

Imagine!



Jan
2017

I magine what it must be like living in a tent. It is one thing to go 'glamping' when the weather is dry and warm, but no fun when it is wet and cold. There are thousands of refugees who have to make do with such conditions. Imagine you have also been separated from other family members and do not know where they are, or even whether they are still alive. What do people in that situation have to look forward to? The theme of our next Messy Church on 22nd January is 'hope', and we shall be exploring how hope provides a positive way of dealing with difficult circumstances.

Hope is a key foundation of the Christian gospel. With God on our side nothing is hopeless. When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, the prospect of finding shelter was not looking good. However, the young couple trusted God's promise made through Gabriel. They hoped that all would be as foretold, and it was. When Noah was in the ark surrounded by floods, he hoped that the food supply would last out until the water subsided. God kept his promise and Noah was saved along with all his passengers.

At the beginning of a new year it is traditional to make resolutions. They may be made in good faith, and we may hope to keep to them, but research indicates that less than 20% will stay the course. Perhaps that is because we lack confidence in our own ability. Imagine how Noah must have felt having responsibility for his family and all those animals in the ark. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews provides some guidance on the relationship between hope and faith. He (or perhaps she?) writes: *Faith makes us sure of what we hope for* (Heb 11:1). So by being faithful to God we can be confident that our hopefulness will be rewarded.

Thanks be to God that this applies to everyone, including tent-dwellers, stable-dwellers, ark-dwellers and ourselves. Mike Dyer

WHAT'S ON IN JANUARY

Worship at Stansted Free Church

1st	10.30 am	Julie Finbow
8th	10.30 am	Rev'd Christine Fowler
15th	10.30 am	Rev'd David Chapman
22nd	10.30 am	Rev'd Roy Fowler - Covenant Service
29th	10.30 am	Rev'd Jenny Martin

Other Activities

Thu	12th	9.30 am	Church Oversight Group at 7 Blythwood Gardens
Sun	15th	11.30 am	Fairtrade goods on sale after the service
Sat	21st	10.00 am	Church Meeting in the Hall
Sun	22nd	3.00 pm	Stansted Messy Church at St Mary's School
Wed	25th	7.30 pm	Churches Together AGM in the Hall

THANK YOU to everyone who supported our **Gift Service** with goods and a financial donation for Whitechapel Mission, and the **Churches Together Celebration of Christmas and Carol Singing** which raised £948.75 which has been sent to the Christian Aid Christmas Appeal.



Care Time



We pray for: Messy Church on 22nd January; visitors to *The Place* who are unwell or going through difficult times; those undergoing tests or awaiting operations; and for Bishop's Stortford YMCA's social events that bring together their residents so that they can develop a true sense of community and belonging.

FEASTS AND FESTIVALS Synod Celebration Day

Saturday 10th June at The Suffolk Showground, Ipswich

There will be plenty to do and see for all ages and the venue can cope with all kinds of British weather. It is planned to make this the WEBS outing for 2017. Book the date now - more information to follow.

The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on Sunday 29th January. Please email articles by Friday 20th January to news@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk or pass to one of the editors: Alan and Mike & Marion

Copies of this and previous editions of Imagine can be found on our website
www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



The Place Christmas Events
Mon 12th, Wed 14th and Fri 16th Dec

Christingles, Carols & Father Christmas ...
... a great time was had by all!



Stansted Free Church (Methodist / URC)

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

**Part of the WEBS (West Essex & Bishop's Stortford) URC Pastorate
and the Bishop's Stortford Methodist Circuit**

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Sunday Service

10.30 am Morning Worship.

1st Sunday of each month - New Directions (Informal)

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

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

Tel Marion & Mike, Catherine & Alan or Fran

Email: theplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk