

# Imagine!

Stansted Free Church



Imagine  
keeping to your  
resolutions!

“Imagine what scheme Gaspar has cooked up!” My wife looks at me askance again. I can see her thinking “Melchior, you have everything here in this paradise on the lower Euphrates. Why must you wander again?”.

Silently I pack everything. I go to defend my religion against Gaspar who says there is a new magnificent religion about to come to life. Why can't he be content with his home religion?



It always suited his forefathers.

Back in Oman he has fashioned a costly nugget of gold - sold all his furniture to buy it.

“This will honour the King of my new religion” he says. He has chosen a symbol of glory.

Cynically I choose a symbol of death. I take some of the myrrh we use to embalm our dead.

I meet him by the oasis. It is night. A pungent aroma of frankincense fills the air. A retinue of camels appears over the dunes. Behind the giant silhouette of Balthasar an extraordinary star glows just above the horizon. “Aha, you’ve seen it too then?” he chuckles. “You know what it means? The new mighty conquering King is appearing and he will sweep the Romans away!” Gaspar ponders for a moment “Can’t be that. A new religion is being born somewhere up in the north. That’ll be what it is about. Shall we go together and find it?”

Balthasar shows me the aromatic frankincense he has stowed away. As the camels move away across the desert I remount and the bitter odour of the myrrh catches in my throat. "These young kings so full of vigour about to ride across the desert chasing the mirage of new life. All I can see is death. It will all come to no good! I shall defend what I have against all this nonsense," I grumble to myself as I lag behind the others. "It's all doomed," I mutter.

Then suddenly it is as if an epiphany shakes my mind into life. Scales fall from my eyes. The horizon is alight with a mysterious glowing. It's almost as if angels fill the sky. It's as if I am being reborn and entering a new life. In rapture I ride with a new confidence into this beckoning land of Judah.

*Alan Wheeler*

In this issue:	Page
Services and Events	3
The Original Wise Men	4
Christmas Collection	4
Christmas Events	5
Deck the Halls revisited	6
Monday Club	6
Care Time	6
Pilots	7
Contacts and regular events	Back cover

The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on Sunday 27th January. Please submit articles by Friday 19th January. If you have email access, then we would prefer your articles to be sent 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.

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

# What's on in January

## Worship at Stansted Free Church

6th	10.30 am	Rev Stuart Veitch - Baptismal Service
	2.30 pm	No service
13th	2.30 pm	Visiting Preacher <i>Note change of service time</i>
20th	10.30 am	Rev David Mullins - Covenant Service Preacher Rev Paul Wilkin
27th	10.30 am	Rev John Buxton

***Our worship is followed by coffee and tea. Please join us!***

## Other Activities

Sun 6th	3.30 pm	NO Outreach Tea
Mon 14th	8.00 pm	Joint Church Meeting at Water Lane URC
	8.00 pm	Shalom in the Hall - Pot Pourri Discussion
Mon 21st	12.30 pm	Monday Club Lunch at The Cock
	6.00 pm	Pilots in the Hall
Mon 28th	8.00 pm	Shalom in the Hall Video about Solzhenitsyn's Nobel Prize

### **Baptism of Kieran Van de Noort on 6th January**

We are delighted that Audrey and Harry Van de Noort are bringing their son Kieran to be baptised in our church. This will be our first baptism since we became a joint church. We extend a warm welcome to Kieran, his godparents Wendy and Martyn, Audrey, Harry, and their families. We remember them all in our prayers.

## The Original Wise Men

### **Where did they come from?**

The East of course! Persia or Parthia is the popular answer but the Chinese say Han dynasty astrologer, Liu Shang, discovered the "king star" and mysteriously disappeared for two years after its discovery.

### **How many were there?**

Three? Not necessarily. They had three gifts but the Bible doesn't say they were three men. And where were the wise women????

### **Why were they called wise men?**

Some say that the word magi (meaning wise men) was dropped to avoid any negative connection with the evil Simon Magus, a sorcerer in Acts.

### **Do we know their names?**

Different traditions have different names. Ethiopia has Hor, Karsudan, and Basanater, while the Armenians have Kagbha, Badadakharida and Badadilma. Syria has very Persian sounding names of Larvandad, Gushnasaph, and Hormisdas. In the West the favoured names are Balthasar, Gaspar and Melchior.

### **What happened to them?**

Marco Polo claimed that he was shown the three tombs of the Magi at Saveh south of Tehran in the 1270s. Yet a Shrine of the Three Kings at Cologne Cathedral, according to tradition, contains their bones.

### **Were they wise?**

After all, wouldn't sugar, soap, and candles have been wiser gifts?

### **What happened to the gifts?**

Some say the gold was stolen by the two thieves who were later crucified alongside Jesus. Another tale has it being entrusted to and then misappropriated by Judas. Another story is that the family quickly pawned or sold them and later used the money to finance their flight to Egypt.

## Christmas Collection

Our Christmas Collection this year raised the superb sum of £120 for the Bangladesh Appeal. Many thanks to all who contributed.

*The Treasurers*

## Christmas Events



Ecumenical Carol Singing  
around the village raised  
£300 for MIND

Advent Sunday All Age Worship  
included a 'prayer tree' and  
individual advent candles



Carol Service  
23rd December



It was lovely to see the  
church full for our first  
Stansted Free Church  
Carol Service





## Care Time



We bring to you those who are unwell or who have lost loved ones: Ronald & Nancy Rawlings; Gladys Dix; Rev Lydia Rapkin (former URC minister) and her sister Muriel Dalley (URC group secretary for many years); and Rev Michael Hayman (former Methodist minister) who has had arterial stents fitted following chest pains and a collapse whilst on holiday. We also think of Mary Heuch and Ivor Thomas who are no longer able to attend church as often as they would like. Please remember them all in your prayers.

### Deck the Halls revisited

*We are very grateful to Phyllis Harrison who was commissioned to write new words to this well known carol tune for the choir to sing at our Carol Service*

Deck the halls with chains of ivy *Fa la la la la, la la la la*  
'Tis the season to be lively *Fa la la la la, la la la la*  
Greet the guests and mend the quarrel *Fa la la, la la la, la la la*  
Troll the ancient Christmas carol *Fa la la la la, la la la la*

Now the shopping chores are done with *Fa la la la la, la la la la*  
Sin(g!) with those you've never sung with *Fa la la la la, la la la la*  
Follow us in joyful measure *Fa la la, la la la, la la la*  
While we sing of heaven's treasure *Fa la la la la, la la la la*

Fast away the year end passes *Fa la la la la, la la la la*  
Soon to jobs and homes and classes *Fa la la la la, la la la la*  
Still to church in any weather *Fa la la, la la la, la la la*  
Praying, playing all together *Fa la la la la, la la la la*

*Phyllis Harrison*

### Monday Club

We will be starting the New Year with a lunch at the Cock Inn, Silver Street on January 21<sup>st</sup>. Our Meetings in the Free Church Hall begin again on February 18<sup>th</sup> at 2.30pm. Happy New Year to all.

*Phyllis Little*



# Pilots

Dates this term 6 pm: Jan 21st, Feb 4th & 18th, Mar 10th & 17th

## THE PEACE BOX

The Peace Box is a key activity for the whole of the Peace Builders project. The Peace Box idea grew out of the part of worship where we 'Pass the Peace' to each other as a sign of being a community which is forgiven by God for all that we have done wrong.

It is hoped that the Peace Box will become a tool for our Pilot Group to 'Pass the Peace' beyond the walls of the church. By passing the Peace Box around, the Pilots will be able to express to those in the community their desire for peace to be an integral part of community life.



The children have made and placed a Peace Box in the front porch of the church.

We invite church members and friends to place in the box their thoughts and prayers about peace.

Another Peace Box is out in the community and next term will be in Bentfield School for a few weeks.

We hope to open the boxes at the end of the term and maybe have a special evening where the contents can be read out and talked about so that the children can feel a real part of church life within the community. Please help us to achieve this for our young people by placing your thoughts in our box.

Henry Playle, our URC Youth Development Officer will be working with our older Pilots on a regular basis during the Easter term.

*Valerie Trundle*

# **Stansted Free Church**

## **Methodist / URC**

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

### **Contacts**

(All telephone numbers are 01279 unless otherwise stated)

#### **Minister**

Rev David Mullins

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

URC Interim Moderator Rev Janet Tollington

#### **Church Secretary**

Betty Francis

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

#### **Lettings & Church Notices**

Janet Townsend

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

#### **Newsletter Editors**

Alan Wheeler     Mike & Marion Dyer

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

#### **Pilots**

Valerie Trundle

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

### **Sunday Services**

#### **1st Sunday in each month (except this 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