

Imagine!

March
2011



I magine being one of the Tuareg nomads in the Sahara desert. What concerns them most? Their priority is having enough water to keep them going when travelling from one oasis to another. That is why their camel trains are loaded with various water receptacles such as plastic bottles and tyre inner tubes. Their capacity for trading in commodities such as cheese, salt, dates and millet is then somewhat compromised.

Imagine how water becomes scarcer as the desert spreads and more lakes begin to dry up. The tribal cattle herders have to compete with elephants as they travel together from one parched pasture to another. Imagine what happens when the blistering Harmattan wind breaks the silence. The resultant sandstorms can create devastating desert tsunamis with waves of sand 100 metres high. It is understandable then that the name Tuareg can be translated as “forsaken by God”. Surely God did not intend his children to endure such hardship?

However, Jesus spent forty days and nights in a similar hostile territory. Had Jesus been forsaken by his Father? Surely not. After all, Jesus had been led there by the Holy Spirit and it is inconceivable that the Spirit would lead anyone away from God. The inescapable and comforting conclusion is that wherever we are, we are not God-forsaken. When Jesus was tempted in the desert, he was given strength by his Father to resist Satan’s lures. When the Tuareg set off on a three month shopping trip across hundreds of miles of shifting sand, they are not forsaken. Indeed, whether Christian or Muslim, they put their trust in God that he will provide water when they need it. May we, during this time of Lent, be reminded that God forsakes nobody? May we avoid the temptation to forsake him?

Michael Dyer



Care Time



Please remember any of our church family who are unwell or need our prayers, including:

Sue Parker and family following the death of Gladys Dix, one of our most loyal and hard-working church members; Ivor Thomas, Chris Coetzee and those no longer able to attend church.

Betty 813977

In this issue:	Page
Services and Events	3
Big Brew Coffee Morning	3
Writing the Bible by Hand	4
Christian Aid	4
Church family News	5
Lent Groups	5
Biblefresh 2011	5
Women's World day of Prayer	6
Fairtrade	7
Bald Statements Exhibition	7
Points of Light Retreat	7
Shalom	7
Contacts and regular events	Back cover

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

Worship at Stansted Free Church

- 6th 10.30 am Jerry Heyhoe & Worship Leaders - New Directions
13th 10.30 am Rev David Keeble - Communion
20th 10.30 am Rev Allen Morton
27th 10.30 am Faith Paulding

Other Activities

- Wed 2nd 10.30 am Big Brew Coffee Morning in the Foyer
8.00 pm Local Preachers' & Worship Leaders' meeting
in the Hall
- Fri 4th 2.00 pm Women's World Day of Prayer - St John's
- Mon 7th 7.30 pm Talk by Anna Seifert, Ecumenical Accompanist
St John's Church
- Sun 13th 11.30 am Fairtrade goods on sale after service
7.00 pm Café Worship - Saffron Walden Methodist
- Mon 14th 10.00 am Church Oversight Group - 7 Blythwood Gdns
8.00 pm Pilots in the Hall
Shalom Discussion - 7 Blythwood Gardens
- Wed 16th 8.00 pm Lent Group - Quaker Meeting House
- Sun 20th 2.00 pm Writing out the Bible - B Stortford Methodist
- Tue 22nd 8.00 pm Lent Group in the Hall
- Mon 28th 6.00 pm Pilots in the Hall
8.00 pm Shalom At Home - 62 St John's Road
- Wed 30th 8.00 pm Lent Group - St John's Church



FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT BIG BREW

COFFEE MORNING & SALE OF FAIRTRADE GOODS

**10.30 am - 12.30 pm Wed 2nd March
Stansted Free Church Foyer**

All are warmly invited ~ Come and browse!

Writing out the Bible by Hand

This is the challenge that the Methodist Church has set itself to mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. The whole of the Bible will be hand written by congregations around the country. The Bishop's Stortford circuit has been allocated two chapters of Jeremiah, which have been divided up according to the size of churches, giving our church four verses. The writing will take place on Sunday 20th March at Bishop's Stortford church. Our contribution will be about 2 pm, but a light lunch of bread and cheese will be served from 12 noon to which all are invited. You don't have to have copper-plate hand writing to take part. If we have more than four volunteers it won't matter, as other churches may struggle to find enough people. Please let me know if you would like to take part in this unusual and historic event.

Catherine Dean

Christian Aid

How can you help others and at the same time keep fit? If you volunteer to deliver and collect Christian Aid envelopes in your street from 15th to 21st May you will be getting exercise and fresh air and at the same time will be making a huge contribution to improving the lives of the poorest people on our planet!!

Count your blessings in Lent

As in previous years, Christian Aid has produced a 'Make Lent Meaningful' sheet encouraging us all to reflect on the good things in our life, and to give a daily gift for those living in poverty around the world. For example on 18th March we are told that 95% of homes in Britain have central heating, and are invited to give 50p for every degree above 20 on our thermostat. There is a caveat that the daily giving amounts are suggestions only! Last year Christian Aid raised £250,000 from this Lent giving. I have some leaflets, or a form can be down-loaded from www.christianaid.org.uk/lent. There is also a children's version online.

Catherine Dean

Church Family News

Gladys Dix

Thank you to everyone for the kind words, cards and messages received after Mum passed away on 4th February. It was lovely to see the church full for the funeral service, and decorated with daffodils and catkins. Thank you also for your support and prayers during the difficult months when Mum was unwell, which was much appreciated. Best wishes.

Susan Parker



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

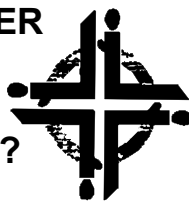
Marion Dyer



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 Rev Lesley Goldsmith

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 women! Please contact me for more details.

Brenda Veitch



The next Traidcraft stalls will be after the service on Sundays 13th March and 10th April. 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 (see page 3)!

Brenda

Bald Statements

An exhibition exploring loss, grief and change
Sat 12th March - Thur 21st April
Newport URC, Wicken Road
See church noticeboard for opening times



Points of Light Synod Retreat

10 am - 4 pm Saturday 16th April Clare Priory

Led by Mary Irish and Allen Morton with inputs from the Clare Priory Community. The theme is 'Reflections on the Cross'. Cost is £13.50 including a simple but satisfying lunch. The programme will cater for those who are new to retreats and for those who have experienced them before. Tel 01223 830770 for details.



Shalom All Welcome - Meetings are 8 pm

14th Mar 7 Blythwood Gardens - Tape and discussion
'Why are so many young men converting to Islam?'

28th Mar 62 St John's Road
Informal 'At Home'

Marion Dyer

Stansted Free Church

Methodist / URC

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Contacts

Ministers

Rev David Keeble

Rev Allen Morton

Email for both ministers: minister@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Church Secretary

Betty Francis

Email: info@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Church Notices

Marion Pretty

Lettings

Mike & Marion Dyer

Email: lettings@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Newsletter Editors

Alan Wheeler Mike & Marion Dyer

Email: news@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Treasurers

Alan Wheeler Marion Dyer

Email: treasurer@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

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