

Imagine!



MAR
2017

I imagine you are an asylum seeker in the UK; a young man from Somalia, whose family are all dead, killed by Al Shabaab fighters. You have given up your home, and travelled, facing great hardship, fear and loneliness, eventually making it to England. Your asylum application has been turned down of course; you have appealed, and are waiting. No work - not allowed - just the minimum benefits and the constant cloud of being forcibly returned to your dangerous homeland. This is no new problem of course. It has been happening throughout all the ages. Christ himself fled as a baby with his parents to Egypt to evade the bloodthirsty wrath of a king. However you are in England, facing a similar situation; but here comes the YMCA. It will provide you with a home at a hostel in Stevenage, with a support worker who speaks your language, is a Muslim like you, and helps you find English classes. There are seven other asylum seekers in your hostel, from different countries with different languages and cultures, and you have to get to know them and get along with them. Your support worker organises tennis, football and swimming. It is not home, but it is a great deal better than expected. You are a human being again. Jesus said:

"I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was a stranger and you took me into your home, and in that you did it for the least of these your brothers, you did it for me."

There are many places where love and care is being shared, but often out of the sight of the public gaze - like the support being quietly given by local churches to the refugee family living nearby. So however bleak the news, just remember this Lent, that God's love is hugely at work all around us; look out for it and give thanks.

Stuart Veitch



Care Time



We pray for the events that are happening in Stansted during March, particularly the Churches Together Lent Groups and Messy Church. We remember Phyllis; Arthur in Australia visiting his daughter; all those who are unwell or awaiting operations; the Syrian Family who are still finding it difficult to settle in Stansted; and those who come to The Place on the Hill and Messy Church.

You are invited to use the prayer request slips which are available in the foyer

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The next edition of **Imagine** will be available on 26th March. Please submit articles by Friday 17th March to: 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

WHAT'S ON IN MARCH

Worship at Stansted Free Church

5th	10.30 am	John Banks
12th	10.30 am	Rev'd David Mullins
19th	10.30 am	Rev'd Jan Bisschoff
26th	10.30 am	Rev'd Roy Fowler - Communion

Other Activities

Fri	3rd	2.00 pm	World Day of Prayer at Quaker Meeting House (p4)
Mon	6th	8.00 pm	LPWT Meeting at B Stortford Methodist Church
Wed	8th	7.45 pm	Lent Group at St John's Rectory (p6)
Thu	9th	10.00 am	Big Brew in the Foyer and Church
Sun	12th	3.30 pm	Messy Church at St Mary's School (p5)
Wed	15th	7.45 pm	Lent Group at St Theresa's Parish Centre (p6)
Wed	22nd	7.45 pm	Lent Group at 27 Spencer Close (p6)
		8.00 pm	Circuit Meeting at B Stortford Methodist Church
Fri	24th	7.30 pm	Crosslight at Charis Centre, B Stortford (p6)
Sun	26th	11.30 am	Fairtrade goods on sale after the service
Mon	27th	10.00 am	The Place on the Hill Easter Crafts (p5)
Wed	29th	10.00 am	The Place on the Hill Easter Crafts (p5)
		7.45 pm	Lent Group in the Hall (p6)
Fri	31st	10.00 am	The Place on the Hill Easter Crafts (p5)

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT



Fairtrade COFFEE / tea / biscuits
PLUS
Sale OF FAIRTRADE GOODS

10 am - noon Thur 9th Mar in the Church & Foyer
The stalls will also be available on Fri 10th Mar
at The Place on the Hill

All are warmly invited~ come and browse!

Contact Brenda for more information

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER



International and Interdenominational



**2 pm Friday 3rd March
Stansted Quaker Meeting House**

Am I being Unfair to You?

Prepared by the women of The Philippines

On Friday 3rd March, over 5,000 services will be held in the British Isles on the theme of 'Am I Being Unfair to You?' The Christian women of the Philippines wrote the service and it has been translated into 1,000 different languages and dialects. The same service will be used throughout the world, starting at sunrise over the island of Samoa and continuing until sunset off the coast of American Samoa.

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan - named locally as *Yolanda* - struck the Philippine islands in the Pacific Ocean. This is mentioned in the service but you will also hear the stories of a girl, a mother and an older woman, recounting their situations and their hopes and fears.

The service focusses on the Bible story of the workers in the vineyard: Matthew 20 v 1-16. There is a reflection on the artwork designed by Rowena 'Apol' Laxamana-Sta.Rosa. It is very thought provoking and illustrates contrasting scenes.

Why not find out more about the theme, the Philippines and the service? The Day of Prayer is not just for women - everyone is welcome, men and women. The service will be followed by refreshments. There will also be a Traidcraft Stall.

Brenda



STANSTED MESSY CHURCH



Sunday 12th March 3.30 - 5 pm
St Mary's School, Foresthall Park

An **exciting** and **informal** style of church for families, with activities, celebration and food (all based on a Christian theme), and an emphasis on **FUN!** Arranged by Churches Together in Stansted.

You can see photographs of our previous Messy Church events at www.stanstedchurches.com/messychurch

A very big thank you to all those who have helped or provided food at our previous events, and also to Carol who is taking a well-deserved sabbatical from organising the food. We are very pleased that Sue Parker has offered to take over this very essential role for the rest of this year, and she will be looking for people to provide sandwiches and cakes (please call Sue if you can help).

For general information please call Marion & Mike



Easter Craft Special Events ***Mon 27th, Wed 29th & Fri 31st March*** ***10 am - 11 am***

Come and join the fun decorating
eggs & crosses
and making Easter baskets

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

The Place on the Hill is open
Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays 9.30 am - 12.30 pm
including the school holidays

For more details contact Marion & Mike
email: theplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



Friday 24th March 7.30pm Charis Centre, Bishop's Stortford

Crosslight by Paul Burbridge and Les Ellison draws us into the events of Jesus' passion and especially into the experience of Peter, the disciple chosen to lead the church, but who failed, in spite of everything he so passionately believed in.

This is a moving play written to encourage the audience to reflect and respond to Jesus' passion, during short periods between the acts and at the end. It is suitable for adults and young people aged 12 and upwards. Riding Lights is a professional Christian theatre company based at Friargate Theatre in York.

Tickets £12 adult, £10 concession from Sue Glass (Bishop's Stortford URC) or after 6th March from Tony Crosby (Stansted Churches).



LENT GROUPS 2017

Our groups will be led by four of the Stansted churches, on a topic of their choice. Meetings will begin with coffee at 7.45pm, followed by discussion until 9.00pm. Dates (all are Wednesdays in March) and venues are as follows:

8th led by St John's at the Rectory, St John's Road

15th led by St Theresa's at the Parish Centre, High Lane

22nd led by the Family Church at 27 Spencer Close

29th led by the Free Church in the Free Church Hall

All welcome. You do not have to attend every week. Come when you can!

STEPPING OUT

A writing competition organised by Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB), inspired by the life, writing and work of Rev'd Julie Hume who died in 2014 from cancer, aged 56

You are invited to submit a meditative or reflective piece of writing of no more than 500 words in prose or poetry, on the theme of **Stepping Out**. Each entry must be an original piece of work, not previously published either in print or electronically. You may submit up to **three** entries.

Closing date: Wednesday 19 April

Prizes: £150 winner, £50 runner-up, to be announced at Conference on 23rd June. The competition is open to everyone aged 16 or over, except relatives of the organisers or judges.

COMPETITION RULES

All entries must be typed and sent as Word documents. Do not put your name or any identifying details on the entry.

Entries should be submitted preferably as an email attachment to: **writingcompetition@mwib.org.uk** including your name, address, telephone number and the title of the piece in the body of the email. Email entries will be acknowledged by email. Alternatively, typed entries may be sent by post to **Writing Competition, PO Box 9298, Loughborough LE11 9FY**. Postal entries should include a separate cover sheet with your name, address, telephone number and the title of the piece. If you require an acknowledgement, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Copyright will remain the property of the writer, although it would be our intention to publish the material on the MWiB and Imagining Abundance websites.

The judges' decision is final.



Methodist Women
in Britain

www.mwib.org.uk

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

Contacts

Minister

Revd Roy Fowler (day off Monday)

Email: minister@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

WEBS Minister

Revd Caroline Vodden

Church Secretary

Betty Francis

Email: info@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Church Notices

Marion Pretty

Lettings

Mike & Marion Dyer

Email: lettings@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Newsletter Editors

Alan Wheeler Mike & Marion Dyer

Email: news@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Treasurers

Alan Wheeler Marion Dyer

Email: treasurer@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Fairtrade

Brenda Veitch

Email: fairtrade@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Sunday Service

10.30 am Morning Worship.

Some months we hold New Directions which is an informal service

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