

Christmas 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

COMMUNITY CENTRE PLANS OPPOSED

CHURCH SHOCKED AT 'NO' DECISION

Plans to refurbish the United Reformed Church building into a community centre for the town are in jeopardy because of English Heritage, whose views have to be taken into account before there can be planning agreement. In a letter strongly opposing the proposals, which include disabled access, new toilets, a kitchen and the extension of the gallery to provide community rooms, English Heritage writes, "We remain unconvinced by the need for such extensive change." In the week in which the Town Council announced the closure of the Manor with its community rooms, English Heritage comments, "We have no evidence . . . why so much meeting room and lounge space is needed."

The minister, Revd Roger Whitehead, summed up the feelings of the congregation, "We are shocked. We have plans which would provide much needed meeting rooms, and when we have removed the pews we will meet the demand for a wet weather facility for holiday makers as well as social events for the elderly."

A spokesman for the South Western Synod of the URC, which has the final say on the plans, said, "We are working hard with the architects to see if a compromise is possible, because we want to see this development take place."

The Regeneration Consultancy Report, which was commissioned by the Town and District Councils, has identified the refurbished church building as one of Dawlish's main assets in revitalizing the town centre.

A display of the controversial plans and several drawings showing an artist's impression of how it might have looked is available in the church and on the church website (www.DawlishURC.org.uk) - follow the link to development. You can also email your comments from the site or leave a message at the church.

"We believe what we want to do is right," says the minister, and we are confident that in the end it will be recognized that church buildings are to be adapted to serve the community, not to become museums."



Artist's view of gallery extension

Dress up for Crib Service

At 4 pm on Christmas Eve we hold a 30 minute Crib Service

mainly for the under 7s and their parents (and grandparents).

If possible we want children to come dressed as shepherds or angels to take part in the tableau. We sing traditional well known



Christmas carols and re-enact the Christmas story with the children. It's great fun and we hope to see you!

Christmas Services

Sunday 20 th	10.30	Family Service
	4.00	Carol Service <i>followed by tea</i>
Christmas Eve	4.00	Crib Service <i>children dress up</i>
	7.00	Candle-lit Carols
Christmas Day	10.00	Family Service <i>at the Methodists Church</i>

Roger Whitehead, minister of the church, shares his thoughts



When Christians Together decided on a seasonal greeting in the *Gazette* we did think about what we were wishing people. Was it a Happy or a Joyous or Peaceful Christmas? We know for many people it will be none of those, if they have been flooded out of their homes or mourn a missing loved one or have been unemployed for a year. The angel who told Mary that she was going to have a baby said, "Peace be with you." The Hebrew word used is Shalom, which means more than the absence of war or violence. It is wishing the very best to someone, physically, financially and spiritually, and it implies our willingness to help someone have that true peace. "Shalom" is to want God's very best for everyone whatever their situation. So Christmas is a time for remembering the needy and thinking about every part of our life, spiritual as well as physical. Our focus is a baby: God coming helpless into our world. You will have to look up the *Gazette* to find what greeting we finally chose.

PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

"Prayer is an essential part of our church's life," says retired minister, Revd Dr Ken Hibberd, who has a long experience in this area. "That is why we encourage people to put their prayer requests on the prayer board for inclusion in our prayers each Sunday. They are an important part of each week's service,"



Ken introduced Prayer for Healing Services in the church every other month. He explains, "We do not call them 'healing services' because that implies we have some power of our own to heal. We pray for God's healing, because healing comes from God. There is the opportunity during the service for those who wish to have personal prayer led by the minister and an elder. In this way we focus our prayers on an individual and pray that we may become the way in which God blesses and heals that person."

The next service is on 17th January at 10.30.

HAMILTON HALL UPGRADED WITH A NEW NAME

"There's such a need for decent meeting rooms with disabled facilities that we decided we need to upgrade the Hamilton Hall," says Church Secretary, Rosemary Holmes. "Now we have a high quality kitchen and toilets and an extra room. Already we are getting many bookings from groups unable to continue at The Manor."

The Hall, which is half way up Lawn Hill, will soon have a hanging sign to show where it is and external lighting for better night time use.

The church's intention is to lease its buildings including the Hamilton Hall to the Strand Community Centre for community use in a partnership with other voluntary agencies. To mark the start of this, the church has decided to rename the Hamilton Hall as the Strand Hall.

"When different groups work together they can achieve much more than each one separately," comments Cllr Helen Humphries, one of the Centre trustees, "I congratulate the church on this bold initiative."

Regular events

Sundays

- 10.30 **Service & Junior Church**
Communion 1st Sun
Healing Service 3rd Sun
(bimonthly on 17 Jan, 21 Mar)
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**
children from 0-3 & parents
- 2.30 **Friendship Hour**
Talks, videos and members' contributions

Thursdays

- 2.30 **Keep Fit**
exercises to enjoy to keep body and mind alert

Fridays

- 1.00 **Bible Study**
lunch together from 12.30
- 3.30 **Messy Church** (in Meth Ch)
children 3-12 *(15 Jan & 12 Feb)*
- 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
28 High Street
Dawlish EX7 9HP
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Church Secretary & Bookings

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Visit our website:

www.DawlishURC.org.uk