

# Imagine!

December  
2014



**I** magine a world without hope. Advent is a time for yearning. These last few weeks leading up to Christmas, known as Advent, are for dreaming about what might yet be. We do not have to cast our minds very far before we need to begin dreaming again. Just when we thought that Iraq might be beginning to find its new future, it has been plunged into civil war. So little progress has been made towards creating a secure future for both Israelis and Palestinians to live alongside each other in peace. The number of people dependent upon foodbanks in our own country is on the increase. And this should surely be our Advent hope that we dream about, and pray and work for, what God still needs to bring about in our world.

Etty Hillesum was a Christian Jew who died in Auschwitz. In her diary, she spoke of not allowing her experiences to crush her, but rather to face her difficulties without bitterness or the desire for revenge, so that she was able to prevent the power of death from destroying her. As I read that, it spoke to me of always keeping the flame of hope alive that flickers within us. Isn't this what Advent is about - tending the light of hope of within us? *Imagine a world without hope.*

I saw someone on the television who had been out of work off and on for a number of years. She was looking for work at the time, and spoke of needing to hang on to a sense of self-worth and not allowing the dispiriting process of seeking work destroy her. Isn't this about tending the Advent hope too? *Imagine a world without hope.*

As we yearn and dream, as we tend the flame of hope in challenging times, we are preparing again in Advent for the renewal of the promise that God will come to us. We wait again to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ - 'God with us.' God is the subject of our yearning and the presence of hope within us. May we all know the dawning of God's presence again this Christmas. Christine joins me in wishing you all a joyous Christmas and good hope for the New Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine".



# Care Time



We remember with much affection Cath Parsons, a longstanding church member who died recently. We pray for her family and for all those who are grieving at this time. We also pray for Mary Warnett, recovering from major surgery and others in our wider church family who need our prayers.

## Updated Photo Gallery

The photo album containing pictures of our present congregation has been updated and is available on the drop-leaf table in the Foyer.

## Ebola Appeal

Thank you to all those who generously donated to our Ebola Appeal. With the Gift Aid added, we were able to send a cheque for £125.

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

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 DECEMBER

### Worship at Stansted Free Church

- 7th 10.30 am New Directions with Pilots  
14th 10.30 am Rev'd Charles Martin - Communion  
21st 10.30 am Rev'd Roy Fowler Carols & Gift Service (see below)  
25th 10.30 am Rev'd Christine Fowler - Christmas Day Family Service  
28th 10.30 am Julie Finbow

**Services are followed by coffee. All are welcome.**

### Other Activities

- Mon 1st 8.00 pm LPWL Meeting at Little Easton  
Thu 4th 8.00 pm Circuit Meeting at Bishop's Stortford  
Mon 8th 8.00 pm Shalom Party at 7 Blythwood Gardens  
Wed 10th 10.00 am The Place on the Hill Christmas Event (see p 4)  
Sun 14th 11.30 am Fairtrade goods on sale after service  
Mon 15th 6.00 pm Pilots in the Hall  
Sat 20th 3.00 pm Celebration of Christmas at St John's Church  
Mon 22nd 7.30 pm Carol Singing (see p 6)  
Tue 23rd 7.30 pm Carol Singing (see p 6)  
Wed 24th 11.15 pm Midnight Communion at B S Methodist Church

### Carols and Gift Service 21st December

During this service there will be an opportunity to bring items for the Whitechapel Mission. As most of you will know, the mission provides thousands of breakfasts to homeless people each year, and also has the largest clothing store in London for the homeless. Breakfast cereals, tinned beans and tomatoes, tea, coffee, and toiletries are welcome, along with gloves, scarves, socks, towels, sheets, blankets and sleeping bags. If you are not able to be at the service, donations may be left in the vestry, but please label for Whitechapel so that foodstuffs will not be confused with our Stansted Foodbank supplies. Thank you.

### Christmas Day Service

Our offering on Christmas Day will be for Save the Children.

# Pilots



Valerie and Peter Trundle recently received an Uttlesford District Council Community Achievement Award for Service to Children and Young People, in recognition of 40 years leading Pilots. They are pictured with Michelle, as a Pilots Leader, receiving their award from Councillor Keith Artus. Many congratulations to them both!

The Pilots attended the Remembrance Day service at the War Memorial (photo courtesy of Margaret Silvester).



The Pilots will be taking part in our church service on 7th December at 10.30 am, when they will also be presented with their seals (badges).



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**Christmas Event**  
**Wednesday 10th December.**  
**10 am - 11.30 am**

**Come and join the fun making**  
**Christingles followed by a visit from**  
**Father Christmas**

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

**The Place is open Wednesdays & Fridays 9.30 am - 12.30 pm**  
**but we will be closed on Wednesday 24th and Friday 26th December**

For more details contact Marion & Mike  
email: [theplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:theplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)



Come and join our

# Celebration of Christmas Songs and Readings

with contributions from villagers,  
local schools & churches

**3 pm Saturday 20th December**  
**St John's Church**

*All are welcome to join the choir  
- come along and have some fun!*

*Choir Rehearsals 7.30 - 8.15 pm  
Thursdays 4th & 18th December  
in St John's Church*

Retiring collection for Huw Johnson Club and  
Red Cross Ebola Appeal

*Organised by Churches Together in Stansted Tel: 816318*



# CAROL SINGING

in aid of

**Huw Johnson Club &  
Red Cross Ebola Appeal**

**ALL WELCOME**

**MEET AT 7.30 EACH EVENING**

*Come & join the fun singing your  
favourite carols in Stansted  
Collectors also needed each night*

**Monday**            **Meet junct Mountfitchet Rd / Church Rd**  
**22 December**    **Finish at Old Lane House, Church Rd**

**Tuesday**           **Meet by Windmill**  
**23 December**    **Finish at 49 Recreation Ground**



*Followed by seasonal  
refreshments around 9 pm  
For information Tel: 814059*



## CAROL SERVICE



3 pm Wednesday 10th December  
Abbey Lane URC, Saffron Walden

Speaker Rev'd Christine Fowler

All Welcome ~ Followed by Seasonal Refreshments

### A message from Gordon Heald

*Gordon has recently retired from his position as Property Officer for the URC Eastern Synod. A cheque towards his retirement gift was sent from the church. Our recent church refurbishment would have been difficult without the professional advice and encouragement we received from him. The following letter was received:*

Dear Betty

I am writing to thank you for your church's kind contribution to my retirement gift. I was passed a significant cheque and a list of those churches who had contributed towards it. Both the overall gift and your church's contribution towards it were quite unexpected and I am very touched that so many churches have been so generous.

I have enjoyed my 13 years working for the Eastern Synod and trust that I have helped many of the individual local churches in their mission during this time. It is of course the people of the local churches who have been so enjoyable to work with and my interest in their buildings has enabled me to meet them and I hope to encourage them. With grateful thanks.

*Gordon*

The next **Traidcraft** stalls will be after the service on Sundays 14th December and 18th January. If you would like any Fairtrade goods at other times, just give me a call. Catalogues are available in the church foyer.



Tel Brenda 815819 Email: [fairtrade@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:fairtrade@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

# Stansted Free Church

## Methodist / URC

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

### Contacts

(All telephone numbers are 01279)

#### Minister

Revd Roy Fowler

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#### Fairtrade

Brenda Veitch

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

### Sunday Service

10.30 am Morning Worship. 1st Sunday - New Directions (Informal)

#### Pilots Children's Work

**Monday (monthly - term time)** 6 pm Pilots for children aged 5 - 18  
Valerie Trundle Tel 813433 Email: [pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk](mailto:pilots@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk)

#### The Place on the Hill Drop-In (Everyone Welcome)

Every Wednesday and Friday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm