

# Imagine!

Imagine living  
in an occupied  
country



**I**magine a quiet mountain village in the heart of rural France. Imagine that it is 1940 and France has fallen to the Nazi regime. Imagine that one day a stranger knocks on your door asking for help. Imagine that the stranger is a Jew who is seeking refuge from internment and transportation to the concentration camps of the east. Imagine your life, and the lives of your family and village stand to be put in jeopardy should you provide sanctuary. Imagine your response to the stranger at your door. Imagine saying, “Naturally, come in, come in!”

Imagine that this is no one off event, and that this stranger is followed by more than 5,000 others, mostly women and children, over the following four years. Imagine that you and your fellow villagers provide refuge, forged identity papers and a pathway to safety for all these people. Imagine the Vichy police and Gestapo officers making visits to the village because they know that you are providing safe harbour, but whenever they come, you and the villagers manage to disperse your guests temporarily into the surrounding woods and refuse to hand them over despite the possible consequences to themselves. Imagine that in four years of occupation and offering refuge, no one in a village of 3,000 people betrays their guests or one another and as a direct result the lives of 5,000 Jewish refugees are saved.

Yet this is no imaginary fiction; it is what happened at Le Chambon sur Lignon during the period 1940 - 44. The village was the home of a large Protestant community who were led by their pastor, Andre Trocme, and his wife, Magda, whose words of welcome, “Naturally, come in, come in!” greeted the first stranger to knock on their door. The story of Le Chambon and ‘how goodness

happened there' is told in Philip Hallie's remarkable book, 'Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed'. It is a story of courage and bravery, and of how an impoverished rural community held together under immense pressure. What united them was their faith in God and their belief that they must actively prevent suffering and harm. Whilst the world was engulfed in a terrible slaughter that took the lives of some 48 million human beings, there in a quiet French village, lives were being saved.

This November we will be remembering the victims of war and those whose lives are even now in jeopardy in the conflicts of our time. As we remember them, let us remember too, the villagers of Le Chambon, whose quiet yet determined resistance is a sign of hope and an inspiration to us all.

David

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

# Village Harvest Supper

Another successful and enjoyable evening, raising £400 for St Clare's Hospice. Our contribution to the entertainment was by Judy & Marion, Alan & Mike, and Phyllis.



What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no zest for harvest fare?  
No thrill beholding, crisp n' dry,  
The re-recurring shepherd's pie?  
(hopefully lamb from good New Zealand stock  
Not from some Bethlehem shepherds' flock.)

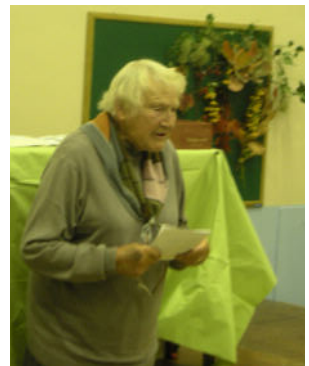
Girls with "Jerusalem and Jam"  
May demonstrate "New ways with lamb"  
While groovier folk prefer their grub  
In some up-market, French-style pub

O for a taste of crumble upon plum  
All just as good as "made by Mum".  
Dull would he be of sense who could pass by  
The sight of Stansted's harvest bakery!

On with the crumble! – and of course  
Lashings of cream and gold custard sauce!  
What is this life if full of pie,  
We cannot choose our way to die?

I've loved these harvest "Salad Days"  
Tomorrow?? - - to fresh fads and takeaways?

*Written and read by Phyllis Harrison*



# What's on in November

## Worship at Stansted Free Church

- 1st 10.30 am Julie Finbow  
8th 10.50 am Rev Allen Morton **at St John's Church**  
United Remembrance Day Service  
15th 10.30 am Rev David Mullins  
Holy Communion  
22nd 10.30 am Gordon Doyle  
29th 10.30 am Rev Allen Morton

**Morning worship is followed by coffee. All are welcome.**

## Other Activities

- Mon 2nd 6.00 pm Pilots in the Hall  
Mon 9th 8.00 pm Shalom at 7 Blythwood Gardens  
Wed 11th 7.00 pm Shoebox packing in the Hall  
Sun 15th 11.30 am Fairtrade goods on sale after service  
Mon 16th 2.00 pm Monday Club in the Hall  
6.00 pm Pilots in the Hall  
Sat 21st 12 noon St John's Christmas Market  
Mon 23rd 8.00 pm Shalom 'At Home' at 62 St John's Road  
Tue 24th 10.00 am Church Oversight Group 7 Blythwood Gdns  
Mon 30th 8.00 pm Worship Leaders' Meeting in the Hall

**Café Worship comes to Stansted Free Church**  
**7 pm Sunday 6th December led by Rev Stuart Veitch**  
assisted by worship leaders from Stansted Free Church  
and Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church

*A Café style service with coffee during the service*

***Open to all - Please join us!***

## Congratulations ...



... to Ivor Thomas  
on his 97th birthday ...

... and to Brenda Veitch  
on becoming  
Network President of the  
Beds, Essex and Herts  
Methodist District



Brenda's Induction was  
at Bishop's Stortford  
Methodist Church, with  
music provided by the  
Stansted Music group  
and friends

Christmas is  
a time of giving



Want something to do on  
11th November?

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOE BOXES

Please join us at the Shoe Box packing evening on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November from 7pm in the Hall. If you are not able to stay and enjoy the fun, then please help by bringing shoe boxes, Christmas wrapping paper and items to fill the boxes, such as:

- Toys - soft toys, balls, finger & glove puppets, jigsaws, cars, girls' jewellery and hair accessories
- Paper, pens, felt tips, chalk, crayons, stickers
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, flannel, hair clips
- Sweets (but not chocolate) with a sell-by date of at least March 2010, gloves, scarf, sunglasses.

If you are not able to help on the evening or supply items for the boxes, then you may consider giving financial support. We are asked to give a donation of £2.50 per shoebox. Please pass any donations to myself or Marion Dyer before 11<sup>th</sup> November. If you have any queries about the shoeboxes, please contact me. Thank you.

*Helen Baker*

## Singapore impressions

Jet-lagged and unhappy with the steamy heat of the place I stumble into Orchard Road Presbyterian church half way through the sermon. At least, in the sanctuary the whirling fans give some respite from the oppressive atmosphere. I perch at the back of the church amidst a small group of impeccably dressed Chinese men. In this central Singapore location, the congregation is almost entirely Han Chinese. A later service is actually conducted in Mandarin and there are other services in other languages. My best man Stephen Rapkin acts as cantor, calling in his big baritone voice to the choir nestling in the rear gallery, who respond to him, in negro spiritual fashion. All

very dramatic! David, the Australian pastor, looks a bit surprised at this innovation. On more familiar territory his sermon sternly guides his congregation through Deuteronomy, making them read back passages to him to ensure it sinks in. A day or so later he cuts a different figure standing by the swimming pool of his condo, sucking spare ribs and swigging punch. It is the time honoured 'bring and share' but a little different in this sunny exotic location.

Christian life in Singapore is thriving in spite of the overbearing parental control of the autocratic government, who watch carefully in case the churches step out of line. On our way to lunch, we are driving along the dual carriageway when we are suddenly stopped by a police officer to allow a fleet of cars to enter the avenue; a normal occurrence apparently. Church has ended and the policeman is letting the forty-odd cars carry their Christian occupants home for their lunch! Imagine that happening on Chapel Hill! That all seems very nice but religion is only tolerated here as long as it toes the party line. Stephen reminds me of the story of the 'Christian Conference of Asia' who some years ago were unceremoniously kicked out of the country following their plea for justice for a group of Jesuits who had been jailed by the regime. In the present day, the government pay lip service to consultation with the churches. Apparently all congregations were consulted on the suitability of a casino being built. The government listened to what they said and then ignored it and is building two casinos! Most of the time the churches seem to function without dabbling in issues of justice or political morals and attend to evangelism which they can manage more easily. Many Chinese seem interested to learn about the gospel but once converted find it difficult to integrate their Chinese customs with their new found faith. The Chinese have ceremonies and superstitions around their ancestors' deaths and afterlives. All around the city during August were many make-shift shrines supplied with food and items for use in the after life. It is called feeding the 'Hungry Ghosts'. It is uncomfortable for newly converted Christians who are faced with the following sort of dilemma: you have just become a Christian but Mum expects you to honour your recently deceased Grandmother in the traditional way, performing the expected ceremonies at the temple. How do you remain true to Christ and yet keep the family happy?

*Alan Wheeler*

# Stansted Free Church

## Methodist / URC

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

### Contacts

(All telephone numbers are 01279)

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Marion Pretty

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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 Tel 813433 Email: [pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)