



I imagine that I couldn't imagine anything, that my creativity dried up and nothing but the same old idea just came back to me. I wonder if this ever happens to you?

Imagine what it must be like for our ministers, starting each Monday, looking at the lectionary and wondering how they can produce a sermon for next Sunday. Isn't it a miracle that not only are they able to, but the results are so rewarding and inspiring? Our expectation of them is so high and yet they keep on refreshing our spiritual needs.

The crowds looked on Jesus with the same expectation. A man was cured of a skin disease. Jesus told him not to publicise the cure. Maybe he was too tired to face the crowds. He withdrew to a place on the other side of the lake. Imagine his heart thumping as he saw the first boats coming to the shoreline, about to interrupt his meditation, his special time with the Father! And yet he kept on refreshing the crowds, sometimes in ways that weren't what they expected, sometimes saying things they would rather not have heard. Isn't it extraordinary that the spring doesn't dry up?

Sometimes there are moments when we lack faith and anticipate failure. Yet the well spring is continually pumping forth Living Water, ready at all times to renew us, to recreate us, to surprise us with what we are able to achieve when we had thought we could imagine nothing new! Let's live in eager anticipation, for example, about what David, our Methodist minister will be able to imagine afresh when he returns from his sabbatical!

Alan Wheeler



Care Time



Several of our church family have been in hospital recently but are now back home including Ivor Thomas and Herbert Colliver. Ivor is now back in Elsenham after a short stay in St Margaret's Hospital Epping, followed by a few days with Richard to enable further care to be arranged. Kath Hartnell had a fall and has torn ligaments in her hip and leg, is very immobile and would welcome visitors. At the time of writing, Phyllis Harrison is back in Radwinter Road Hospital. Valerie Trundle is still making slow progress after her accident. We remember also the family of Revd Jim Gill, Methodist Minister, who died at the beginning of February. Please remember these folk and also Phyllis Little and her family in your prayers.

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The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on Sunday 29th March. Please submit articles by Friday 20th March 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 March

Sunday Worship at Stansted Free Church

1 st	10.30 am	Maureen Kendall
8 th	10.30 am	Rev'd David Mullins Holy Communion
15 th	10.30 am	Rev'd Allen Morton New Directions in Worship with the Pilots
22 nd	10.30 am	Julie Finbow
29 th	10.30 am	Rev'd David Thompson

Other Activities

Mon 2 nd	8.00 pm	Shalom at 7 Blythwood Gardens Alan Wheeler: 'Church East - Church West'
Wed 4 th	10.00 am	Coffee Morning & Fairtrade Sale
Thu 5 th	7.30 pm	Lent Group in the Church
Sun 8 th	11.30 am	Fairtrade goods on sale after service
Mon 9 th	6.00 pm	Pilots in the Hall
Tue 10 th	8.00 pm	Church meeting in the Hall
Wed 11 th	7.30 pm	Lent Group in St John's Church
Thu 12 th	8.00 pm	Worship Leaders' Course in the Hall
Mon 16 th	8.00 pm	Shalom in the Hall Edna Goreing: Prayers, Music & Readings Circuit Meeting at Chrishall Methodist Church
Fri 20 th	7.30 pm	Lent Group in the Friends Meeting House
Mon 23 rd	6.00 pm	Pilots in the Hall
Wed 25 th	7.30 pm	Lent Group in the Church (hosted by R C)
Mon 30 th	8.00 pm	Shalom at 7 Blythwood Gardens
Tue 31 st	7.30 pm	Lent Group & Agape in St John's Church

CHURCH MEETING Tuesday 10th March 8 pm

Everyone is welcome to come and share in this meeting. It is your opportunity to express your views on the items discussed, so if you want to know what's happening in the life of the church, be there!



MARCH LENT GROUPS 7.30 pm

A short act of worship in the tradition of the host church, followed by discussion using the York Course: 'These Three - Faith, Hope and Love'.

Thu 5th	Free Church - Believing and Trusting
Wed 11th	St John's Church - The Peace of God
Fri 20th	Friends' Meeting House - Faith into Love
Wed 25th	Free Church (hosted by RC) - The Greatest of These
Tue 31st	St John's Church (Bring & Share Agape)

Methodist World Mission Quiz Sheet

I have produced a quiz sheet to raise money for the Methodist World Mission Fund. The quiz sheet is for the whole of the Bishop's Stortford Circuit. When we were raising money for our re-development several years ago we found it an enjoyable way of fund raising. The challenge is on - 400 copies have been printed (not all for Stansted I hasten to add) and I'm sure you will help us to do our bit by selling a few to your friends and family. Entry fee is £1, and the answers are all stations on the London Underground and Docklands Light Railway; so you'll need to get out your underground map, find the magnifying glass (if your eyesight is anything like mine!) and get the old grey cells working. The closing date is 31st May so there is plenty of time. The winner will be announced at the Church Day in Saffron Walden on 13th June, so please put the date in your diary. This event was very successful last year; there will be a tour of Bridge End Gardens, which are well worth a visit, and lunches and teas in the Methodist Church, Castle Street.

Betty

Advance Notice - Circuit Quiet Day for Everyone

Organised by Bishop's Stortford Circuit Women's Network

Sat 30th May 10 am to 4 pm at Chrishall Methodist Church
led by Brenda and Stuart Veitch

Rev'd Jim Gill

On 1st February, Jim finally lost his nine year battle against cancer. He had been known to both the Methodist and URC congregations for many years as a local preacher, and for introducing them to the Whitechapel Mission. Ten years ago Jim became a Methodist minister, initially appointed for five years as a non-itinerant 'Minister in Local Appointment' to the Methodist churches in Chrishall and Ickleton, where he brought several young families into the church. He was then appointed as assistant minister to Bishop's Stortford, with responsibility for the Stansted Methodist



Church. We enjoyed Jim's energetic and inspiring leadership for only a couple of months before he was moved to the Harlow Circuit, but during that short time Jim encouraged us to pursue our links with the Stansted URC. We were very disappointed to lose Jim, but accepted that Harlow's need was greater than ours. Jim stayed in the Harlow Ecumenical Circuit, recently taking on the pastorate of Hatfield Heath URC.

We have known Jim, his wife Jean, and daughters Fiona and Pauline for over 30 years, as we were all members at Bishop's Stortford church back in the 1970s. Marion and Jim used to swap stories of their bad backs; Jean often sang with Harold Fisher, minister of the church for 13 years, and Marion sometimes accompanied them. Although he declared himself 'not at all musical', Jim was always there to support Jean, as he did the girls who learnt piano with Marion and took part in concerts. Often described as 'a breath of fresh air', Jim was greatly loved and respected by all who knew him and will be very much missed.

Marion and Mike Dyer

Fairtrade Fortnight 23rd Feb -7th Mar

There will be a coffee morning and sale in our church foyer on Wednesday 4th March from 10 am - 12 noon. If you are not able to support this event, then remember that most supermarkets give 20% discount on their Fairtrade items during this time. Why not try a Fairtrade product that you have not tried before? The next Traidcraft stalls at our church will be after the Sunday morning service on 8th March and 5th April.



*Brenda
fairtrade@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk*



Shalom March Meetings at 8 pm - all welcome

2nd at 7 Blythwood Gdns. Alan Wheeler: 'Church East - Church West'
16th in the Church Hall. Edna Goreing: Prayer, Music and Readings
30th at 7 Blythwood Gdns. Rev'd Allen Morton: Lenten Meditation
Marion Dyer

Pilots

Meetings this term Mondays 6 - 7.30 pm March 9th & 23rd
During 2008 our Pilot Group had visits from several different organisations - Fairtrade, Christian Aid, MAF and Shoe Boxes - all being represented by our own Church Members. We also had Ken Larman of Bishop's Stortford URC on the elephants of Burma, and Sandy, the guide dog for the blind. At the very end of the year Pilots gave a short Christmas entertainment, mostly to themselves, apart from four brave souls who appreciated the children's efforts!
Having invited several visitors last year, we decided this term to have our Pilot meetings on the theme of 'Looking at the Bible'. You can see our Noah's Ark in the church, and the Pilots will be taking part in the New Directions service on 15th March. We are also planning to use some Pilot Desk worship material called 'All Together Now' with our Pilot Group later in the year, so watch this space!
Valerie

Worship Leaders' Course

The February session was cancelled due to the snow, but we will be meeting on Thursday 12th March, Wednesday 29th April, Wednesday 20th May, Thursday 11th June, and Wednesday 22nd July. It is not too late to join us! Also a reminder that visits (which are open to all) are being arranged to churches with different styles of worship. The next one is on 29th March to the Harlow Salvation Army.

Stuart and Brenda Veitch
worshipleadercourse@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

I may be a saint but I don't want to be patronised!

Answers to last month's quiz to guess the patron saints of:

1. **Hairdressers:** No, not Saint Shaun but Saint Martin of Porres who lived and worked with the poor of Peru. He had been apprenticed to a barber in his youth
2. **Alcoholics:** Saint Monica - who was forced to endure a brutal marriage in the house of her unfriendly in-laws (does this imply she turned to drink?)
3. **The Internet:** Not Saint Bill but Saint Isidore of Seville, who produced many books and a learned encyclopedia (presumably not Wikipedia!)
4. **Lawyers:** Saint Thomas More - whose high moral stand brought him to the scaffold
5. **Orphans:** Saint Jerome Emiliani who set up three orphanages on his release from prison where he had been converted
6. **Rheumatism:** Saint James the Greater, one of the 12 apostles called by Jesus (those cold nights in the desert?)
7. **Musicians:** Not Saint Breve but Saint Cecilia who survived three attempts to cut off her head (see if you can think why that is connected with music!)
8. **Undertakers:** Who lent his tomb to Jesus? Come on - you must know!

How did you get on?

Alan Wheeler

Stansted Free Church

Methodist / URC

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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