

# Imagine!

Dec  
2018



**I**magine a family is celebrating Christmas. They are in a stable (at best) or in the corner of a field (at worst). A mother and a father tend their new-born baby. A manger, full of hay for the animals, is the baby's cot. It doesn't look like a good place for a mother and new-born baby to be. In fact, this is the first Christmas. At least that is how the writer of Luke's Gospel chooses to depict it.

There are no prizes for guessing who the baby is, so don't bother writing to the editor to claim your prize! The baby is Jesus. We can get over-familiar with this story; we can lose our sense of how shocking it really is. If Jesus was born today, he might well end up on social services' *At Risk* register. We are at the perilous end of human experience. John's claim that the 'Word became flesh' becomes vivid when viewed through Luke's version of the Christmas story.

All humanity is embraced in the Christmas story of the birth of Jesus. Life in all its rawness and imperfection is encompassed within the love of God: *Love came down at Christmas.*

When we stop believing that we can have a perfect Christmas and accept that life is never perfect; when we can accept the rawness in our own lives; and when we can look around us and see the precarious hold on life that many people experience, then we will grasp the true meaning of Christmas: God's embracing of the world with the vulnerable love of the Christ child. It is love that can uphold us and transform us.

In the promise of this vulnerable love, I wish you God's peace and joy this Christmas.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Roz", is located at the bottom right of the page.



## Care Time



We pray for:

Judy and Arthur as they travel to Australia to spend Christmas with their families; Brenda recovering from her operation; The Place on the Hill Christmas Events; the Churches Together in Stansted Christmas Events; for the work of Whitechapel Mission; and those in our wider church family who need our prayers.

### THANK YOU

Whitechapel Mission sent a lovely letter thanking the church for donating our Harvest Collection to them. The letter, along with a **Certificate of Recognition** can be seen on the notice board in the entrance foyer.

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The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on 30th December. Please submit articles by Friday 21st December 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.

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)**

## WHAT'S ON IN DECEMBER

### Worship at Stansted Free Church

2nd	10.30 am	Richard Lewney - New Directions
9th	10.30 am	Karen Quelch - Gift Service (see below)
16th	10.30 am	Rev'd Roy Fowler - Communion
23rd	10.30 am	Carol Service (see below)
25th	10.30 am	Rev'd Christine Fowler - Christmas Day Family Service
30th	10.30 am	Denis Walker

### Other Activities

Sat 1st	5.30 pm	Advent Remembrance Service at S Walden URC (p 5)
Thu 6th	8.00 pm	LPWL Meeting at B Stortford Methodist
Sun 9th	11.30 am	Fairtrade goods on sale after the service
Mon 10th	10.00 am	The Place on the Hill Christmas Event (p 4)
	8.00 pm	Shalom Party at 7 Blythwood Gardens
Wed 12th	10.00 am	The Place on the Hill Christmas Event (p 4)
	8.00 pm	Circuit meeting at B Stortford Methodist
Fri 14th	10.00 am	The Place on the Hill Christmas Event (p 4)
Sat 22nd	3.00 pm	Celebration of Christmas at St John's Church (p 6)
Sun 23rd	4.00 pm	Carol Singing (p 7)

### Gift Service 9th December

We will be collecting items for the Whitechapel Mission which provides thousands of breakfasts to homeless people each year, and has the largest clothing store in London for the homeless. Items urgently needed are:

**Food:** Baked Beans, Plum Tomatoes (not chopped), Sugar, Coffee, Honey, Biscuits, Instant Hot Chocolate

**Toiletries:** toothbrushes, razors, shampoo, deodorant, soap

**Clothes etc:** men's underwear and socks, men's trainers and shoes, jeans waist 28-36", trousers waist 28-34", rucksacks, carrier bags, blankets

If you are not able to be at the service, donations may be left in the vestry, but please label for Whitechapel. Thank you.

### Carol Service 23rd December

Betty is arranging our carol service and would like suggestions of carols and readings to be included - please let her know by 14th December



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twitter @placeonthehill

## **Christmas Events** **Mon 10th, Wed 12th and Fri 14th Dec** **10 am - 11.30 am**

**Come and join the fun making**  
**Christingles followed by a visit from**  
**Father Christmas**

**There will also be a video of the**  
**Christmas Story**  
**which is suitable for all ages**

**All Welcome - do come along on any or all of the days,**  
**even if you do not normally attend The Place**

**The Place is open throughout December on**  
**Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays 9.30 am - 12.30 pm**

**EXCEPT Wednesday 26th December**

**For more details contact Marion & Mike**



## **SHOEBOXES**

**T4U**  
real people making  
a real difference

A total of 241 boxes were packed this year by St Theresa's Wednesday Club, visitors to the Place on the Hill, and at the packing evening. Thank you to all who helped or brought completed boxes – because of you, many children will experience the delight of opening a special Christmas box filled with wonderful goodies. Thank you also to those who supported the quiz which raised £500.

**There were 30 boxes from The Place on the Hill. Special thanks to those who helped pack or brought completed boxes.**

*Catherine*

# A Service of Remembrance for Advent



**5.30 pm Saturday 1st December  
Abbey Lane United Reformed Church  
Saffron Walden**

You are warmly invited to join us for this special service on the Saturday before Advent, which will include an Act of Remembrance and the dedication of a lighted Christmas tree in memory of those we have loved.

Christmas is a time of joy and hope, but it is touched with sadness as we remember family and friends who are no longer with us to share the celebrations.

We thank God for his gift of love in Jesus Christ and pray that all may know his comfort and peace this Christmas.

*The service will be followed by light refreshments*



**STANSTED MESSY CHURCH**  
**INK CARTRIDGE RECYCLING**



Please bring your used ink cartridges and place in the boxes in the foyer and the hall. All makes except Epson can be recycled, but they must be originals, not re-manufactured. We receive £1 for every cartridge which will go towards the costs of Merry Church. **Please note we can no longer recycle mobile phones.**

*Marion*



Come and join our

# **Celebration of Christmas Carols and Readings**

**with contributions from villagers,  
local schools & churches**

**3 pm Saturday 22nd December**

**St John's Church**

**Followed by mulled wine & soft drinks**

*All are welcome to join the choir*

*- come along and have some fun!*

*Choir Rehearsals in St John's Church*

*7.15 - 8.00 pm Thursdays 29th Nov*

*6th & 13th Dec*

**Retiring collection for Red Cross  
for their current appeal**

*Organised by Churches Together in Stansted [www.stanstedchurches.com](http://www.stanstedchurches.com)*



# **CAROL SINGING**

**in aid of  
RED CROSS  
for their current appeal**

***SUNDAY 23rd DECEMBER 4pm***

***Meet in Broome End Care Home,  
Silver Street***

***At 4.30pm we will sing along  
Blythwood Gardens, finishing in Silver  
Street for refreshments about 5.30pm***

***ALL WELCOME***

***Come & join the fun singing your  
favourite carols in Stansted***

***Collectors also needed***



***For more information  
Please tel: 814059***



# **Stansted Free Church (Methodist / URC)**

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

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

## **Contacts**

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### **WEBS Minister**

Rev'd Caroline Vodden

### **Methodist Superintendent**

Rev'd Gill Hulme

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### **Fairtrade**

Brenda Veitch  
Email: [fairtrade@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:fairtrade@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

## **Sunday Service**

10.30 am Morning Worship.  
Some months we hold *New Directions* which is an informal service



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

Monday, Wednesday and Friday (not Bank Holidays)

9.30 am - 12.30 pm

Tel Marion & Mike , Catherine or Fran

Email: [theplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:theplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)