



**I**magine travelling in a Russian train for 30 hours, changing, and travelling for another 30 hours to get home. That was the prospect for two Russian Methodists, Violetta and Galina that Brenda and I met on the last day of the European Methodist Festival held in Bratislava in August. Flying was far too expensive. Even their rail tickets were bought for them by some Irish Methodists. That's how keen they were to meet other Methodists, to celebrate the work and love of God together, and incidentally, to witness their dedication. Theirs is a tiny denomination where the next Methodist Church may be hundreds of miles away, but they emanated an air of confidence that put the rest of us to shame.

The theme of the festival was celebrating being young, being foreign, being different and travelling. Not difficult to appreciate all these topics at a festival of over 1000 people, a good proportion of young people, representing 25 nations speaking at least 10 languages, taking place in a country that was behind the Iron Curtain not so long ago. To a degree all of us felt ourselves to be foreign.

Quite right too! All of us, everywhere, should always feel foreign on this earth. Look up Hebrews 11: 13 and you will see that there is good scriptural basis for this assertion. For Paul is saying that the God fearer, the Christian, should never feel fully comfortable here, for whilst the earth is a gift from God, it is only a means to an end, a preparation for a fulfilment that comes in a later stage of our journey. Only when we are willing to put God absolutely first in our lives, thus putting everything else even including "church", subordinate to Him, will we be foreigners here on earth.

Imagine a Christian people so committed.

*Stuart Veitch*



# Church Family



We ask you to remember our church family in your prayers: Fran Richards following an operation for carpal tunnel syndrome; Michelle King, recovering from a foot injury; Cherry Lewis and Peter Thompson from Pilots; David & Sylvia Simpson, as they continue to settle into retirement; Keith & Fran Page in their new ministry in Leigh on Sea; Ronald Rawlings (Methodist supernumerary minister living in Thaxted) and his wife Nancy, who used to attend Stansted Methodist church. Both Ronald & Nancy are in poor health at the present time.

## Welcome

We extend a very warm welcome to our new Methodist minister and his family, David & Louise Mullins, and their daughters Jenni and Rachel. We look forward to their ministry with us over the coming years as we continue our journey as one united church.

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The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on Sunday 30th September. Please submit articles by Friday 21st September. If you have email access, then we would prefer your articles to be sent 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)**

# What's on in September

## Sunday Worship at Stansted Free Church

2nd	10.30 am	No morning service
	2.30 pm	1st Church Anniversary - Rev John Buxton followed by celebration tea in the hall
9th	10.30 am	Maureen Kendall
16th	10.30 am	Rev David Mullins - Holy Communion
23rd	10.30 am	Doug Coulton
30th	10.30 am	Rev Martin Cressey - Harvest Festival followed by church lunch

***Morning worship is followed by coffee except the first Sunday in the month, when tea is usually served following the afternoon service.***

***Please join us!***

## Other Activities

Sat 8th	8.00 pm	Hymns of Praise - B Stortford Methodist Church
Mon 10th	6.00 pm	Pilots in the hall
Mon 17th	2.30 pm	Monday Club in the hall
	8.00 pm	Shalom Prayer & Praise - 7 Blythwood Gdns
Mon 24th	6.00 pm	Pilots in the hall

## SPECIAL EVENTS THIS MONTH

### **Stansted Free Church Anniversary Sunday 2nd September**

2.30 pm service led by Rev John Buxton

3.30 pm Celebration tea in the hall - all welcome

### **Welcome Service for Rev David Mullins Sunday 2nd September**

at Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church

5.00 pm tea

6.30 pm service led by Rev Anne Brown,

chair Beds, Essex & Herts Methodist District

### **Stansted Free Church Harvest Sunday 30th September**

10.30 am service led by Rev Martin Cressey

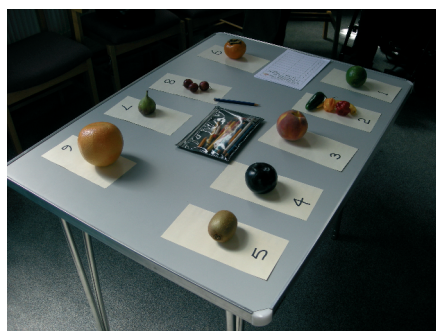
12.30 pm church lunch



It's not only in Britain that it has been raining too much. The recent floods in Asia, which are the worst for 20 years, have left many people homeless and destitute. Christian Aid has launched an **Asia Flood Appeal** to raise £2 million for immediate aid. **We are having a special collection each Sunday until 3rd September - please look out for the collection plate in the foyer. We shall also be sending a donation from church funds.**

Catherine Dean 813579

## All age worship 5th



- sampling the Fruits of the Spirit

## Annual Church Meeting 8 pm Tuesday 9th October

At this meeting, we will be electing the various officers of the church - secretary, treasurer, deacons, organists etc etc - the list is quite long! When we formulated our constitution, it was agreed that deacons should serve for six years, but for the first few years, one deacon would stand down each year. I am due to finish my term of office, and although I could be re-elected, it would be good if we could have someone different, especially as I shall still be part of the Church Oversight Group in my role as joint treasurer.

If you are interested, or would like more information, please do contact me on 814059 or email [marion@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:marion@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

Marion Dyer

# Happy 1st Birthday

Would you believe it? We are one year old! Clang it out on the teapots, toss the pew cushions in the air, kiss your neighbour and wish the Grace of God go with him - for we who were two are now one! What a journey! All that preparation of dusty documents we probably won't look at again. All the confusion of helicopter groups and COGs and deacons.

So how is this young married couple doing after one year? Have we grown closer and do we long for our old way of doing things? I find that every now and again I slip into the old habits of thinking URC and not Free. Isn't it great though, that we can not only draw on our own traditions but can also enjoy the richness and history of our sister tradition, because we can legitimately call ourselves Methodists and URC at the same time? Not only that, but we are more than the two parts joined together. We are actually more than the sum of the parts and a new being called Stansted Free Church.

Wish us well as we move into the toddler years!

Alan Wheeler



We will be celebrating our birthday on Sunday 2nd September with a service at 2.30 pm led by Rev John Buxton from Harlow, followed by a celebration outreach tea in the hall.

Everyone welcome

Please join us, and help us make it a real celebration!

## The Fields are ripe unto Harvest ...

Although this is traditionally harvest time, thank goodness many farmers finished their combining weeks ago before the onslaught of cold rainy weather! How many harvests were spoiled this year? In Gloucestershire for example and obviously in Bangladesh. "The fields are ripe unto harvest" says the Lord and in relation to our own lives, are the fields which should be ready for harvest also beaten down by the hard rains of life, by the tedious daily slog, by the slow drip of secular values and assumptions?

The dust cover of the little book "Everyday Prayer" talks of a belief that Christians are formed by the way they pray. Could that be likened to the gradual ripening of the corn of our lives that culminates in the full wheat ear of spiritual maturity so that ultimately we are ready to be brought into His barn? Ruth Tealby, the author of this book describes her own experience of a dissonance between the world of the altar and the daily grind of a pile of mail to be answered, phone calls anxiously waited, the need to pack children off to school and so on. I am sure you can add a few from your own experience; standing in an NHS queue for example or stuck in a carriage between Broxbourne and Cheshunt, times when the little niggling things of life as well as a latent brutality challenge the equanimity of our mood.

We probably feel like Ruth that we are not good enough for prayer. Yet it is in the knocks and jostles of life, in disappointment, failure and the sheer stupidity that the growth of the corn is slowly matured. As we offer the deadness, the doubt and drudgery of life in prayer we allow Christ to share our pain and inadequacy. Prayer is exactly for that. We don't need to be pure before we do it. Maybe as a result the corn can face the bitter winds and the wild rains and ultimately come through to become a beautiful field ready for harvest..

Alan Wheeler

**Harvest Celebrations Sunday 30th September**

**10.30 am Morning Worship led by Rev Martin Cressey**

**12.30 pm Church Lunch - Everyone welcome**

**Please book for lunch before 23rd September by signing the list in the foyer or 'phoning Betty on 813977**

# Pilots

Autumn / Winter Term Mondays at 6 pm in the Hall:

September 10th & 24th

October 8th (special evening all invited) & 29th

November 12th & 26th, December 10th

*Valerie Trundle 813433*



## **Sunday Afternoon Outreach Teas**

On behalf of Pump Aid, I write to extend sincere thanks for your recent donation, raised from your monthly Sunday Afternoon Outreach Teas. It really is very kind of you all to donate to Pump Aid. It will help us install a much-needed pump in Zimbabwe, which will have such a life changing impact on the lives of hundreds of children and adults.

To give you an idea, typically we will install an Elephant Pump at a poor rural school, along with improvements to their sanitation facilities, and establish a nutrition garden. We train the staff, children and local community on how to maintain the pumps and on related areas such as agriculture, health and hygiene. We then build pumps in four or five villages around the school so that children can have clean water at school and at home.

With all who will benefit from your donation, I send heartfelt thanks and blessings.

## **Monday Club**

Mr Barry Kaufmann-Wright was the August Speaker. If you have never heard of him, do go and hear him if the chance comes your way, for he speaks on many subjects illustrated from his collection of about 42,000 slides. As a police officer for about 32 years based mainly at Thaxted, Barry spent 18 years as Wildlife Crime Officer. Our subject was 'Wildlife in the Garden'. I have heard Barry many times and learned something new each time about life in our countryside. Remember this golden saying: "Laughter is the sun that denies winter from the human face"

*Phyllis Little*

**Stansted Free Church**  
**Methodist / URC**  
**[www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](http://www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)**

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**Sunday Services**

**1st Sunday in each month**

10.30 am New Directions in Worship

*An informal, participative service for all ages*

2.30 pm Afternoon Worship

*followed by outreach tea*

**All other Sundays**

10.30 am Morning Worship

**Children's Work**

**Alternate Mondays**

6 pm Pilots for children aged 5 - 18 years. Tel 81 3433