

Imagine!

January
2012



I imagine you were the second hand on a clock and that everyone is staring at you as you rise towards the top of your climb. Then they all go berserk with salutations and toasting one another. What, you think to yourself, have I done to deserve such acclamation? But it is very short lived; they don't look back at you again. You go round and round day after day and no-one takes any notice; sometimes you wonder why you bother? But just once in a while you seem to become the centre of attention again.

Time passes on and on; with it we age. We are all one year older than when the second hand last got so much attention. We all live 'in time'. Does God, do you think? Can he fast reverse or fast forward? Can he exist outside time altogether? Don't actions need to have a beginning, a middle, and an end, for them to exist at all? Can we have free will if God can dance about all over the 'time shop' as it were? Is it possible that God is stuck with some sort of time, even if it bears no relation to our short lived day and year etc?

Well, all will be revealed one day, and no doubt it will seem pretty trivial then. Meanwhile we are all getting older, minute by minute, and at precisely the same rate. And some people put an enormous amount of effort into trying to stave off the effects of time for as long as they possibly can. When, very many years ago, I commented to my granny about her age, she remarked that her aim was to grow old gracefully.

A New Year. A time to be reminded of the passing of time.

Would you take my Granny's advice, grow old gracefully, beautifully, thankfully, generously, patiently? It would be a real lesson to our younger generation about Christian lifestyle if we did, and it might be a lot less stressful for ourselves too.

Stuart Veitch



Care Time



It was good to see Allen and Daphne Morton (our former URC minister and his wife) recently, and we continue to pray for them as Allen settles into retirement.

Please pray for the Church Oversight Group as they prepare the profile for our new URC minister.

David Simpson, the first URC minister of our joint church, has ruptured his Achilles tendon and is using a wheelchair to get around. We remember him and any of our wider church family who need our prayers, and those no longer able to attend church.

Betty 813977

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The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on Sunday 29th January. Please submit articles by Friday 13th 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

- 1st 10.30 am Rev'd David Mullins
8th 10.30 am Andrew Brown
15th 10.30 am Rev'd David Keeble
Covenant Service with Holy Communion
22nd 10.30 am Penny Flynn
29th 10.30 am Mike Render

**Services will be held in the hall during January and February
Morning worship is followed by coffee. All are welcome.**

Other Activities

- Sun 8th 11.30 am Fairtrade goods on sale after service
Fri 20th 7.30 pm Public meeting re proposed new Health
Centre in the Hall
Mon 23rd 6.00 pm Pilots in the Hall
8.00 pm Shalom at Home - 7 Blythwood Gardens
Sat 28th 10.30 am Church Meeting in the Hall

The Shape of our Church to Come

In the mists and maze at this point in our church life we search for a sure path into the future. It has always been so in every age. Christ beckons us on to challenging new paths. As we contemplate the particular path that we must follow, we need to revitalise ourselves so that we can be prepared to think anew what it means to be Stansted Free Church. So we are embarking on a new course, **Mission Shaped Intro**, with our friends from St John's Church. This is for **everyone** and we do hope you will take part. The sessions will be led jointly by Rev'd David Keeble and Rev'd Paul Wilkin and are on **Wednesdays** at 8 pm in the hall: **29 February, 7, 14, 21, 28 March**. More details to follow.

Christmas Greetings

As *Imagine* will be available on December 25th I thought it would be an excellent opportunity to wish all my friends at Stansted Free Church a very happy and special day whatever you may be doing and whoever you are with. I am very lucky to be sharing this Christmas with two of my daughters and four of my grandchildren in Australia and I am sure it will be a time to remember, but I shall think of you all back home.

I have spent several Christmases in warm climates and one in Baghdad, where it was bitterly cold and the earth really did stand 'hard as iron'. We had a dust storm on Christmas Eve that covered everything in the house with a fine dust including the Christmas cake; but I never remember seeing as many stars in the skies as I did there. There was a military coup at the time and we were not allowed out after 7pm; but the expatriates - some of them British - decided to put on a pantomime and show everybody the stuff we were made of! So 'Goody Two Shoes' was launched to the bewilderment of most of the Iraqis and some Europeans, although the cast included Norwegian, Dutch, South African, German as well as Scots, Welsh and English. We rehearsed during the day and luckily had amongst us one of those pianists who can play anything by ear. Half the audience could not understand the concept of a Dame who was an old man and a young love-sick boy who was a girl!

I can't remember the story-line of Goody Two-Shoes but there was a Dame and two young lovers. We all sang and danced to the pop songs of the day and generally made fools of ourselves, but had a lot of fun despite the frightening times we were living in. I don't think my eldest daughter, who was four years old, was very impressed - she cried when she saw me up on the stage! It was difficult to find gifts, especially toys, to buy in the shops and food was not very plentiful but it didn't seem to matter, as we felt nearer to Bethlehem than Christmas than we had ever been, and it was a very memorable experience.

Happy Christmas everyone.

Judy Colliver

Recent Church Events



Representatives from Pilots at the Village Remembrance Day Parade and Service

Our Carol and Gift Service was prepared by Brenda, Catherine and Valerie.

It was a very thought provoking time of praise and worship.



The service was very well attended and it was good to have so many people taking part.

The gifts will be taken to Whitechapel Mission

Pilots

Extracts from a letter sent by Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF):

On behalf of those overseas who will benefit from your concern, please accept our warmest thanks for the kind gift of £27 from the Pilot Group at Stansted Free Church following David and Michelle King's recent visit. Please pass on our thanks to all the young people who made this gift possible. Our flights to Dadaab in northern Kenya are still full as the famine relief efforts continue. The team has also flown into Somalia, the first flight into that country for some time. We carried a team of World Vision staff to Hargeisa, where projects include drilling boreholes and rehabilitating clean water storage facilities, as well as providing emergency feeding. Give thanks with us that this flight was possible and please continue to pray for the safety of our team as they fly and for the teams travelling to Dadaab and into Somalia.



A fun evening learning more about MAF from David and Michelle King.

Pilots helped at the Shoebox packing evening in November. Over 300 boxes were sent to Liberia.





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When I left you all at the beginning of August I did not mean to take so long to write and let you know how we were settling in to our new home. My apologies for having taken so long.

At the beginning of August we left for a wedding in Frome, Somerset and then house sat for our daughter and husband whilst they were away in South Africa, and we stayed on until the messiest of our house renovations were complete, finally moving in at the end of September. During that time we had the wall knocked through from the kitchen to the dining room and then promptly switched the rooms which caused a bit of an upheaval but it has definitely been worth it. The well stocked garden needs quite a lot of tlc and we have already spent a lot of time pruning and digging up brambles.

With such a good railway service to London we have been to London a few times but have spent most of our spare time(!) discovering the delights of the South Downs and the coast. We have begun worshipping at St John's Church, Polegate where we have been made most welcome. John has already found a tennis club and of course from now on we can look forward to seeing more of the pre-Wimbledon tennis at Devonshire Park. I have joined Eastbourne's Sovereign Centre for my early morning swim.

I would like to thank you all, but especially Judy and Marion, for making me so welcome during my time in Stansted and wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Mary Portway

Mary worshipped with us for several months whilst she was staying with her family in Stansted, awaiting the move to Sussex.

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Sunday Service

10.30 am Morning Worship **in the Hall**

Children's Work

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

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