



Imagine not being able to go to school because you haven't got a pen or pencil to write with or a notebook to write in. This is the reality for Mehi and the gypsy children of Northern Romania. Imagine an Operation Christmas Child project representative coming along and giving Mehi a shoebox containing pencils and paper. Imagine his huge smile as he said "This is the best Christmas present ever - now I can go to school." This is just one of many stories that illustrate how important the shoebox scheme is.

In 2007 all previous records were broken as over 1.3 million shoeboxes left the UK bound for some of the poorest and most disadvantaged children in Central and Eastern Europe, Mozambique, Swaziland and, for the first time, Liberia - where children at a school in Voinjana have only known war and violence. These children queued for several hours, some terrified because they thought the only reason you queued was to be immunized. Imagine how their faces changed when they saw the brightly covered boxes. The person distributing the boxes watched the children rush away to open their presents on their own, in case their precious gift was taken away from them. He was surprised to see that the things they treasured most were pens and pencils, and anything that would help equip them for school and a better future.

As we all know fuel costs have escalated in the last few months and this year the recommended donation towards transportation is £2.50 per box (the first increase since 1996). So if you would like to help put a smile on a child's face this

Christmas but are not able to fill a shoe box, then a donation of money is just as important.

Our shoebox packing evening will be on 12th November but more on that next month. In the meantime please remember all the people involved in Operation Christmas Child (especially John Bree the marketing manager, known to some of us) who have been very busy during the last few months and would appreciate our prayers as the 2008 appeal reaches its climax.

Janet Townsend

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The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on Sunday 28th September. Please submit articles by Friday 19th September to: 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

What's on in September

Sunday Worship at Stansted Free Church

7th	3.00 pm	Church Anniversary Rev David Mullins & Rev Allen Morton followed by tea in the Hall - all welcome
14th	10.30 am	Rev David Mullins - Holy Communion
21st	10.30 am	Rev Allen Morton - Harvest festival
28th	10.30 am	Pamela Cressey

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 6th	10 am - 4 pm	Quiet Day at Chrishall Methodist Church
Tue 9th	8.00 pm	Church Meeting in the Hall
Sat 13th	10 am - 4 pm	Ride & Stride
Sun 14th	11.30 am	Fairtrade goods on sale after service
Mon 15th	2.30 pm	Monday Club in the Hall
	6.00 pm	Pilots in the Hall
Sat 20th	2.30 - 4.30 pm	Allen & Daphne's Open House (see p7)
Mon 22nd	8.00 pm	Shalom at 7 Blythwood Gardens Rev David Mullins
Mon 29th	6.00 pm	Pilots in the Hall

Church Anniversary

Sunday 7th September will be our 2nd anniversary of becoming a joint church. Our service on that day will be at 3 pm and will be led by both our ministers. We are very much looking forward to this, as it will be the first time that David and Allen have led a service together. The service will be followed by tea in the hall. Please join us!

Islands of Prayer

Sat 6th September 10 am - 4 pm

Chrishall Methodist Church

Music, prayers and readings led by Brenda & Stuart Veitch

See posters & booking forms on the noticeboard

From the Secretary

I've a few things to remind you about for September. You will have seen elsewhere in Imagine about the 'Quiet Day' at Chrishall on Saturday 6th, which is being led by Brenda and Stuart Veitch. It sounds very interesting - I hope to go and will have a couple of spare seats in the car if anyone needs transport.

The next day, Sunday 7th, will be the 2nd anniversary of Stansted Free Church. As we have never officially recognised the members of the Church Oversight Group in an act of worship, during the service there will be a 'laying on of hands' for the deacons, and 'the right hand of fellowship' for the other members of the Oversight Group.

The Church Meeting will be on Tuesday 9th September at 8 pm. You may recall that it was agreed that we will hold church meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of alternate months, so that will make it easier for us to remember when it is, particularly when we are planning our diary months ahead. There may be the odd occasion when this doesn't work out but we will try to keep to the same pattern.

September 13th is the annual Ride and Stride, and if you don't feel able to get on your bike or Shank's pony you can still do your bit by 'manning' or 'womaning' the church for a while (see page 7).

Allen and Daphne are having 'Open House' on Saturday 20th September from 2.30 – 4.30 pm. If you need transport, or can offer anyone a lift, then please speak to me.

The final date for September is the Harvest Festival on Sunday 21st. As usual our gifts will be items of food for Whitechapel Mission - tea, coffee, sugar, packets of cereals, baked beans etc. If you want to check what is needed, Mike Dyer or Alan Wheeler are the people to ask as they are regular visitors to the mission (as helpers not clients!) During the service there will also be the presentation of the Pilot plaque.

Betty

Pilots

A reminder that the dates for this term are Mondays 6 - 7.30 pm:
Sept 15th & 29th, Oct 13th, Nov 3rd & 17th, Dec 1st & 15th.
All Church Members and Friends are very welcome to join us.

Valerie 813433



Care Time



Congratulations and best wishes to Ivor Thomas as he celebrates his 96th birthday on 12th September. We miss seeing you at Church Ivor but you are always in our thoughts and prayers. We send our best wishes to Paul Trundle as he recovers with his leg in plaster from an operation to repair a ruptured achilles tendon following a football accident. We also remember Joanne (née Colliver) and Craig who are visiting England from Australia, and whose baby, Hamish, is to be baptized at our church on 5th October.



I shall be selling **Traidcraft** goods after the church service on Sunday 14th September. The new Traidcraft catalogue (with order form attached) is now available in the foyer. Please take a copy to browse through. I am ordering goods regularly so please let me know what you would like and pay me after you have received the goods. I shall be away during

October but Marion will be running a 'mini' stall on 19th October after church. The next stall after that will be on 23rd November. If you want Christmas cards or gifts I can get them for that date (or earlier).

Brenda Veitch

A Message from Rev Trevor Sands

Methodist Minister Saffron Walden, Clavering LEP & Chrishall

You may remember that I was kindly invited to become part of the ministry team of this circuit in August 2006 as part of my secondment from the Baptist Church. At that time I agreed to spend two years amongst you here which was subsequently extended, by mutual agreement, to three years. This note is to confirm that I will be with you (God willing) for one further year until August 2009 moving on at that time as God directs. I thank you all for much love and encouragement over the past 2 years and look forward to all that this coming Methodist year brings as we work together for God's Kingdom.

Warm greetings, Trevor

The Mayonnaise Jar & Two Cups of Coffee

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day are not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and two cups of coffee. A professor stood before his philosophy class and silently picked up a very large, empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was. The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous "yes."

The professor then produced two cups of coffee and poured them into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed. "Now," said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things - God, family, children, health, friends, and favorite passions - things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, house, and car. The sand is everything else - the small stuff."

"If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. So pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out to dinner. Play another 18. There will always be time to clean the house and fix the plumbing. Take care of the golf balls first - the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand."

One of the students inquired what the coffee represented. The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend." *Anon*

Allen & Daphne's Open House

We greatly look forward to welcoming you to tea and cakes at the manse, 39 Clover Avenue, on Saturday 20th September from 2.30 to 4.30 pm. We are off Oriole Way, which can be reached either from the roundabout with the Villiers sùr Marne Avenue, or from the top end of Great Hadham Road if you come via Bishops Park Way. From about 4.00 to 4.15 there will be a short reflective service for the blessing of the house, in the Celtic style, to which all are welcome.

Allen Morton 757635



Ride and Stride Saturday 14th September

Could you spare an hour between 10 am and 4 pm to sign the sponsorship forms for those who visit our church? Please sign the rota in the Church Foyer or telephone me. The rota has been set in half hour slots to encourage people to sign up for 1½ hours rather than just an hour! Thank you.

Janet

It's Nothing to do with Me

I am unable to achieve it, even when I am aware I need it. My mind wanders. I get easily diverted. What am I on about? It's my salvation. It is not within my capabilities to achieve it; but it does not have to be. It is a Free Gift from God himself. The biggest Free Gift you can imagine. And remember, it was very costly to God. Very costly. All I have to do is accept it. I have; have you?

William Frogley

Meetings of the CTS Forum continue to be well attended and are very positive. We are hosting the next forum (chaired by Catherine Dean) on Tuesday 7th October at 7.30 pm in the Hall - all welcome.



There will be a village Harvest Supper and entertainment on Sunday 12th October 6 - 8.30 pm in St John's Hall. Tickets now available from Marion & Mike Dyer - £5 adults, schoolchildren free.

Stansted Free Church

Methodist / URC
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 813433