

In touch



information from Dawlish URC

the church at the centre of the town

September 2012

FROM THE MINISTER

Committing ourselves to serve the community and expressing that by handing over our buildings to the Strand Community Trust was a courageous thing for the congregation to do. Christians, like most people, want the reassurance of being in control of their activities and over the centuries the Christian Church has sought a privileged place for itself in society. In the Middle Ages church and state were so closely allied that the Bishop of Durham was in command of an army and the state punished those who disagreed with the church.

It seems to me that Jesus, on the other hand, did not seek a privileged position in society. He went out of his way to befriend those whom the authorities had shunned, and he was unpopular for it. In the end he submitted to the authorities, refusing (as he memorably said to Pilate) to call on heavenly forces to save him from death. The very act of being born, let alone to a lowly unmarried couple from an obscure part of the country, shows how Jesus eschewed glory and risked himself in a hostile world.

We take risks as part of the Strand Centre and involved in working with the community. Often the culture of society is very different from our comfort zone and that challenges us deeply. We can be accused of compromising, not standing up for what we believe, and undermining faith. Jesus, unlike John the Baptist, entered fully into the society of his day, from providing wine at the Wedding in Cana of Galilee and feasting with the equivalent of today's bankers and discredited politicians. As we get engaged in the community we will be called to be present at or connive with activities which make us feel uncomfortable. The answer is not to hide in a ghetto of like minded people, but to get involved and if necessary explain our hesitations and unease.

God wants to make us fully human - and our insight is that this is only possible when we have fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. If we have courage, trust the Holy Spirit and learn from our mistakes, we will be able to show what God's Kingdom is really like.

ROGER WHITEHEAD





REPORT OF THE 2012 GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN SCARBOROUGH

Taken from the Assembly Briefing Report

Moderator's address

The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar gave a passionate and lively address, appealing to Assembly members to embrace a habit of trusting in a generous God instead of allowing our lives to be determined by scarcity. He said: "The re-authoring of our conversations along positive stories of generosity and abundance is not about avoiding tough questions or not dealing with pain or grief; it is about facing them squarely but through a different set of optics — God's expansive generosity through Jesus Christ."

Major budget cuts agreed

Accepting the recommendation of Mission Council, General Assembly asked six of its committees to achieve expenditure reductions amounting to £600,000 in 2013 relative to their 2012 budgets. The decision came after an emotionally-charged debate, which reflected the particular consternation of many members over cuts to programmes affecting children and young people in the church. It continues a process that began in November 2011, when Mission Council agreed the deficit in the budget for 2012 was not sustainable and asked the Mission Council Advisory Group to oversee a review that could lead to recommendations to the Assembly for cuts.

community action

Four diverse projects were honoured as part of the 2012 Community Project Awards sponsored by the URC and the insurer, Congregational & General. **The Edge Project** was named the overall winner — a youth centre whose varied support programme has helped transform the lives of underprivileged young people in the Holmewood area of Bradford. Other awards were made to **Our Tribe** - an Edinburgh-based project whose work supports greater integration between the lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender (LBGT) community and the local church; **The Terminus Initiative** — an ecumenical project in Sheffield, offering a variety of community services; and **The Avenue Centre** — a project that works with families in the community surrounding Southampton.

In Brief

Our Synod Moderator, Revd David Grosch-Miller, is to be the ministerial moderator of General Assembly for 2014-16. **Two new churches** were formally received into the URC at Assembly; at the same time, notice was given

of 22 local church closures. The **normal retirement age** of full-time stipendiary ministers will rise from 65 to 68.



Hundreds of members of Assembly and Children's Assembly marched with members of the congregation of St Andrew's URC, from St Andrew's church to Scarborough Town Hall on Sunday. Their "**walk of witness**" gave expression to the concerns of many about the disproportionate impact of spending cuts and welfare reforms on the most vulnerable in our society.

Civil partnerships

Assembly agreed to allow local churches to decide on whether to allow civil partnerships to be registered in their buildings (i.e. for the legal formalities as well as the religious ceremony to take place in church). In taking this decision, the URC has become the first mainstream Christian denomination to allow same-sex partners to register their civil partnership in church.

GOING FOR GOLD IN THE URC

The Bridge United Reformed Church in the Yorkshire market town of Otley is celebrating the silver medal won by Lizzie Armitstead in the Women's Road Race at the 2012 London Olympics (Team GB's first medallist). Her grandfather is a retired URC minister. A second remarkable achievement at the Olympics was 18 year old Jenni Pinches' success as a member of the women's gymnastic team who achieved their best result in the post-war era, finishing sixth in the final at the North Greenwich Arena. Jenni's family are at the centre of church life at Trinity Church, Cheadle, Cheshire, which is a joint URC and Methodist congregation.



The third URC success at the Games was Anna Watkins (29), won the gold medal with her partner Kath Grainger in the women's double sculls, after earlier breaking the Olympic record by nearly five seconds in a qualifying heat at Eton Dorney. Anna was brought up within Trinity Church, Leek, Staffordshire, a United Reformed and Methodist congregation. Her parents, Richard and Caroline, and her grandmother remain closely associated with the congregation.

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



THE STRAND CENTRE

Changes to accommodate the new toilets and kitchenette

The trustees did not meet in August, but two Advisory Groups met to prepare for the work of installing the ramp, two new toilets and enlarged kitchenette.

The proposed work will include the structural work to the two main entrances so that the east doors can accommodate the ramp, and the west doors will have a pair of inner glass doors which will allow entrance to the Strand Chapel (the name which will be used for the prayer space created in the main vestibule). This means that the existing east vestibule will need to be greatly altered to make it a welcoming entrance to the building.

A new door will be created into the foyer where the Creation banner now is (this is necessary to provide adequate wheelchair access). The existing door will be blocked up leaving 'dead space', where it is hoped to have a television monitor welcoming visitors and giving rotating details of the Centre and the Church. It will also be possible to have seasonal displays in this area (eg the Easter Garden or a Christmas nativity scene). Imaginative lighting will be necessary.

The shelving in this area will be repositioned where the sideboard is in the vestry to provide space for Knit & Chat's work and garments and the smaller toys of the Toddlers Group. Long term it is hoped to open up and enlarge the fireplace in the vestry to house the photocopier, thus providing more much needed space in the vestry.

Storage is going to be a problem, because the pews in the bay of the foyer will be moved to the Strand Chapel, and quite a lot is stored under them. The present thinking is to curtain off the area of the existing Prayer Corner (relocated to the Strand Chapel) and where the glass kitchen hatch is (this will be blocked up because it will be a wall of one of the toilets. This will house the trolleys for the folding chairs, the tables and the hymnbooks.

The flower cupboard will continue to be the place where vases etc are kept, but more shelves will be built and some of Knit & Chat's equipment will be stored there.

The group also looked at upgrading the existing toilet by installing a hand basin in the toilet instead of outside it.

The other working group on the Kitchenette has yet to meet,



Building work

The insurance assessor has visited and put a replacement value on the 1871 building and the Strand Hall of £4.1m instead of the previous valuation of £1.7m. The assessor also insisted on a number of safety features and tests of equipment etc. This has resulted in having to spend around £1,000 on the electrics, emergency lights and improvements to the lightning conductor.

Dry rot reappeared in the external hall door to the 1871 building because the corrugated roof was leaking into the door frame and wall. The cost of renewing the door and frame, and covering the area with a waterproof Perspex roof is about £1,500. Part of this will have to be paid for by the Strand Church because it ought to have taken remedial action earlier.

Grants

Grant applications have been made to the Community Council of Devon and to the National Churches Trust which has been given money by the government to develop community facilities. We are always hopeful.

ELDERS MEETING REPORT

New Treasurer Rychard Winslade gave notice that he would resign as church Treasurer at the end of the year. The Elders have appointed Geoff Willis to take over from him.



Street Chapel A working group has come up with many ideas for the Chapel (now to be called the Strand Chapel) and grant applications are being made to furnish it. There will be an opportunity for individuals to donate furnishings for it.

Keys Early this month all elders and others who need it will be given a vestry key and the one hanging up will be removed. Please speak to Roger Whitehead or Jan Adams if you are likely to need one.

THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Following a very inspirational worship service at Dawlish Warren in July an ecumenical group is now looking at how we can respond to the spiritual needs of people with learning difficulties in our community.

Will those interested in helping speak to Marie Whitehead. (01626 889098 or e-mail marie@whiteheadfamily.info). At the moment we are thinking of holding bi-monthly services in different accessible churches and we want help with the music, signing, drama and providing tea afterwards. Marie is going on a training day on Oct 6th in Taunton run by a Christian support organisation called 'Prospects' www.prospects.org.uk Would anyone else like to go?



STRAND CHURCH NOTICE BOARD

The Year of Diamond Jubilees We are hugely privileged to have two ministers in our congregation who are celebrating the 60th anniversary of their ordination this year. Ken Hibberd is marking the occasion by presiding at the Communion Service on 9th at 10.30, and there will be refreshments afterwards. This is an opportunity to thank God for Ken's significant ministry in the URC and his contribution to our church over the last 15 years.

Although the day of **the Great Ejection** in 1662 (23rd August) is past, we are marking this most significant event in the history of the Reformed tradition (Congregational and Presbyterian) on Sunday 23rd, when we will be exploring what the issues were then, and what they might mean for today. We will also be using parts of the Communion Service written by Richard Baxter in 1660 at the Savoy Conference of Independents, which set out the Congregational understanding of the faith

Queen of Smoke on 8th September Rebecca Ramsden is arranging a concert of modern Christian music and some Christian rock music in aid of the church funds. During it she will give her testimony about how Jesus has changed her life. We hope many members of the congregation will give their full support and bring their friends. Tickets on sale at £5, including refreshments.

URC Torbay Churches Quiz night 12th September at Furrough Cross

All the usual fun and challenge at which our superb teams always excel. Join the winners - lifts available.

The Bible Study Group resumes on 14th September and for the following few weeks we will be looking at the Maccabees books, which come from the turbulent period around 160 BC when the Jewish community was fighting for its survival. A gripping story to challenge us today.

Have you heard of the 5.30? For about four years URC and Methodist people have established an informal service on Sunday evenings at 5.30 in the Methodist Hall. Singing is led by Marie Whitehead and Ali Rowe, with a variety of more modern Christian songs (many known to our congregation). Roger leads the service about once a month. It is a time of learning, fellowship and worship, and it would be good to see more URC folk at it.

for information on Jesus visit: www.rejesus.co.uk
for information about Christianity visit: www.christianity.org.uk



FOR YOUR PRAYERS



“Be joyful always; pray at all times; be thankful in all circumstances. For this is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus.” *1 Thess 5: 16-18*

COMMITMENT FOR LIFE PRAYER THIS MONTH

Comforter Lord,
I thank you that I live in comfort
with food, shelter, healthcare and education.
Help me bring your comfort to those without
by stepping out of my comfort-zone
and challenging unfair systems.

Lord of Peace,
I thank you that I live in peace.
under the rule of law and justice
Help me bring your peace to those without
by breaking the peace
and shouting until their voices are heard.

Life-giving Lord,
I thank you that I am free
to worship you and express my opinions.
Help me bring your freedom to those without
by freely giving of myself
and breaking down barriers of hatred.

**This month is a time of change
for many people.**

Children going to a new school
people in new jobs or homes
students leaving home for the
first time.

parents with empty bedrooms
school leavers with no jobs
retirement with nothing to do.

*Lord you are the same
yesterday, today and forever.
We pray for those whose lives
are changing:
some with eager expectation,
others with fear and foreboding.
We hold each one before you;
guide, protect and strengthen
those precious to us
and those we do not know.*

Nothing in the present or the times to come, nothing in all creation is able to separate us from the love of God which is ours in Christ Jesus our Lord.

OFFERINGS AND OTHER SPECIAL INCOME

Sunday Offerings* Special Collections and Events

2012 2011

July	£1,794	£1,282	Coffee Mornings in July (2011 = £105)	£145
Total to date	£10,672	£9,888	Fund raising	£0

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

SERVICES IN SEPTEMBER



2	10.30	Family Service	Mrs Jean Potter
9	10.30	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Ken Hibberd *
16	10.30	Baptism & Prayer for Healing	Revd Roger Whitehead
23	10.30	Holy Communion †	Revd Roger Whitehead
30	10.30	Harvest Thanksgiving	Revd Roger Whitehead

* Celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of Rev Dr Ken Hibberd's ordination

† Commemorating the Great Ejection (see page 6)

Other Services

30 6.30 **Iona Service** in our Church #

CHURCH EVENTS IN SEPTEMBER

Tuesdays	2.00 - 4.00	Knit & Chat (11 th & 25 th Sept) #
Thursdays	10.00 - 12.00	Coffee Morning (Kids & Coffee: songs at 11.00) §
	2.30 - 3.30	Friendship Hour (resumes 13 th Sept) †
Fridays	12.30 - 2.00	Bible Study Group (resumes 14 th) #
	5.45 - 6.45	Choir Practice #

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS IN SEPTEMBER

(on our premises unless otherwise indicated)

Sat	1	10.00	Table Top Sale §
Thurs	6	12.00	CTDD Ministers Meeting (28 High Street)
Sat	8	7.30	Queen of Smoke Concert led by Rebecca Ramsden § (see p6)
Mon	10	5.30	Elders Meeting #
Tues	11	10.00	Home Aid Coffee Morning for Christian Aid §
Wed	12	7.30	Torbay URC Churches Quiz Night at Furrough Cross
Sat	15	8.30	Men's Breakfast , Dawlish Warren (lifts available)
Fri	21	3.45	Messy Church (in the Methodist Hall)
			auditorium § Strand Hall † lounge † in the foyer #

For further details about -
 the church: see *In Touch* or www.DawlishURC.org.uk
 Jesus: visit www.rejesus.co.uk
 Christianity: visit www.christianity.org.uk
 The Strand Centre: visit www.strandcentre.org.uk
 Church & Centre phone number: 01626 889 038