuit Finance meeting in the Hall

March

Wed 2nd 10.30 am Big Brew Coffee Morning and Fairtrade stall
in the Foyer
Fri 4th 2.00 pm Women's World day of Prayer Service
St John's Church - Canon Jane Freeman

Whitechapel Mission

St John's Church has a regular collection point at the back of the church (which is open every day during daylight hours), where you can take breakfast cereals, tinned beans and tomatoes, tea, coffee, toiletries, ladies' and men's clothing, gloves, scarves and socks etc. Volunteers from the church take the goods to Whitechapel every couple of weeks.

Pilots

On 24th January we welcomed our Pilots back to the first evening after Christmas. We began by talking about an important thing in all our lives - water. We looked at how often we use water, and how much we use. Then we watched a short film about disadvantaged children in Africa, who go a week at a time without water, and even then it's not clean or safe. We talked about how we wished we could give water to those in need. We then spent a while making cardboard wells, which are shown in the picture below.



We played various water related games, and then finished with a Bible story and some creative prayer. We all wrote what we'd like to thank God for on cut-out fish (to go with the water theme). The children really enjoyed the evening. If any of our church members have any children or grandchildren ages 5-14, then bring them along to pilots! They will have a lovely time and we would love to have them.

Lyndsey Barnes

Remaining dates for this term, Mondays 6 - 7.30 pm:

February 7th & 28th, March 14th & 28th.

*Valerie Trundle, Captain 813433
pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk*

Church Family News

Mary Heuch is settling into her new home near her son. She would be pleased to hear from members and friends. Her address is:

The New Close
Conyngham Lane
Bridge
Canterbury
CT4 5JX



LENT GROUPS

Exploring the Word of God in Scripture

(produced by The Methodist Church)

Meet from 8 - 9 pm:

Wed 16 Mar	Quaker Meeting House - led by the Friends
Tue 22 Mar	Free Church Hall - led by David Morson
Wed 30 Mar	St John's Church - led by Rev Giles Tulk
Tue 5 Apr	Free Church Hall - led by Rev David Keeble
Wed 13 Apr	St John's Church - led by Rev Paul Wilkin

There will be no Agape but the final session will be followed by a glass of wine

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

Biblefresh 2011

10 am - 4.30 pm Saturday 9th April
Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church

The Biblefresh festival provides an opportunity to come and celebrate and engage with the Bible in a number of different ways. Throughout the day there will be worship, music, workshops, speakers and more. This looks to be a very exciting day and four of us have already signed up! For more information and a booking form contact me or visit: www.behdistrict.org.uk/biblefresh2011

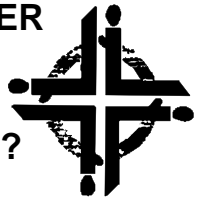
Marion Dyer
marion@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

(International and Interdenominational)

HOW MANY LOAVES HAVE YOU?



2 pm Friday 4th March St John's Church

Led by Canon Jane Freeman

On Friday March 4th women from around the world will celebrate the Women's World Day of Prayer. The service has been written by the women of Chile. It is an appropriate theme, for bread is eaten at every meal and is very much part of everyday life. The women of Chile offer what it means to them as they share this service with us.

Jean Hackett, president of the National Committee of the Women's World Day of Prayer Movement, said: "This is always an exciting day as a great wave of prayer sweeps the world, beginning when the first service is held in Tonga and continuing around the world until the final service takes place, some 35 hours later, in neighbouring Western Samoa. By then the day will have been celebrated in over 170 countries and over 5,000 services will have been held in England, Wales and Northern Ireland."

Stretching from Peru to Antarctica, the Republic of Chile occupies a long narrow strip of land 2,640 miles long and 110 miles wide. It is a land of incredible contrasts. It also has the highest incidence of domestic violence in Latin America and most women suffer from discrimination in some form or other. Equal Opportunities is being pursued.

Although organised and led by women, this is essentially a day of prayer for everybody, as we demonstrate our solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other countries; all are welcome to attend. Further information can be found on the WWDP website at www.wwdp-natcomm.org.

Come and join Stansted's celebration at 2 pm in St John's Church.

All welcome - men and woman! Please contact me for more details.

Brenda Veitch



The next Traidcraft stalls will be after the service on Sundays 13th February and 13th March. 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 28th February to 13th March

This is the time of year when a number of retailers such as the Co-op offer discounts on Fairtrade goods, so why not take a look, but don't forget to also support my event below!

Brenda

fairtrade@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



BIG BREW

COFFEE MORNING

& SALE OF FAIRTRADE GOODS

10.30 am - 12.30 pm

Wednesday 2nd March

Stansted Free Church Foyer

All are warmly invited ~ Come and browse!



Shalom

Please join us - all welcome

Meetings are 8 pm

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 14th Feb | 7 Blythwood Gardens - Rev David Keeble
Bible Study 'Love Is?' based on 1 Corinthians 13 |
| 28th Feb | 13 Blackbushe, Bishop's Stortford
Informal 'At Home' |

Marion Dyer

Stansted Free Church

Methodist / URC

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Contacts

Ministers

Rev David Keeble

Rev Allen Morton

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Fairtrade

Brenda Veitch

Email: 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