

In touch



information from Dawlish URC

the church with the spire

December 2011

FROM THE MINISTER

The Bible Society and the satirical Christian website ship-of-fools have combined to run an interactive nativity play on Facebook which allows you to create your own two minute nativity play. You can cast it by sticking the cut out faces of your Facebook friends on to loo roll characters depicting the usual people in a nativity play. The press release explains that the nativity play goes wrong because the story gets lost in the madness that is modern Christmas. The aim is to entertain Facebookers and sow the idea in their heads about why their nativity play went wrong and by implication the modern way of celebrating Christmas.

The problem the church has at Christmas is to make a familiar story more than a sentimental one focused around small children acting out the various people who come into the story. This year we are attempting to get the story across in a different way by having a quiet space in the auditorium on Saturday 17th when shoppers can catch their breath and reflect; by our display of Nativity sets with the explanations of what they mean to their owners; and by showing the four episodes of the BBC *Nativity* during the display. Each of these events needs stewards and helpers, and this puts particular pressure on those who are staying in Dawlish for Christmas. Please offer to help if you can; Christmas is the one time people seem willing to enter a church and engage with the Christian faith.

We hope to provide fresh understanding for our own congregation in our Advent services. Each will contain a playlet on the theme, and lighting each Advent candle will also focus on the theme. Please let us know if it is helpful. Our aim is for us to arrive at Christmas not exhausted with the preparations, but once again being astonished at the extraordinary love of God who made himself vulnerable to us by coming into the world as a baby.



ROGER WHITEHEAD

ELDERS MEETING REPORT



A lot of time at the last Elders Meeting was spent reflecting on how to cope during Rosemary Holmes' three months sabbatical. The search for enough people to take on the jobs she has done as Church Secretary, Bookings Officer and Caretaker shows just how great her contribution to our church life is. We owe to her a great deal for ensuring that the church is open on time, attractive and clean, and for all the little things that show we care for our building. We look forward to Rosemary's return, refreshed and renewed.

Meanwhile, thanks to all the very useful information which Rosemary Holmes has supplied and the offers of support which we have received, we are just about coping. Jean Potter has agreed to be **Acting Church Secretary**; Janet Garland and Jan Adams have taken over the **bookings** (now the responsibility of the Strand Centre); volunteers are providing the **Sunday church flowers**, covering **Thursday Coffee Mornings**; and Roger Whitehead is liaising with other **Torbay URCS**. The Strand Centre has taken over caretaking, and someone has been appointed to check on the whole building each day to ensure everything is in order. Rosemary continues to look after **her pastoral group**.

The next Church Meeting will be on 11th December after morning Service.

STRAND CENTRE



Planning application successful

The Teignbridge Heritage Officer did not object to the new planning application because it did not include clear glass in the windows facing The Strand, and so planning permission has been obtained for removing the steps in order to lower the floor. We are grateful for the huge support given to our application with over 200 signatures, many of whom identified themselves as disabled.

At the moment we are not appealing the refusal of our application which included clear glass windows, but we shall do so later. We want people to be able to see into the building.

Snippets

Lease All that is holding up the signing of the lease is getting plans of the building in a form acceptable to the Land Registry, but it is hoped that this will be achieved by early December. Plans for an **external noticeboard** to match the congregation's have been put on hold until it is clear we can afford it. The Third Age Group has agreed to **sell all its furniture** to the Centre for £75 so the Centre now owns everything in the buildings, removing doubt about who is

responsible for the provision and maintenance of all furnishings. A small working group has been set up to look at the **furnishings and fittings** of the Centre. Its first report ranged from siting light switches to recommendations for the flooring of the auditorium and café. The suggestions are being passed to the architectural team. Comments and idea are always welcome to any of the elders. The consensus is that the **acoustics** problem has been largely solved by the resiting of the amplifiers, though further experiments will take place. It was decided not to purchase sound baffles for the time being.



Renting out offices

An application has been agreed in principle to let the small end room on the top floor of the Stand Hall as an office (the 'fire escape room'). Details are being worked out. A major charity wants partly to relocate to Dawlish and the trustees have agreed in principle to this. In both cases there needs to be a large clear out and probably redecoration. Help is always welcome. We are also tackling a major clear out of the tower room and the east entrance.

Major Grant

At the time of writing there is no news of our major grant application, though it now seems less likely that we will be successful. The SCT trustees are meeting on 13th December to consider next steps in the development of the building.

Grants received, promised and sought

In addition to grants towards the kitchen and the £300 grant from the Town Council towards a ramp, a further £600 for the ramp has been promised by Devon County Council thanks to the support of John Clatworthy. Efforts are still being made to identify trustees of private charities to support grant applications.

The work progresses

In a way it is a pity that so much of our meetings is taken up with buildings and administration, because there are exciting things to report on the real work of supporting the community. For example, **Oakwood Court School's** Coffee Mornings and Lunch Clubs are well established. We would like more support, particularly from the congregation. However, after half-term the parents of the four students involved all asked that their thanks be passed on to the Strand Centre for giving their offspring the chance to interact with the wider community and all said how much the pupils had matured through this experience.

Use of the premises continues to increase, especially for sales of various sorts. One local church and one major charity now use the auditorium for their major summer and Christmas Sales in preference to The Lawn, because there is no uncertainty about the weather and good facilities for catering.

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday 18th 10.30 **FAMILY SERVICE** (4th Sunday in Advent)

4.00 **TRADITIONAL CAROL SERVICE**
followed by afternoon tea
readings, carols



Christmas Eve

4.00 **CRIB SERVICE**
an absolute *must* for all under 7's
children come dressed as angels or shepherds

7.00 **CANDLE LIT CAROL SERVICE**
 poems, readings, carols
all will receive a candle during the service

Christmas Day 10.00 **UNITED FAMILY SERVICE**
 in our church

New Year's Day 10.30 **UNITED SERVICE** in METHODIST CHURCH

ALONE ON CHRISTMAS DAY?

*Couples and singles are warmly invited to
 Christmas Day Dinner at the Strand Church*



*with all the traditional trimmings
 noon to 2.30*



Transport can be provided

No charge, but donations can be given to Christian Aid

For catering reasons, advanced booking is essential: ring 889 098

PLEASE TELL ANYONE WHO MAY BE ON THEIR OWN

Special delivery of cards to members

Sending Christmas cards ? Post your Christmas cards to church members in the box provided in the foyer by 10th December. They can be collected from Sunday 11th. The money saved on stamps can be given to the Refurbishment Fund.

Display of Nativity sets 19th to 23rd December

We still need more Nativity sets for our display and we need stewards willing to look after the Display and serve refreshments. We know this is a difficult time before Christmas, but it is one of the opportunities we have to explain the real Christmas story to the public. Tuesday to Friday an episode of the BBC's series *Nativity* will be shown at 11.00 and repeated at 2.00. Sign up to help in the foyer.

Fed up with the hassle and shopping? Drop in for some Quiet Space Sat 17th

We want to offer quiet on the busiest shopping day. We need helpers to serve refreshments and keep the church open; please help — sign up in the foyer.

December Concerts

Sat 3rd 7.30 Dawlish Ladies Guild Choir: Seasonal Music & John Stather (organ)
One of Firsts Events which has already a great reputation

Sat 10th 7.30 Carol Concert: St Gregory's Choir and outstanding newcomers
Marie Thompson, Eileen Thompson, Christie Allen, George Elliott

Fri 16th 7.30 Musical Evening near to Christmas
Arranged by the Friends of Dawlish Hospital

More details on posters in the foyer and hall

OFFERINGS AND OTHER SPECIAL INCOME

	Sunday Offerings*		Special Collections and Events	
	2011	2010		
			Coffee Mornings in Oct (2010 = £101)	£130
October	£1,132	£1,612	Coffee Mornings (year so far)	£1,132
Year (so far)	£13,220	£17,406	Harvest Lunch (for famine in Africa)	£127

** includes standing orders etc but not Gift Aid rebates*

Offerings at Christmas

Carols Service (afternoon 18 th Dec)	Force Hospice, RDE Hospital
Christmas Eve Crib service	Children's Hospice
Christmas Eve Candle lit service	FOMO
Christmas Day United Service	Christmas Lunch
Christmas Day Lunch (guests' donations)	Christian Aid



Temperature control

We have finally sorted out the temperature control for the auditorium which comes on automatically for the duration of the Coffee Mornings. At other times heating is obtained by altering the thermostat. This is a wireless instrument, normally is kept on the sill of the central window on the west (organ) side of the auditorium. Full instructions are beside the thermometer.

Insurance

We have reached agreement with the Synod and the Strand Centre to use the same insurance company. This will avoid disputes between insurers in the event of a claim. The reinstatement valued of both the hall and the 1871 building is being reassessed; it is currently £1,700,000.

Fleur-de-lys on the apex of the east end of the gable of the Strand Hall

has been repaired by StoneCo at a cost of around £1,400. The workers had reported that a large part of the stonework had been loose and rocking slightly. If the work had been done after the signing of the lease, the responsibility for paying would have been the Synod Trust's, and it has kindly agreed to reimburse the cost from the funds it holds for the congregation.

CHURCHES TOGETHER REPORT

Publicity

The Churches Together **website** should go live before Christmas. There will be a page on each church with links to that church's website, as well as pages with information about CTDD's own activities. It was agreed to have another **Churches Together Handbook**, which is produced free by the publisher who sells advertisements. It is delivered free by those doing community service. A small group is looking into changing its general format. We will continue to **advertise in the *Holiday Express* newspaper** which is widely distributed to holiday makers in the area, but we will not repeat last year's large church advertisement at Christmas because it is too expensive.

Personnel

It is increasingly difficult to get lay people to take on the three major offices of Churches Together – Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Job descriptions are being drawn up for the next Chair (needed in January) and Treasurer (Helen Bays is retiring in January). Suggestions and offers to Roger Whitehead.

Services

The annual **pulpit exchange** will take place on 19th February 2012 and we will welcome the Revd Patrick Parkes, who is the new deacon at St Gregory's.



NOTICE BOARD



Remembering Service—Wednesday 7th 7.00 Methodist Church

This is a service particularly for those who have lost loved ones in the past few years and would like a quiet occasion to remember them. You can light a candle and pray for the loved one. All are welcome—details from Roger Whitehead.

Home Aid Coffee Morning 13th is for Shelter Boxes

Shelter Box responds instantly to crises anywhere in the world, delivering boxes with supplies for an extended family of up to 10 people with a tent and essential equipment to use while they are displaced or homeless.

Street market Sunday 11th December—after service

We will be giving away hot drinks and offering toilets and a place to get warm in peace to passers-by at the street market. Please offer your help.

URC Ministers, Spouses and Widows Christmas lunch (Fri 9th)

We are hosting this annual three course traditional Christmas dinner for about 30 people. Help is needed from about 10.30 am. Please sign the list.

Developing Monday Morning Coffee

Oakwood Court College is so pleased with its Monday Coffee Morning that it is expanding its menu. Toast, toasted teacakes and bacon rolls will be now available. They make a scrumptious start to the day. A selection of newspapers is also available to read for free.

Violet Ball Friday 20th April

This is a partnership event with the Cancer Research Group, bringing together the supporters of the Charity with the Centre's resources. Book the date – it's going to be one of the best events in Dawlish in 2012

Letters have been received from

St Petrock's thanking us for the Harvest produce we sent to the homeless shelter.

Eileen Lovell is now settling in Virginia with her granddaughter and family. She writes, "Apart from lounging by the pool I have seen many of the most important places in Washington DC, and I have accompanied my granddaughter Ruth when she has performed Mexican Folk and Spanish Flamenco dances. I am looking forward to attending the Marine Corps Ball, having bought lovely glittery shoes to go with my outfit. The people at church have welcomed me with open arms and I am enjoying the services and the presence of the Lord."

SERVICES IN DECEMBER

Morning Services at 10.30 unless otherwise stated

4	Holy Communion	Jean Potter (Roger Whitehead is at Teignmouth)
11	Family Service	Revd Roger Whitehead
18	Family Nativity	Revd Roger Whitehead
25	United Service	Revd Roger Whitehead (in our church)

Special Christmas Services see page 4



REGULAR CHURCH EVENTS

Tuesdays	2.00 - 4.00	Knit & Chat (13th, then not meeting until New Year)
Thursdays	10.00 - 12.00	Coffee Morning (with a play area for children) §
	2.30 - 3.30	Friendship Hour (not 22 nd & 29 th) #
Fridays	12.30 - 2.00	Bible Study Group (last one 2 nd , resumes in New Year) #

§ in the auditorium in the Strand Hall x Strand Hall lounge # in the foyer

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS IN DECEMBER

(on our premises unless otherwise indicated)

Sat	3	10.00	Table Top Sale § full of Christmas goodies
Mon	5	6.00	Elders Meeting #
Tues	6	7.00	Church Outing to Carols Down the Line , Buckfast Station
Wed	7	7.00	Remembering Service (see page 7—Methodist Church)
Fri	9	12.30	URC Torbay ministers & spouses Xmas Lunch †
Sun	11	11.30	Street Market : church serving free hot drinks §
Tues	13	10.00	Home Aid Coffee & Cakes for Shelter Box (see page 7) §
		2.00	Knit & Chat newcomers always welcome
Fri	16	3.45	Messy Church (Methodist Church Hall)
Mon	19	10.00	Set up for Display of Nativity Sets (to noon)
		2.00	Opening Display of Nativity Sets (closes at 4 pm)
Tue	20	10.00–4.00	Display of Nativity Sets (closes noon Friday) §
Fri	23		



THE STRAND CHURCH



Minister	Revd Roger Whitehead	28 High Street	889 098
Acting Sec	Mrs Jean Potter	1, Ivy Lane, Teignmouth	773856
Treasurer	Mr Rychard Winslade	3 Prospect House East Cliff Road	866 948
Bookings	Mrs Janet Garland	10, Luscombe Terrace	888312

