

Imagine!

MAR
2018



I imagine being on a retreat where you don't see anybody for five weeks and the only words you have are those running around in your head. There is only so much time you can spend appreciating the beauty of the arid desert scenery. It gets fiery hot by midday - the air is shimmering, the sun is pressing on your skin like a massive weight relentlessly burning your arms in the places where the thin linen sheet does not cover them.

It seemed so simple back in the temple when I said "Didn't you know I have to be in my father's house" and then events started happening fast; that strange experience of the Spirit descending on me when my cousin baptised me. What was it John said? "A voice calling in the wilderness, prepare the way, make the paths straight" and now here I am led by that Spirit into this very wilderness place between Jordan and Jerusalem. I haven't much time on earth and yet here I am spending 40 days just being in the wilderness. Is that a waste? Should I be back in the market place preaching, teaching and doing good - practical Christianity?

So many questions come to mind and possible strategies haunt me. You know them well "If you are really the Son of God..." and yet these thoughts are just so much noise. It is only when I give myself to the silence that I hear my Father clearly again. A still small voice. Only when I quieten the relentless noise that I allow to battle away in my head can I hear "the voice of one calling in the wilderness" and that is the reality, not the plans and strategies, the trying to think through a way to progress the religion.

The only way to be free and to free others is to constantly come back to that still small voice of one calling in the wilderness and then to make the way straight, straight all the way to Calvary!

Alan Wheeler



Care Time



We remember the events that are happening in Stansted during March: Churches Together Lent Groups, Women’s World Day of Prayer, Messy Church, *The Place on the Hill* Easter Crafts, Lenten services and WEBS events.

We pray for: Desiree; Mike recovering from intensive radiotherapy; Arthur, that the sale of his flat will go through smoothly and quickly; the two Syrian families in Stansted; all those who are ‘sleeping rough’ during the cold weather; those who come to *The Place on the Hill*; and any others known to us.

You are invited to use the prayer request slips which are available in the foyer

In this issue:	Page
Worship & Other Church Activities	3
Lent and Easter Services	3
Women’s World Day of Prayer	4
Palm Sunday devotional reading of Mark’s Gospel	4
Lent Groups	5
Messy Church	5
Lift High the Cross	5
Stainer’s Crucifixion	6
The Place on the Hill Easter Craft Special Events	6
Box Decorating Social Evening	7
Big Brew	7
Contacts	Back Cover

The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on 25th March. Please submit articles by Friday 16th March 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 MARCH

Worship at Stansted Free Church

4th	10.30 am	Brenda and Stuart Veitch - New Directions Fairtrade
11th	10.30 am	Jerry Heyhoe
18th	10.30 am	Rev'd Gill Hulme - Communion
25th	10.30 am	Rev'd Roy Fowler
30th	10.30 am	Rev'd Stuart Veitch - Good Friday

Other Activities

Fri	2nd	1.30 pm	World Day of Prayer at St Theresa's (p4)
Sun	4th	11.30 am	Fairtrade goods on sale after the service
Mon	5th	8.00 pm	LPWT Meeting in the Hall
Tue	6th/13th/20th	7.30 pm	Lent Group at St Theresa's Parish Centre (p5)
Wed	14th	8.00 pm	Circuit Meeting at B Stortford Methodist Church
Mon	26th	10.00 am	The Place on the Hill Easter Crafts (p6)
Wed	28th	10.00 am	The Place on the Hill Easter Crafts (p6)
Fri	30th	2.00 pm	Stainer's Crucifixion at Abbey Lane URC (p6)
		3.30 pm	Messy Church in St John's Hall (p5)

LENT AND EASTER SERVICES

Palm Sunday 25th March

Devotional reading of Mark's Gospel 1.30 - 3.30 pm Bishop's Stortford URC
Arrive and leave any time. Please contact Sarah at the church office tel 755610
Email: office@waterlaneurc.org.uk if you would like to help with the reading or to book a sandwich lunch (available from noon)

Maundy Thursday 29th March

Maundy Thursday Devotion 7.30 pm led by Roy (incl light supper)
Bishop's Stortford URC Hall. For catering purposes, contact Sarah tel 755610
Email: office@waterlaneurc.org.uk if you are planning to come
Tenebrae Service 8.00 pm led by Gill **Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church**

Good Friday 30th March

Reflective Service 10.30 am led by Stuart
Stainer's Crucifixion 2 pm Abbey Lane URC, Saffron Walden
Messy Church 3.30 pm St John's Church Hall
Lift High the Cross 6 pm St John's Church

Easter Day 1st April

Communion service 9.30 am led by Rev'd Roy Fowler (*note time*)

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

International and Interdenominational



1.30 pm Friday 2nd March
St Theresa's Church



All God's Creation is very good!

Prepared by the women of Suriname

Suriname is a small country on the north coast of South America. The same service is shared all over the world and includes music, costumes and objects relating to the 'host' country combined with global themes - this year's theme is about how we look after our planet. This special service is ecumenical and is not just for women - everyone is welcome, men and women, whether you usually attend church or not. The service will be followed by refreshments. There will also be a Traidcraft Stall.

Brenda



DEVOTIONAL READING OF MARK'S GOSPEL
with hymns and prayers

Water Lane United Reformed Church, Bishop's Stortford

Palm Sunday 25th March 1.30 - 3.30 pm

Feel free to arrive or leave at any time

Sandwich lunch available from 12 noon in the Church Hall but please contact the Church Office to book

If you would like to help with the reading please contact Sarah at the the Church Office on 755610 Email office@waterlaneurc.org.uk



LENT GROUPS 2018

Feast or Famine?

This course considers the practical issues of economic austerity versus plenty in modern Britain and beyond. How can we understand the inequalities of today in the light of core Gospel themes, and how can Christians respond? Each session will be led by a member of one of the Stansted churches.

Tuesdays 7.30 - 9 pm (coffee served from 7.15 pm)

all at St Teresa's Parish Centre, High Lane

Feb 27th Hunger or Satisfaction? **Mar 6th** Health or Wealth?
Mar 13th Security or Insecurity? **Mar 20th** Cutting or Investing?

Everyone is most welcome. Please join us.

You do not have to attend every week - come when you can!



STANSTED MESSY CHURCH

Good Friday 30th March 3.30 - 5 pm

St John's Hall (note different venue)



An **exciting** and **informal** style of church for families, with activities, celebration and food (all based on a Christian theme), and an emphasis on **FUN!** Arranged by Churches Together in Stansted.

A very big thank you to all those who have helped or provided food at our previous events. Sue Parker is organising the food this time and will be looking for people to provide hot cross buns and cakes (please call Sue if you can help).

For general information please call Marion & Mike or see
www.stanstedchurches.com/messychurch

LIFT HIGH THE CROSS

Based on words from St John's Gospel

Good Friday 30th March 6 pm St John's Church

A quiet reflective service for choir and congregation.

All welcome.



COME AND SING

STAINER'S CRUCIFIXION

2 - 3 pm Good Friday 30th March

Abbey Lane URC, Saffron Walden

All welcome - singers and listeners

This is an act of worship for two solo voices and chorus interspersed with congregational hymns - it is not a concert

There are no rehearsals for the choir - just come and sing on the day

Bring your own music or see Marion Dyer if you would like to borrow a copy

Followed by light refreshments

We warmly invite friends from WEBS to join us

For more information contact Stephen



Easter Craft Special Events Mon 26th & Wed 28th March 10 - 11 am

Come and join the fun decorating
eggs & crosses
and making Easter baskets

***All Welcome - do come along even if you do
not normally attend The Place***

The Place on the Hill is open
Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays 9.30 am - 12.30 pm
including the school holidays

For more details contact Marion & Mike

Email: theplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



BOX DECORATING SOCIAL EVENING

Abbey Lane URC Hall, Saffron Walden

Saturday 24th March 6.30 - 8.30 pm

Tickets £7 to include a box that can be decorated for any occasion plus a fish/chicken and chip supper

For catering purposes tickets must be ordered by
Wednesday 21st March

Additional boxes also available ~ Come and join us



Join us at our Big Brew



...and help hidden entrepreneurs like Sahanara access the opportunities they need to leave poverty behind for good



Every pound you donate will be matched by the UK Government, which means that we can reach twice as many hidden entrepreneurs living in poverty.

Tue 10th April 10 am - noon
6 Wetherfield

Come and join us for tea, coffee and cake and browse the Books and Bric-à-Brac stalls
(items for stalls also wanted please call Brenda)

Entry free - donations to Fairtrade welcome

All Welcome

Quick!
£1 = £2
Your donation doubled!

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

Contacts

Minister

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Email: minister@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

WEBS Minister

Rev'd Caroline Vodden

Methodist Superintendent

Rev'd Gill Hulme

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Church Notices

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Email: treasurer@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Fairtrade

Brenda Veitch
Email: 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)

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm
Tel Marion & Mike, Catherine & Alan or Fran
Email: theplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk