

Imagine!



Imagine what
YOU can do in
2010

I imagine having to take the Covenant Service promises seriously. Just suppose we really meant them. And suppose God took them seriously too; what would we be letting ourselves into? We'd be like the disciples, who one minute were fishermen, and the next were fishers of men. Off they went, leaving behind all security, and allowing a wandering teacher to take control of where they went and what they did. I suppose there would be an element of excitement in doing that, but what a risk!

Today we are deeply enmeshed by a culture of risk management. Things that we did as children we would not now dare to let our grandchildren do; we are 'managing risks', and so everything is 'safe'. Of course that means life might also be a lot less exciting, less adventurous. We spend a lot of time working out whether the risk is worth it. So much so that the opportunity, whatever it was, may well have passed us by, and we feel a sense of relief but perhaps tinged with a slight feeling of regret, when we find the question of whether to take the risk has gone out of our hands because we are too late. But then I suppose that is the world we live in. It's safer by far to play 'virtual' games on the computer, or read a book and experience life's adventures through someone else, and manage the real risks to ourselves or our loved ones to completely safe levels.

But the covenant promises contain no 'risk assessment', no 'get out' clause, if God were to take them seriously. Imagine reciting the covenant prayer but adding the condition *only if you (God) don't take advantage of me*. You and I would never do that

would we? Those promises are not like New Year resolutions, to be taken seriously only on January 1st, acknowledged vaguely on January 6th and lost without trace by January 10th.

So imagine if we took the Covenant Promises seriously and God also took them seriously, what might happen then? We'd become disciples, I suppose. Just imagine that. And if all the Christians all over the world did the same, just imagine what might happen then?

Stuart Veitch

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The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on Sunday 31st January. Please submit articles by Friday 22nd January 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 January

Worship at Stansted Free Church

3rd	10.30 am	Julie Finbow
10th	10.30 am	Rev David Mullins Covenant Service & Holy Communion
17th	10.30 am	Rev Allen Morton
24th	10.30 am	Faith Paulding
31st	10.30 am	Rev David Mullins

Morning worship is followed by coffee. All are welcome.

Other Activities

Sun 10th	11.30 am	Fairtrade goods on sale after service
Mon 11th	8.00 pm	Shalom at 7 Blythwood Gardens
Wed 13th	8.00 pm	Circuit Network Meeting in the Foyer
Mon 25th	6.00 pm	Pilots in the Hall
	8.00 pm	Shalom at 7 Blythwood Gardens
Sat 30th	10.30 am	Church meeting in the Hall

Café Worship returns to Stansted Free Church

7 pm Sunday 14th February

led by Rev David Mullins

assisted by worship leaders from Stansted Free Church
and Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church

A Café style Circuit Service with coffee during the service

Open to all - please join us!

Pilots' Christingle Service

On 7th December, parents and church members joined the Pilots for their first Christingle Service, led by Allen Morton.



The Pilots had all made Christingles during the preceding Pilots session, which were then lit during the service.

Arthur had made the beautiful 'painted glass windows' shown here.

As well as readings and carols, the service also included a video about the Missionary Aviation Fellowship.

After the service, everyone gathered in the hall for refreshments.



A big thank you to all those who supported us.

Valerie Trundle, Captain
813433

pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Monday Club

It is with regret that I have to tell you that our Monday Club has finally had to close after nearly ten years since its inception in January 2000 with 38 members. Sadly many of our dear friends are no longer with us and we felt it was better to close now when we are still enjoying it and can meet together for coffee.

Our last meeting took place in November with 18 members enjoying lunch at The Cock, which made a lovely ending to the many happy years. I would like to thank you warmly for your support; we could not have had our meetings without you and all the willing hands who worked together to make tea, wash up and set up tables and chairs. I would like to particularly thank Gladys for her help and Ann for her opening prayers and for introducing our speakers. Best wishes to you all for the New Year.

Phyllis Little



Shalom Please join us - all welcome

Meetings are 8 pm at 7 Blythwood Gdns unless otherwise stated

Shalom now meets on the 2nd Monday of each month for a more formal session, and on the 4th Monday of each month for an informal 'At Home'. Future dates are:

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|----------|--|
| 11th Jan | Video and Discussion |
| 25th Jan | At Home |
| 8th Feb | Rev Giles Tulk: 'How does the church respond to 21st Century Society?' |

Marion Dyer
marion@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Important Church Meeting

Our next Church Meeting will be at 10.30 am on Saturday 30th January. By having the meeting on a Saturday morning rather than an evening we hope to encourage more people to attend. The meeting will particularly focus on looking at the future of our church, and setting some achievable targets for ourselves in line with the Vision 2020 which Allen Morton has outlined below. We really would like to hear everyone's views so please make the effort to attend if you can. If you are not able to attend but have some ideas, please pass them to Betty, David or Allen before the meeting.

Local Mission Pledge

Saturday 30th January is a very important date in the life of Stansted Free Church. Members will meet to consider making our church's local mission pledge for the coming year or two, as our practical response to the 2020 Vision consultation. The 2020 Vision is part of the overall United Reformed Church's Vision 4 Life renewal process with its three stages, seeking to help every member renew their relationship with the Bible, Prayer and Evangelism. The 2020 Vision consultation invites each local church to ask: Where would we like the United Reformed Church to be in 10 years time, locally and nationally? Ten statements were offered for discussion and response:

By 2020

- Every local church will be able to say who they are, and what they do and why they do it
- We will have grown in our practice of prayer
- We will be more confident in our identity, when it comes to working ecumenically
- We will be a church that is more active in the life of local neighbourhoods

- We will be a diverse church that does more to welcome and include all people equally
- We will be more confident to engage in evangelism, in whatever way that finds expression
- We will be a growing church with an increasing membership
- We will be a church that is an active partner in God's global mission with other churches around the world
- We will be a church that keeps faith with the poor and challenges injustice
- We will be a denomination where each congregation has taken different steps to safeguard the integrity of creation, to sustain and renew the life of the earth.

As a further step in this envisioning the life of the church, each congregation is encouraged to make its own local mission pledge. What do we want to achieve in the next two or three years? That shorter time-frame makes the issue more immediate and manageable. Whatever we pledge as a congregation has to be realisable in that time. Then we would review the outcome and consider a further pledge to take us forward. David Mullins and I, together with the Church Oversight Group, very much hope that as many members as possible will join us for this exciting morning's work, starting at 10.30 am in the Hall.

Allen Morton



The next **Traidcraft** stalls will be after the service on Sundays 10th January and 7th February. If you would like any fairtrade goods at other times, just give me a call. Catalogues are still in the foyer

Brenda 815819

fairtrade@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Stansted Free Church

Methodist / URC

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Brenda Veitch

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Sunday Service

10.30 am Morning Worship

New Directions - our bi-monthly service in a less formal style

Children's Work

Alternate Mondays 6 pm Pilots for children aged 5 - 18 years.

Valerie Trundle Email: pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk