

Imagine!



*Imagine
seeing the empty
tomb*

I have just returned from an Italian city. In cool March it isn't easy to envisage how it must be transformed by the fierce summer sun. Virtually all pavements are protected by porticos; romanesque archways stretching the length of each street. From the city walls the portico corridor continues beyond Bologna up the first foothills of the Appennines.



With a little imagination I can picture the pilgrims leaving their simple lodgings in the dusty city making their way along the first arches of the 600 or so porticos which will lead them to the summit where they will celebrate mass at the church of Saint Luke.

How weary a pilgrim must be as he or she arrives at the holy destination! How important it was to protect the pilgrim as far as possible from the baking Mediterranean sunshine! There are no coffee stops on the three mile climb but I can imagine on the Saint's day, little groups of nuns handing cups of cold water to the thirsty pilgrims. As we settle relaxed and comfortably in our upholstered pew seats at the beginning of communion perhaps we might imagine what it must be like to arrive at the beginning of the Lord's supper, stressed, exhausted, sweating but in a state of utter devotion. Have we lost something of the devotion, commitment and single-mindedness that pilgrimage demands? Perhaps we could still be a pilgrim people and whilst we are in Lent, what better time to assess how our pilgrim journey is going.

Alan Wheeler



Care Time



We ask you to remember our church family in your prayers, especially:

Mary Heuch; Mary Ecclestone, as she settles into Hargrave House; Dora Camp, who has recently returned home after a stay in hospital; the Trundle family, following the death of Peter's mother, Rose. It was good to see Cherry Lewis, one of our Pilots leaders, at church recently but she is not back to full health yet.

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The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on Sunday 29th April. Please submit articles by 20th April. If you have email access, then we would prefer your articles to be sent to:
news@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk.

Alternatively, please pass to one of the editors, or send to 23A Bentfield Road, Stansted CM24 8HP. If you have any queries, please telephone us. 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 April

Sunday Worship at Stansted Free Church

| | | |
|------------------|----------|---|
| 1 st | 10.30 am | The Worship Team - All Age Worship |
| 1 st | 2.30 pm | Rev Keith Page <i>followed by tea in the foyer - all welcome</i> |
| 1 st | 6.30 pm | Lent Groups Agape in the Hall - all welcome |
| 8 th | 10.30 am | Easter Day Holy Communion Rev Stuart Veitch |
| 15 th | 10.30 am | John Banks |
| 22 nd | 10.30 am | Gillian Taylor |
| | 6.30 pm | Methodist Easter Offering Service (see page 4) |
| 29 th | 10.30 am | Karen Brady |

Easter Services

Maundy Thursday 5th April

| | |
|---------|---|
| 8.00 pm | Reflective Service at Water Lane UR Church |
| 8.00 pm | Last Supper in the Jewish Tradition at Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church |

Good Friday 6th April

| | |
|----------|--|
| 10.30 am | Rev Keith Page at Stansted Free Church |
| 4.15 pm | Walk of Witness from St Theresa's Church |

Other Activities

| | | | |
|-----|------------------|---------|--|
| Mon | 16 th | 2.30 pm | Monday Club |
| | | 6.00 pm | Pilots in the Hall, for children aged 5 - 18 |
| Tue | 17 th | 7.30 pm | Fairtrade Evening Saffron Walden Methodist Church |
| Thu | 19 th | 8.00 pm | Church Meeting in the Hall |
| Sun | 29 th | 3.00 pm | Music4Mission in the church (see page 4) |
| Mon | 30 th | 6.00 pm | Pilots in the Hall, for children aged 5 - 18 |
| | | 8.00 pm | Shalom at 7 Blythwood Gardens |

From the Secretary

What a wonderful service we had on March 18th. Not wonderful in the sense that it was David's last service, but wonderful because of the number of people in the congregation, the beautiful music and an inspiring sermon, not forgetting the 'children's address'. The lunch afterwards was a very happy occasion although tinged with sadness, but I'm sure David and Sylvia will be back to visit us from time to time. Their new address is: 7 Woodbank, Loosley Row, Princes Risborough, HP27 0TS. No telephone number yet.

Stansted Deacons and the Bishops Stortford URC's Vacancy committee met with The Moderator and Janet Tollington on March 14th, so that they could explain the process of calling a new minister. This was the first of many meetings; by the time you read this, the Deacons will have met with Janet Tollington, and had another meeting with Water Lane! It will be a long journey, but we know that God will send the right person to us, we must just be patient. It could be up to two years before the vacancy is filled. All meetings of the vacancy committee are confidential, but be assured that we will let you know when we have a minister in view.

Apart from these meetings, April looks like being a fairly quiet month, (famous last words). Please try to attend the Church Meeting on Thursday 19th April at 8pm. The Methodist Easter Offering service on the 22nd at 6.30pm, which is not Easter, must be a quaint Methodist custom! Makes up for all the strange URC ones. I'd quite forgotten Easter - see the previous page for details of services.

On Sunday 29th there will be a Musical Afternoon (see below). Did I say it was a quiet month? Then to start May on a high point, on May Day there will be another vacancy committee meeting! I think the Deacons will need a sabbatical by the time the inter-regnum is over. Happy Easter to you all.

Betty

Music 4 Mission

3 - 5 pm Sunday 29th April
Stansted Free Church

Gospel, choral & popular music performed by ~
Dave Law ~ Bishop's Stortford Methodist Choir
Stansted Music Group ~ Charity

Tickets £5 in aid of Methodist Fund for World Mission
available from Marion & Mike

Sunday 18th March
David & Sylvia's final Sunday with us



David: "So now you all know what I take on my holiday!"

Keith: "I'm beginning to feel quite envious..."



Sylvia: "Won't it be nice to watch the rugby without feeling guilty..."

From the Minister

Image is important. A newborn child has little idea of him or herself and the world around. Gradually images grow within that give form and shape of the world and of oneself. Parents, family, community and teachers are crucial in this development. Wrong image leads to a wrong sense of reality. A growing problem is that the television is becoming a surrogate mother / father / friend / teacher. Children look at screens for input but there is no dialogue. We are raising children who are impoverished in communication skills, with poor images of themselves and others, and having difficulty in relationships. The car has banished outdoor play. A teacher tells me that children no longer know any board games. Image is important, but we are no longer recognising ourselves. Even more worryingly, we are losing substance.

Every nation and generation attempts to make their 'gods' out of their own image. No wonder their 'gods' fail them - image without substance. If God is real, then we are made in His image and find reality in His substance. Wrong image of God, we lose the skill of how to relate to Him. The Bible brings the reality of God home. The Bible never portrays God as distant, but always intimately creating and sustaining the universe. People today ask, "Where is God?"

The Bible answers: imagine God as a bridge spanning a vast chasm. The world makes its way along it, but people become sceptical about the existence of the bridge. "Where is the bridge?" they shout. They are standing on it! God is not only Creator - His every breath sustains us. Wrong image of God = wrong response = wrong sense of reality. But just as so many children are getting a wrong image of themselves and the world, so is our nation with God. Many people say they believe in God, but their image is defective. Usually God is seen as 'hands off' - distant.

At Easter time, Christians remember the price that had to be paid by God to restore a correct image of Himself in the world. God sent His Son - yet the world rejected Him. God could have 'washed His hands of us' as we did to His Son, yet He raised Jesus from the dead. In Him we find life. In Him we experience the love of our true Father. In His Cross and resurrection, image becomes ultimate reality. We find this, we find ourselves.

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. Colossians 1:15-16

Keith Page

Psalm 23 - an alternative version

Toki Miyashina, a Japanese woman, updated Psalm 23 as a prayer for busy people.

The Lord is my Pace-setter, I shall not rush;
He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals.
He provides me with images of stillness, which restore my serenity;
He leads me in ways of efficiency through calmness of mind,
And His guidance is peace.
Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day,
I will not fret, for His presence is here.
His timelessness, His all importance, will keep me in balance.
He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity
By anointing my mind with His oils of tranquility.
My cup of joyous energy overflows.
Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours,
For I shall walk in the pace of my Lord,
and dwell in His house for ever.

Ken Mark used this reading during a service at our church recently.
If you would like a copy please see Marion.

Pilots

On Monday 5th March the Pilot Group held a **Collectors' Evening**. At 6 o'clock sharp the children arrived, very excited about showing their various collections. The Lecture Hall was soon full of colourful football programmes, magazines and cards; also beautiful Turkish scarves displaying gold and silver metal discs, a range of colourful beads and necklaces; a large collection of various Bibles, banknotes, toy cars and bears.



In order to gain their collectors badge, the Pilots displayed and talked about their collections to one another. Everyone enjoyed the evening and they are looking forward to the final session of the Easter Term which will be an evening of Entertainment and special refreshments when the Pilots will share their talents with one another.

We begin our Summer Term on Monday 16th April from 6 to 7.30 pm and if the weather is kind to us we hope to be out and about, looking at our village, also taking part in various activities and fitting in a B-B-Q and games.

Over the last few months our number of helpers for Pilots has almost halved, due mainly to ill health and personal circumstances. The situation is now getting quite serious and if we are to continue this valuable work with the children in our care, we really need more help in order to keep Pilots alive. Please let me know if you can help in any way.

Valerie Trundle

More Collectors' Items

We still have Stansted URC souvenirs available for purchase.

As the church no longer exists, these are now
COLLECTORS' ITEMS!!

Mugs ~ Thimbles ~ Coasters ~ Notelets ~ Cook Books
plus Stansted Village Tea Towels.

Please help clear the stocks! Details in the porch or call 812593

Rose Trundle

Over 60 people filled the church on 7th March for the Thanksgiving Service for the life of Rose Trundle who died on 23rd February 2007 aged 94. Rose had been a member of our church for over 40 years and took a very active part in all church activities. Even when she moved into Broome End care home she was still very interested in what was happening. As we heard at the service, Rose moved into her home in Chapel Hill right opposite the church in 1937 and after a few years took up the role of unofficial caretaker by dealing with left on lights and switching the heating on for meetings etc. If anyone forgot their key we knew where to go.



Her house became a meeting place in the late 50s and early 60s for the teenagers of the church, and Rose supplied us with tea and biscuits. Many a happy hour was spent in the little room on the side of her house which we nicknamed the courting room. Rose was a very independent person who would help anyone who needed it but did not accept help easily herself. She found leaving her home of 60 years and moving into sheltered accommodation at Mead Court quite difficult.

Peter, Valerie, her two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren were very important to her and she proudly told many stories about them when you visited her. Please remember them in your thoughts and prayers as they come to terms with their loss too.

Shelter from the storm

Prayer pointers



As Jesus wept over Jerusalem, lament with Him over the loss of good and simple things that man needs... fresh water, safe streets, a restaurant where you don't get poisoned and a hotel where you don't get strangled....



Shalom

Four Special Women of Vision

"How deep is your love?"

When I used to hear the communion invitation – all who love our Lord are welcome - I would think "How is it possible to love someone you cannot see?" Yet for four women we studied at our Shalom retreat last month, the common passion was to love God with every fibre of their body and soul. Singing "The reason I live is to worship you" would not have seemed strange to Therèse of Lisieux. To her, Christ was loved exactly as a bridegroom. Her love of God was white hot. A very uncomfortable image for us today, especially non-Catholics.

Saint Teresa of Avila, on the other hand seemed much more earthy. Our leader, Father McGreevy, told us that she insisted on the importance of eating well and getting a good night's sleep. She seemed a lively tough character, travelling all over Spain spreading God's word. Difficult work for a woman at the time of the Spanish Inquisition. Her father had even been interrogated by them!

The two women who one really warmed to were Catherine of Siena and Edith Stein. Although she was illiterate, Catherine courageously took up cudgels against the political iniquities of her time and in particular the schism within the Catholic church. She wrote to the Pope in Avignon "Written in the saving blood of Christ" and she reprimanded him.

Edith Stein was a wonderful contemporary woman – a Jewess who in Nazi times converted to Christianity with a passion, and whose wonderful selfless caring on the train journey to Auschwitz was recorded by the few survivors who witnessed it. The weekend gave a precious insight into these special women. However the underlying theme was the One who inspired their passion. We left the retreat house pondering on the God who loves each of us with a glorious passion, reflected in the lives of these special women. "How deep is your love?" In God's case very deep indeed – for each one of us.

Alan Wheeler



Christian Aid Week (13th - 19th May) is seven amazing days of fundraising, prayer and action against global poverty. If you can add some of your time to deliver and collect envelopes in Stansted streets this can have an impact around the world.

Please let me know if you can spare a few hours to make a difference to the lives of the poorest people in the world. The roads where we need collectors are:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Benfield Causeway | Croasdaile Road |
| Benfield Green, Bower and Bury | |
| Lower Street | Maitland Road |
| Meadowcroft | Millfields & Millside |
| Mountfitchet Road | Recreation Ground |
| The Spinney | Stoneyfield Drive |

Cut the Carbon

Climate change is killing poor people. But these are the people least responsible for climate change. The average Briton emits 31 times more CO₂ per year than someone living in Bangladesh. We won't make poverty history unless the rich world cuts its CO₂ emissions. So Christian Aid is starting a campaign to encourage UK companies to publish a full account of their global carbon footprint, estimated to be 12-15 percent of the world total, and to commit to a reduction of at least 5 percent per year. More about this and the broader campaign next month.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Catherine Dean 813579

Monday Club

Nineteen of us were able to attend our most enjoyable February lunch in the Church Hall. It was good to see the rest of the church being used on the same day by others, and we all fitted around each other at different times.

At our March meeting, Mr Ted Pretty spoke to us about Windmills, explaining the history and workings, illustrated by slides. It made us realise that our windmills must be saved for future generations, and that Stansted Village is lucky to have such a wonderful mill.

Phyllis Little

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Pilots

Valerie Trundle

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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