

Summer 2009

spire

spire provides news about the Church with the spire in the Strand. It is delivered by members of the Church.

news from Dawlish United Reformed Church

OPPOSITION TO CHURCH PLANS FOR CHANGE

Opposition to turn Dawlish URC's building into a community centre has raised questions about getting planning approval for the project. Because the building is Grade 2 Listed, several bodies have the right to advise the church planning authorities on whether the alterations should go ahead. English Heritage is strong in its opposition, advising that "it would cause unjustifiable damage to a nationally significant historic asset." Teignbridge Council, which has to approve all external alterations, recommends refusal because "the proposals seriously damage the character of the listed building through the removal of original fabric and fittings."



Rosemary Holmes

Commenting on the advice, the Church Secretary, Rosemary Holmes, says, "Our plans are to make the building an asset to the town and so safeguard its future as a community resource and a place of worship. Unfortunately the heritage bodies do not have to take this into account

when giving their advice. The congregation is not in the business of maintaining a museum; it wants a building suitable for the 21st century."

Like other denominations, the United Reformed Church has delegated planning authority over its listed buildings. This means that it makes the final decision about any internal alterations. The minister, Revd Roger Whitehead, remains optimistic. "I am sure that the church authorities will listen to the advice that they have received, but in the end they will recognise that our proposals are the right way forward for the church. They know that over the years church buildings have always been adapted to meet the needs of each generation."

The church treasurer, Rychard Winslade, is very upbeat. "So far we have raised over £130,000 towards the changes, and I take this as a sign that God is definitely on our side—we will get the permission we need."

The church authorities commented that the matter is still under consideration and a decision would be made later in the year.

BOCCIA—A GAME FOR DISABLED AND ABLE-BODIED

As part of its development plan Dawlish URC is creating a club for disabled and able-bodied people around the game of Boccia (pronounced to rhyme with "gottcha").

Boccia is a competitive game that is played one-on-one, in pairs, or with teams of three. The goal of the game is for players to throw balls so that they get them as close as possible to a target ball, rather like the French boules. What makes it special is that players have to be seated, so those in wheel chairs are not disadvantaged. In a recent training exercise, one church member who has been in a wheel chair for some time said, "It's



the best game I've ever played!"

Sessions will be held in August 2.30 - 4.00 on 4th, 11th & 14th; and 10.30 - 12.00 on 7th. All are welcome, but please phone 889 098 or 862 620 so we can prepare for the right numbers.



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Roger Whitehead, minister of the church, shares his thoughts



Years ago I heard a radio play about a plane with engine trouble. It focused on the passengers' reactions as the plane circled the airport to burn off excess fuel. Each decided that his or her life would be different if they escaped possible death. The religious promised God, "If you get me out of this alive I will change"; the others promised themselves they would be different. The plane landed safely, and the play followed the subsequent lives of the passengers, only a very few of whom changed in the way they had said they would.

As the credit crunch affects our jobs, our spending, our pensions and our holidays, it is easy to promise that, if we emerge with job, home and pension intact we will behave differently in the future. When the problem passes it is just as easy to dismiss our promise as a naïve response made in the heat of the moment.

I believe that a crisis can help us to see what is really valuable in life such as our families and friends and how we spend our time. It should then help us to reshape our lives. Promises to God in a crisis need not be a panic response but an opportunity to come to terms with what is really fundamental to everyone of us.

MESSY CHURCH—NOW IN THE HOLIDAYS AS WELL!

Children often say that they find church "boring". Our response is Messy Church. No child or parent has ever called it that. It meets monthly on Friday from 3.45—6.00 in the Methodist Church Hall. Children have a choice of games to begin with, before a craft session with lots of options to make things, cook or play on computers. All the activities relate to the day's theme and this is continued in the short time of worship. Then parents and children sit down to a cooked tea with lots of cake to follow.

Asked why it is called 'Messy Church' one of the leaders, Marie Whitehead, says, "It is 'messy' not only because of the crafts but because it is church fellowship in an informal and participative way. That's why many parents stay to join the sessions."

Messy Church has been so successful that it is expanding to two meetings in August—Monday 24th & Tuesday



Children hard at work in a craft session 25th from 10.00 to 2.00. "It gives the children more time for craft," explains another leader, Alethe Virgin. "And because the meal has proved so popular, there will be a full lunch each day, when children can eat with their parents."

The summer meetings are likely to be popular and numbers are limited so please book by phoning 889 098 (Marie) or 773 070 (Alethe) or getting a form from either of the churches.

Afternoon meetings begin again on 18th September.

Regular summer events

Sundays

- 10.30 **Service & Junior Church**
Communion 1st Sun
Healing Service (3rd Sun
(bimonthly on 19 July, 20 Sept)
Afterwards fairtrade tea & coffee
- 3.30 **Choral Service** 1st Sun

Tuesdays (alternate weeks)

- 2.00 **Knit & Chat**
knitting for orphans in Malawi

Wednesdays

- 10.00 **Coffee Morning**
cake stall on 3rd Weds
- 10.00 **Parents & Toddlers** *(not Aug)*
children from 0-3 & parents
- 2.30 **Friendship Hour** *(not August)*
Talks, videos and members' contributions

Thursdays

- 2.30 **Keep Fit** *(not August)*
exercises to enjoy to keep body and mind alert

Fridays

- 1.00 **Bible Study** *(from 25 Sept)*
lunch together from 12.30
- 3.30 **Messy Church** (in Meth Ch)
children 3-12 *(17 July, 18 Sep)*
- 6.00 **Choir practice**
The choir leads the singing at each Sunday service

Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals

by arrangement with the Minister

Minister

Revd Roger Whitehead
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Church Secretary & Bookings

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Visit our website:

www.DawlishURC.org.uk