

Imagine!

February
2016



I imagine you listened to a sermon that upset you so much you grabbed the preacher and tried to hurl him over the car park wall. It probably would have started when you found out the preacher was the son of the local carpenter and not someone with proper credentials. In Luke chapter 4 the congregation at Nazareth synagogue didn't take it kindly when Jesus suggested that a prophet is not accepted in his home town. They were expecting a repeat of the great things he had done in Capernaum; but Jesus reminded them of the actions of Elijah who, ignoring local needs, went far away to the widow in Zarephath and again to Naaman the Syrian to perform his ministry. It is not nice to hear that your town is not going to be the focus of attention, especially from your local boy made good.

In Luke's gospel, Jesus' ministry was almost cut short prematurely at this point when the crowd drove Jesus to the edge of a cliff and threatened to push him over. It is hard to imagine that a brush-off can lead to such a violent reaction isn't it? We all know what it is like to be snubbed, but sometimes we have to learn that our own agenda is not necessarily the most important one. It would be wonderful to think that God has an important place for us in his plans, but sometimes the most important things God has in store will happen elsewhere. Still, we can rejoice that Jesus has honoured us by the attention he has already paid us and that we play a part, however humble, in the mission he has on earth.

We can also rejoice that we are surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12). Just think of the ones you have known here in Stansted in your lives so far. In the gospel, the crowd started by being amazed at the Lord's gracious words and it was only later that they got all het up. Let us all remember the graciousness of

Jesus (and of that cloud of witnesses) when we are tempted to get het up because things are not going our way.

Imagine however, if we really are Capernaum instead of poor old left-behind Nazareth. Imagine then the transformation that might take place in Stansted if that is going to be the case. Imagine and have faith. Live joyfully in expectation of wherever the powerful wind of the gospel takes us next!

Alan Wheeler



Care Time



We pray for Angela Finbow, Lucinda and Jonathan, following the death of Colin, and for all those who are grieving at this time; for the special events during Lent; for the Circuit Day on 6th February; and for those in our wider church family who need our prayers.

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The next edition of *Imagine* will be available on 28th February. Please submit articles by Friday 19th February to: news@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk. Alternatively, please pass to one of the editors, or send to: 23A Bentfield Road, Stansted CM24 8HP.

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 FEBRUARY

Worship at Stansted Free Church

- 7th 10.30 am New Directions - The Worship Team
14th 10.30 am Rev'd Roy Fowler
21st 10.30 am Rev'd Jenny Martin
28th 10.30 am Rev'd Roy Fowler - Communion

Other Activities

- Sat 6th 9.30 am Circuit Day at B S Methodist Church (*see p 4*)
Sun 7th 11.30 am Fairtrade goods on sale after the service
Mon 8th 8.00 pm Defibrillator Launch at the Day Centre
Wed 10th 7.30 pm WEBS Ash Wednesday Service in the Church
Wed 17th 11.00 am WMib District Day at B S Methodist Church (*see p 5*)
8.00 pm Lent Group in the Hall
Sun 21st 12.30 pm Quaker Tapestry Talk at Friends Meeting Hse (*see p 7*)
Mon 22nd 8.00 pm Circuit Finance Meeting in the Hall
8.00 pm Shalom At Home 49 Recreation Ground
Wed 24th 8.00 pm Lent Group in the Hall

LENT 2016

WORSHIPPING TOGETHER IN WEBS

Please join us at Stansted Free Church
for a reflective service marking the beginning of Lent
Ash Wednesday 10th February 7.30 pm followed by coffee, ending by 9 pm



LENT GROUPS - HOPE ACTUALLY

A course by the Church Urban Fund with video,
discussion and bible study

Each session will be led by a different church

Wednesday 8 - 9.30pm (*coffee from 7.45 pm*) in Stansted Free Church Hall

- 17th Feb** The **joy** of the Gospel Mark 1.9-15
24th Feb The **foolishness** of the Gospel Mark 8.31
2nd Mar The **challenge** of the Gospel John 2.13-22
9th Mar The **power** of the Gospel John 12.20-33

All welcome. You do not have to attend every week. Come when you can!

Bishop's Stortford Methodist Circuit

Looking ahead
Mission & Ministry

You are invited to join a conversation about
the future of the circuit
its mission and ministry in 2017 and beyond

9.30 am - 1 pm Sat 6th February

Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church

with Ann Howlett-Foster

Learning and Development Officer, East of England
The Discipleship & Ministries Cluster

Coffee and croissants will be served from 9 am

**We are part of the Circuit and it is hoped there will
be a good representation from our church**

***It would be helpful but not essential to know if you are
planning to attend - please call Betty***





Beds, Essex and Herts District
Methodist Women in Britain

DISTRICT DAY

11 am - 3 pm Wed 17th Feb

Coffee served from 10.30

Bishops Stortford Methodist Church

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Journey through Lent to Easter

Morning Session

with Rev. Andrew Hollins

Superintendent Minister North Bedfordshire Circuit

Afternoon Session

Try your hand at a number of Easter-related
handicrafts

Cards - Decorated Eggs

Floral Coasters - Miniature Gardens

The Choice is yours!

Bring your own lunch ~ soup and drinks provided

Bring & Buy Stall ~ All Welcome

CHRISTMAS DAY 2015



Collection for Refugee Crisis Appeal

Many thanks for your kind donation of £150.00 on 07 January 2016 towards the work of Christian Aid. Your response to our emergency appeal is greatly appreciated.

The images of desperate refugees crossing the Mediterranean in unstable boats, or packed illegally into lorries, or protesting 'We are human beings too' in the port of Calais, are a distressing reminder of the shocking refugee crisis that led to the founding of Christian Aid in 1945. According to the UN, in the first half of 2015 a third of the people making the sea crossing to Italy and Greece were from Syria. More than four terrible years of conflict in Syria have had devastating effects on young and old alike. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and, shockingly, 50% of the population are now displaced – more than 4.1 million people forced to seek safety outside the country. The numbers seeking refuge will grow as long as the conflicts in Syria and Iraq continue, and, as winter approaches in all countries of refuge, their needs will increase.

Once again, thank you so much for your continued support of our work with and for the poorest communities on earth. With your continued help, we can make a difference.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hewson

Financial Processing Officer

Reference: OR291506:B253959/6

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Christian Aid is a member of the
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The Quaker Tapestry

12.30 pm Sun 21st February

Friends Meeting House

Free light refreshments from 11.45 am

Illustrated talk on the famous embroidery panels depicting social change

Free - All Welcome

Retiring collection for Stansted Foodbank

We are very pleased that, thanks to the generous grant of £19,000 from Viridor Credits, we have been able to fit secondary glazing and blackout blinds to the church. This will make it a warmer, more comfortable venue for community use and worship. We are sure that all those who use the building will appreciate the improvements.

Betty

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

2 pm Friday 4th March Stansted Free Church



Receive Children - Receive Me

Prepared by the women of Cuba

The theme reflects Mark chapter 10 verses 13-16, which is the focus of the service and a reminder that everyone is a child of God and equally worthy of our love and respect. The service is followed by refreshments and a Fairtrade stall. All welcome – men and women.

Brenda



FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT BIG BREW

Fairtrade COFFEE / tea & Sale OF FAIRTRADE GOODS

PLUS Bring & Buy Books and Bric-à-Brac

10.30 am - noon Thur 10th Mar in the Church & Foyer

All are warmly invited~ Come and browse!

Stansted Free Church (Methodist / URC)

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Part of the WEBS (West Essex & Bishop's Stortford) URC Pastorate
and the Bishop's Stortford Methodist Circuit

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Sunday Service

10.30 am Morning Worship.

1st Sunday of each month - New Directions (Informal)

The Place on the Hill Drop-In (Everyone Welcome)

Every Wednesday and Friday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

Tel Marion & Mike, Catherine & Alan or Fran

Email: theplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk