



**information
from Strand Church**

the church at the centre of town

March 2013

FROM THE MINISTER

As I write, the foyer is a complete mess, with mud on the floor, builders waste scattered about and a thin film of dust everywhere, so everything you touch feels vaguely gritty. As the work has gone on, I have often wondered if it would ever come right, and was the whole project a great mistake? But I know that on 1st March - which is the date on this copy of *In Touch* - it will all look different. We will rejoice in what has been achieved, and we will wonder how we could ever have doubted the project.

It is a small way of understanding what Jesus' disciples must have felt as they drew near to Jerusalem, wondering if they had been foolish to give up everything to follow him when there seemed only the vaguest chance that it would all end well. Our Lent Bible Study Course helps us to get glimpses of God through the uncertainty, chaos and pain of life. It is not that God is absent, but rather God is alongside us in our human experience. And as the disciples discovered, from the darkness of the crucifixion there came the glorious liberation of the resurrection, made all the more precious because of what they had been through.

In difficult times I find it best to hold on to some of the certainties. Of course the building chaos is worth it - we know we have a vision from God for a transformed building. I write before the final amount of the Epiphany Appeal is known, but it seems the Centre will have received over £5,000, most of it Gift Aided. This is a staggering sum and for me a precious sign that God is behind what we are doing. Just as Jesus' resurrection inaugurated a new life for the disciples, I believe that God has put us on the threshold of a new and exciting chapter in the life of our church. Thanks be to God for all his goodness to us.

ROGER WHITEHEAD





Planning ahead

There may have been considerable reduction in the activities in the Centre during January and February as the work in the foyer progressed, but the Strand Centre Executive Committee has held many meetings working out how to make the most of the opportunities which the new kitchenette provides.

A drop-in cafe

The vision of the Church several years ago was to develop a drop-in café for the large number of lonely elderly people that there are in Dawlish. As the body entrusted with delivering the vision, the Strand Centre people have worked hard to make it a reality. The new kitchenette has the equipment to provide high quality healthy food throughout the day, and this has led to the decision to run the kitchenette as a café with its own name (The Inspire Café), logo and brand image. The name 'Inspire' was chosen not only because it relates to the prominent spire rising above the building; its vision is to inspire fellowship, mutual support and learning leading to increase well being in the community.

All those involved in the Inspire Café believe that the vision is authenticated by the quality of reliability of all aspects of the Café – from the quality of food and drink at reasonable prices to the high standards of those who serve the public.

The following are the aims of the Inspire Café

- ◇ to be open six days a week initially from 10.00 – 2.30 and then to 5.00
- ◇ to provide a warm welcome to all and have no restriction on the time spent in the cafe
- ◇ to serve healthy and wholesome food
- ◇ to source food locally wherever possible
- ◇ to use Fairtrade products wherever possible
- ◇ to have the highest standards of Health & Safety
- ◇ to support local charities by enabling them to run the café and share in the proceeds
- ◇ to meet the needs of the elderly and visitors to Dawlish
- ◇ to contribute in every way possible to the life and regeneration of the town.

If it is to be successful as a café, customers need to know what food they will get at what price. So there will be a standard menu each day (varied according



to the seasons), and each item will cost the same whoever is running the cafe. This continuity each day will be emphasised by the uniform which all the helpers will wear.

The Centre has been privileged to have the involvement of David Phillips, former Army chef and head chef at the Langstone Cliff Hotel, and Head of the Catering Department at Torbay and then Exeter College. His knowledge of food, how to source it and how to sell it has been literally invaluable. When the Strand Café opens, it will be professional because of his input and commitment.

The plan is to use the first full fortnight in March as a training period for the volunteer staff before the proposed Opening by the Mayor on 18th March. During that fortnight we would welcome church members coming in to the café so we can practice running a café with real and (we hope) sympathetic customers.

Building work

The building work has taken place relatively smoothly. The only unexpected problem was the discovery that the wiring of the lights in the auditorium was in rubber cables which were unsafe, and an extra £3,000 had to be spent on re-wiring them. The trustees took the bold decision to look to the future, and they authorised rewiring so that each light is separately switched, allowing much more variety in lighting effects. Additional wiring has been installed and two additional light sockets have been put in the apse and a socket for a spot light has been put part way down each side of the auditorium. The lights will be fitted when money is available.

The existing sound cupboard will have to be moved, and the Elders Meeting will be deciding whether the church can afford to make all the amplification wireless. This would give much more flexibility and adaptability for the future.

During the work members of the Strand have transformed the vestry into the office. The Victorian fireplace has been exposed and will be done up; the adjacent toilet has been removed and that area now houses the new colour photocopier and several shelves to hold the spare paper. A computer has been bought. This has been done thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor. Pop in and have a look – though it is still work in progress.

Bookings

The number of bookings is increasing, but no permanent use has been found for the upper floor of the Strand Hall apart from occasional use of the lounge. We are hoping some imaginative ideas will be forthcoming.



NOTICEBOARD

Lent Lunches for Christian Aid on Fridays 12.00 - 1.30

1 st	URC Strand Hall	15 th	St Gregory's
8 th	St Agatha's (with St Gregory's)	22 nd	URC Strand Hall

Bible Study in March

We are following the Lent York Course "Glimpses of God - Hope for today's world".
The subjects for March are:

1 st	The Son who is the Way, the Truth and the Life	
8 th	The God who shares our pain	
15 th	The God who calms our fears	<i>During Lent the Group meets from 1.15 to 2.15 so that it is possible to go to the Lent lunches</i>
22 nd	Reflection on the Passion	

Torbay URC Churches Quiz Nights

Under new management - Roy Richards has handed over to Philip Kay of Central Church, Torquay who is planning four a year, but retaining the price at £3. The next one is on **Tuesday 5th at 7.30 at Kingsteignton** and we want to enter two winning teams.

Prospects



Prospects is a dynamic national Christian organisation working together with people with learning disabilities so they live life to the full. It runs inclusive worship services bimonthly in the Dawlish churches which have disabled access. The next one is on 10th March at 4 pm at St Agatha's. The service has lively songs and hymns and plenty of movement, and is followed by tea. All are very welcome.

Dawlish Home Aid - Tuesday 12th 10.00 - 12.00

For Dawlish Disability which provides transport for the disabled.

St David's Weekend



Saturday 2nd March at 6.15 for 6.30 pm Welsh Evening

Traditional dinner including leek soup, Welsh lamb and Welsh cakes followed by Welsh entertainment. Booking is essential for catering purposes.

Sunday 3rd March at 10.30 Annual Welsh Service

Guest Preacher: Revd Vincent Canning who is planning a service around Welsh hymnody. Not to be missed.

Safeguarding

Special meeting on 11th March at 2.30 pm

Safeguarding is about more than children! Jan Murphy, the Synod Safeguarding Officer is holding a seminar for the Church and Centre and all who are even remotely involved with vulnerable adults or children in the church or the centre are urged to attend.



Just ordinary women in extraordinary situations

This is the title of the URC Synod's Women's Conference 15th to 17th October at Brunel Manor. It will look at some of the Bible women alongside others from history and our own time - ordinary people like us whom God has empowered to work for him. It will also reflect what God calls us to do in our lives. Already two members have booked up as day visitors, paying only for meals. Further details from Marie Whitehead or Jan Adams

SERVICES FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

Maundy Thursday (28th) 7.30 **Tenebrae** (in the Methodist Church)



A quiet meditative service reflecting the growing darkness of the day. It includes Holy Communion

Good Friday (29th)



11.00 **Good Friday Meditation** (our church)

A devotional service leading into a procession to The Lawn for the Churches Together Open Air service.

12.00 **Open Air Service of Witness** (on The Lawn)

Our traditional ecumenical service of readings, hymns and sharing of hot cross buns.



4.00 **Hot Cross Bun Service**

An activity service to help all members of the family understand the Good Friday and Easter message, led by Marie Whitehead and ideal for all ages.

Easter Day (31st)



6.15 **Dawn Service** on the beach

Celebrate the resurrection at the hour when the women found the tomb empty. On the beach (Jesus met his disciples on a beach). Breakfast will follow in the Strand Hall.

10.30 **Easter Celebration** with Holy Communion

A service for all ages, and eggs for the children!

URC STATEMENT ON SAME SEX MARRIAGE



Following the vote on Tuesday 5 February in the House of Commons, in which MPs voted overwhelmingly in support of same-sex marriage, the United Reformed Church says:

“The United Reformed Church (URC) has not yet reached a denominational position on same-sex marriage. During the government’s consultation period in March 2012 the URC declined to make a contribution, saying it had insufficient time to prepare a meaningful denomination-wide response (although individuals within the denomination were encouraged to make a contribution if they so wished).

“Members of the Faith and Order Committee, the Law and Polity Advisory Group and the Human Sexuality Task Group are now looking at the draft legislation and considering the matter fully on behalf of the denomination – although only when (and if) the Bill becomes law and we know the final form of the Act, shall we be able to begin the process of considering its implications for the URC. The speed of the government’s actions does not require us to respond in haste, and it is possible that the question of whether same-sex marriages may be solemnized in United Reformed churches or using United Reformed forms of service may not be decided until the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church next meets in July 2014.”

Issued by the press and media office of the United Reformed Church 8 February 2013 .

SPECIAL IN MARCH

Mothering Sunday Service 10th March

A celebration of family life, with all the ladies receiving a small posy of flowers - and spares to take to neighbours and friends.



Re-opening Thanksgiving Service 24th March

We are honoured to have our Moderator, Revd David Grosch-Miller, leading the service to celebrate the work which has been done in the foyer. The liturgy is still being planned. This will be the last visit that the Moderator pays to Dawlish, because he retires in June.

Holy Week Art Exhibition 25th to 29th March

Members of the Dawlish Art Group have accepted an invitation from the Elders to hold a special exhibition during Holy Week expressing in art what Holy Week means to them. This unusual way of marking Holy Week will be really exciting. We will need stewards and helpers - please sign the list.



FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Commitment for Life Prayer and Reflection



This year's Christian Aid theme is *Count Your Blessings 2013*, and there is a calendar suggesting a bite-sized reflection to inspire thanksgiving for the blessings in your life. This month the theme is water.



We pray for those who are thirsty because they are denied access to clear water and those who are thirsty for living water, for the right to live. We are committed to life.



Action: Fill up a glass of water from your tap. As you do so give thanks that you have such a precious life-giving commodity at your fingertips. Sit with your glass of water. Smell it, taste it, dip your fingers in it. Really look at it in detail. Clean, still, fresh and revitalising. You couldn't live without it. Pray for those without access to this basic human right.

PRAYERS THROUGHOUT THE MONTH

Pray for Bill and Sharon Robertson

Bill's prognosis is not good. Pray he may have peace and confidence in the presence of God as he faces the future. Pray for Sharon, who has only been his wife for sixteen months, as she cares for him and has to think about her future. Pray for the leaders of the Methodist church at this time of trial.

Pray for the best phases of the building work

The Council has insisted on a purpose made ramp with a glass balustrade which is expensive. When it is built the east vestibule (nearest the Post Office) will become the main entrance, and it will need to be made far more welcoming and attractive than it is now. The cost is about £15,000. The cost of converting the other vestibule into the Street Chapel is about the same. We hope to raise this through grants. Pray for wisdom and success in grant making.

The Inspire Café needs volunteers

A great new kitchenette with huge potential - but we need volunteers to staff it. Church members are already fully committed - pray that more people will catch our vision and want to help the Café support the community.

SERVICES IN MARCH



Sunday Morning Services at 10.30 unless otherwise stated

3	St David's tide & HC	Rev'd Vincent Canning §
10	Mothering Sunday	Rev'd Roger Whitehead § (see page 6)
17	Prayer for Healing	Rev'd Roger Whitehead §
24	Palm Sunday	Rev'd David Grosch-Miller (Re-opening Celebration)
31	6.15 Easter Dawn Service	<i>on the beach followed by breakfast</i>
	10.30 Easter Communion	Rev'd Roger Whitehead

Other services

10	4.00 Prospect Service	Dawlish Christian Fellowship
31	6.30 Iona Service	- no service

For Holy Week services see page 5

REGULAR CHURCH EVENTS

Thursdays	10.00 - 12.00	Coffee & Kids (with play area for children not 28 th) §
	2.30 - 3.30	Keep Fit §
Fridays	11.30 - 12.15	Prayer Meeting (not 29 th) Carey Room
	12.00 - 1.30	Christian Aid Lent Lunches (see page 4)
	1.15 - 2.15	Bible Study Group (not 29 th) Carey Room (see page 4)

§ in the auditorium † in the Strand Hall ⌘ Strand Hall lounge # in the foyer

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS IN MARCH

(in the Strand Centre unless otherwise indicated)

Sat	2	6.15	Welsh Evening - dinner and concert § (see page 4)
Tues	5	7.30	Torbay URC Quiz Night , Kingsteignton (lifts available)
Fri	8	12.30	Torbay URC Ministers meeting, 28 High Street
Mon	11	2.30	Safeguarding seminar † (see page 5)
Tues	12	10.00	Home Aid Coffee Morning for Dawlish Disability Group § (p 4)
Wed	13	6.00	Elders Meeting #
Fri	15	3.45	Messy Church , Methodist Church Hall
Sat	16	8.30	Men's Breakfast St Mary's Hall, Dawlish Warren (ask for a lift)
		10.00	Elders Quiet Day
Thurs	21	12.30	Churches Together Forum †
25th - 29th		all day	Holy Week Art Exhibition by Dawlish Art Group § (see p 6)
Sat	30	9.30	Decorating the church for Easter - helpers needed



about the church visit www.StrandChurch.org.uk

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