



**I**magine ..... do you sometimes imagine you are too small to count or too weak to be of any value?

Imagine then that you're a bird! You can fly, zooming effortlessly from your window ledge to the bottom of the garden, flying on to peer into other people's gardens, flying over the town and seeing everything from a new perspective. And then you can sing too. You can stop humans in their tracks to listen to your song.

I'm sure that the birds themselves don't see things that way. They're too busy being birds; fighting for food, fighting for their territories, fighting for mates, fighting exhaustion when feeding their young, and fighting for survival when the winters turn cold.

Jesus valued two sparrows at one penny, but went on to say that *"Not one sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's consent."* They are worth a lot more than a halfpenny to their God. But Jesus then said *"As for you, even the hairs on your head have all been counted, so do not be afraid, you are worth much more than many sparrows."* (Matthew 10: 29)

You see you are valued. Human life means a lot to God.

But we seem very ambivalent about human life. Sometimes we go over the top in safeguarding it from all risks, and at other times we take a person's life without much concern, whether it be young gangs in London, or our treatment of people we suspect of being terrorists.

Christ's birth at Christmas, death and resurrection at Easter, and return to heaven at Ascension were not mere grand gestures,

but gifts to each one of us of his life, his sacrifice and rising, and his confidence in our mission on his behalf.

A story goes that when Jesus arrived in heaven he was challenged by the archangel: *“What plans have you made for your gospel to be spread throughout the world?”* and he replied *“I have left the task to my disciples”*. The archangel was concerned and asked *“What if Peter is too busy and Thomas too doubtful, what then?”* And Jesus replied *“I have no second plan, I am counting on them”*.

He still counts on us, his followers, and values us as his friends.

Stuart Veitch

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The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on Sunday 27th April. Please submit articles by Friday, 18th April . 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 April

## Sunday Worship at Stansted Free Church

- 6- 10.30 am The Worship Team - Recognition  
2.30 pm John Banks  
followed by tea in the foyer - all welcome
- 13- 10.30 am Rev David Mullins - Holy Communion  
6.30 pm Rev Ferni Cole-Nije - Circuit Easter Offering
- 20- 10.30 am Christine Heyhoe
- 27- 10.30 am Pamela Cressey

## Other Activities

Sun 6- 3.30 pm Outreach Tea

Mon 14- 6.00 pm Pilots in the Hall  
7.30 pm CTS Forum – St John's Church

Mon 21- 2.30 pm Monday Club in the Hall  
8.00 pm Shalom Prayer & Praise - 7 Blythwood Gardens

Thu 24- 9.30 am Church Oversight Group – 58 Chapel Hill

Mon 28- 6.00 pm Pilots in the Hall



Care Time



Bessie Armitage is starting to feel better and has sent a card to the church thanking everyone for their love and prayers. Please remember Bessie in your prayers and also Rev Jim Gill who has been having chemotherapy, Arthur Law who is awaiting treatment, Kath Hartnell who is undergoing painful tests, and others who are unwell.

## Welcome Chris

Church members and friends were delighted to welcome Chris Coetze into membership of our church.

Chris was previously a member of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.



## From the Secretary

There has been a lot of talk about why Easter was so early this year so I have been reading up about it and it's quite interesting. It is believed that from about 31AD to 325AD, Easter was celebrated either on or just after the 1st day of the Jewish celebration of the Passover, no matter what day of the week that was, or on the Sunday closest to that date. From 326AD to 1582AD Easter day was based on the Julian calendar which was in use at that time. The method we use today was calculated by Pope Gregory XIII and his advisors in 1583. The date of Easter Sunday is related to the full moon at the time of the resurrection.

Easter Sunday falls on the Sunday following the full moon after the spring Equinox. Although the equinox can be March 20th or 21st, for this purpose it is taken as the 21st March, the first day of spring. So the earliest Easter Sunday can be is March 22nd and the latest April 25th. The next time it will be as early in March will be in 2035 when it will be on the 25th and the latest on April 25th 2038.

The reasons why the Christian and the Orthodox churches have different dates are far too complicated to explain here. There is a movement afoot to try and have one universal date for Easter but that, no doubt, will be some way off.

A date that is quite a bit closer is the induction of Allen Morton, our new URC minister. Subject to the manse being ready for him and Daphne, the induction will be on May 10th. Please keep this date free. I would expect it to be in the afternoon followed by tea - could we celebrate anything without tea and cakes? As soon as I have a definite date and time I will let you know.

For those of you who have over-indulged in chocolate over Easter I include the following: Chocolate is made from the cocoa bean. Beans are vegetables, vegetables are good for you, therefore chocolate can be included in your 5 a day!

Betty



## *Shalom*

We will be on our annual retreat at Hemingford Grey from 11- 13th April.

On 21st April at 7 Blythwood Gardens, Edna and Harry Goreing will be leading a Prayer and Praise. Please join us – you will be warmly welcomed!

Marion Dyer



## What are you doing in May?

Or more precisely 11th to 17th? If you are not on holiday or moving house, you may have a few hours to spare to collect for **Christian Aid**. I can't guarantee that it won't rain or that everyone will welcome you knocking on their door (though most will), but I can guarantee that the money you collect will make a difference to the lives of people less fortunate than us.

People like Idrissu in Ghana, who with the help of Christian Aid's partner SEND has overcome poverty and physical disability to become a teacher. He has also taught himself sign language so that he can work alongside others to access debt relief money. You will remember the "drop the debt" campaign of Christian Aid and other organisations, which is now bearing fruit for Idrissu and his community.

If you would like to know more about being a volunteer collector, please talk to me or to those in our church, who for many years have been giving up a few hours in May.

Catherine  
[christianaid@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:christianaid@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

## Fairtrade News

I would like to thank everyone who supported the Fairtrade events at our church and at our house during Fairtrade Fortnight, and also the Co-operative Society for Fairtrade Vouchers and information on Fair Trade. The sale of fairly-traded goods raised £290, which, together with donations totalling £120, was sent to Traidcraft Exchange - a charity helping to develop new fairly-traded organisations.

I also stock a wide range of fairtrade goods all the year round. Please contact me for details.



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

# Women's World Day of Prayer

About 40 people attended the service on 7th March, which was held in our church this year. The Service had been compiled by the women of Guyana and went under the title of 'God's Wisdom Provides New Understanding'. The country of Guyana is in the N.E corner of South America and is the only English speaking country in the continent. The Amerindians are the original inhabitants of Guyana; but they are now a combination of British, African, Portugese, Chinese and East Indian ancestries. The Service had plenty of opportunity for representatives of all our churches in Stansted to take part and we were fortunate to have our own Valerie Trundle to provide the music on the piano for the many songs and hymns that were in it. A particularly lovely solo anthem 'Sophia' was sung to us by Isobel Bradshaw from the Catholic Church - this would have been sung in many churches all over the world; but I doubt if they would have surpassed her version.

We were fortunate too to have Brenda Veitch, one of our own members, to give the address. Brenda emphasised that women's concerns in the modern world are very much the same wherever we are. The concerns we have for wars being fought in so many parts of the world and the problems of homelessness, child prostitution and AIDS/HIV. We have a need to develop a new understanding in our relationships with each other and with God. The offering was taken for the work of the Prayer Movement, for Christian Literature Societies and for Christian Educational Projects and was in excess of £100. It was good to be part of this Service and know that the same words were being echoed all over the world in so many different climates and circumstances, but with a common theme uniting us all.

*Judy Colliver*

## Stansted Fun Run & Walk 11 am Sunday 15th June

This year's event is supporting: Hearing Help Uttlesford; Diabetes UK; and The Moreton Romanian Orphans Fund (in which Jane Perkins from Water Lane URC is involved). You may have seen in the Link magazine that we are looking for more helpers. We would not want to encourage you to miss morning worship, but we will still need helpers from noon onwards. If you can help, please contact me. Many thanks.



*Marion Dyer*

*info@stansted10k.org.uk*

# Pilots

Dates for this term Mondays 6 - 7.30 pm:

14th & 28th April, 12th May, 2nd, 16th & 30th June, 14th July.

## MAF Evening

We have sent a report and photographs of our very successful MAF evening to the *Pilot Desk* in London. We hope this report will be included in the *Pilot Bridge* magazine and maybe in *Reform*. One of our own officers, Michelle King, is now the official local representative for MAF, and we hope that organisations in the area will get in contact with Michelle if they wish to know more about the work that she represents.

## Peace Box

We will be opening the Peace Boxes in the next few weeks.

## Good Friday Project

Most of our Pilots took part in this event and there will be a report in the next newsletter.

## Bessie Armitage

We are pleased to report that Bessie is 'on the mend'. We have been in contact with her and the Pilots have made their own get well cards which we have sent to Bessie in Scotland.

## Pilot Plaque

Sylvia Payne and Henry Playle will be coming in the near future to present a plaque to our group. We are deciding where to display it.

## Pilot Birthdays

March 31st Abigail King

April 8th Megan Warwick and Sam Carter; April 21st Samantha Graves

Valerie

# The Radio Times

Do you buy it? It is very good. It not only tells you what is happening on the radio and television today, it tells you what will happen tomorrow. It gives informal opinion, both on what will happen and what has happened. It tells you about people and gives personal opinion. This is not an advertisement for the Radio Times. It is an advertisement for the Bible, which does all of the above and much more with regard to our LIFE. Want to know what has happened, or what is going to happen? Read the Old and then the New Testament.

# **Stansted Free Church**

## **Methodist / URC**

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

### **Contacts**

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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.