

In touch

information from Strand Church

the church at the centre of town

April 2013

FROM THE MINISTER

At Easter we celebrate the joy of Jesus' resurrection. The joy is not a false cheerfulness that all will be well – how could it be when an innocent man has been brutally executed by the state? It is not a joy which starts with an emotional experience or is sustained by ignoring the worst of the world around us. It is the joy of realising that the victorious mercy and inexhaustible love of God have finally triumphed. It is not a joy based on a theory about the universe, but an acceptance of the reality of the resurrection of Jesus.

The joy of Easter does not offer a guarantee of freedom from tension, pain or disappointment, but it promises that whatever happens in our unpredictable world, God's love and reconciliation are ceaselessly at work. This is why Christians can speak of joy at times of personal difficulty or in situations of violence and abuse. This joy is despite the difficulties we may be in and is based on the Easter message "The Lord has risen: he has risen indeed!" To say that with faith is to have a new attitude to life in this world.

We know it is true not because it can be proved scientifically, though many books have gathered very powerful evidence of its truth. We know it is true because it works in us as we live out our lives today; and we see its truth in the sweep of the history of the church, from the martyrs of the centuries,

from the creative art which faith has generated, to ordinary people transformed as they journey through life in the power of the resurrection.



So when on Easter Day we share the Easter greeting, we are affirming a life changing experience with God at its centre.

ROGER WHITEHEAD

THE INSPIRE CAFÉ IN THE STRAND CENTRE



On Monday 15th April at 11.00 Cllr Pauline Bloomfield, the Mayor of Dawlish, will open the Inspire Café. From then on the Café will be open daily from 10.00 to 2.30 serving morning coffee and light lunches. It is hoped by the summer to extend the Café into serving afternoon tea.

In the last edition of *In Touch* we set out the philosophy undergirding the Café. The Inspire Café is a major step in the vision which has led to the new kitchenette and toilets. It is to provide not only a comfortable and welcoming space for use by the people of Dawlish, but also a drop-in facility particularly for those on their own and/or who feel lonely. The next step is to create The Strand Chapel in the west vestibule as a quiet space of prayer and meditation in the centre of the town.

Inevitably some people are worried that the Café will adversely affect other local eating places, and it is worth explaining that the Inspire Café will be different from them and not in competition with them.

Firstly, it is a Café with a vision which is “to inspire fellowship, mutual support and learning, leading to increased well being in the community”. So the Café is a drop-in venue not a commercial restaurant. Those who come in are free to stay all day without being asked to replenish their drink or buy more food. Dogs are welcome and daily newspapers are provided. In the afternoon talks for the elderly will be provided on such things as Healthy Eating, Cooking for One and General Health, with help to find professional advice if it is needed. Social activities like playing games will be provided. No other café seeks to serve this group of people in this way.

Secondly, the Café will only serve snacks. There is no oven in the kitchenette, so no traditional main courses can be served. Most cafés in the town provide full meals.

Thirdly, much of the service is provided by local charities which get a share in the income generated for their charity. We anticipate that charities will gain a substantial increase in income for their work. We reckon over £15,000 pa is raised for charities in the building, even before the new kitchenette is open. No other café provides this charity support.

Fourthly, the Café has a policy of providing Fairtrade goods and using locally resourced supplies where ever possible. Only a few other cafés do this.

The Inspire Café is being run as a separate organisation which has to make an economic contribution to the running costs of the Centre. These include a rent to the Synod for the lease of the building and an obligation to maintain the building which has been rather neglected over the decades – so far the Centre is spending over £5,000 a year on this basic work. In addition the Café has to pay Chris Canning, its supervisor and one other part-time helper. They assist the volunteer groups which run the Café and they run it themselves when no one else is available.



The Café operates an ‘open book’ financial policy. This means that charities and staff know what the profits are and how they are shared among the staff, charities and Centre. We want all participants to be content with the café’s financial arrangements.

STRAND CENTRE NEWS

The management of the Strand Centre has been struggling to cope following the resignation of the Treasurer and Centre Manager. For the time being Geoff Willis has agreed to undertake oversight of the Centre’s monthly income and expenditure and do the VAT return. Anne Pemberton has kindly agreed to be Interim Centre Manager on a temporary basis to help get the systems in place. These offers have been invaluable.



The government now requires a weekly or monthly return about each employee’s pay, so to the appointment of Chris Canning to look after the Inspire Café, and possibly another part-time employee, has created a significant new administrative demand. The previous system for Criminal Records checks for those working with children and vulnerable adults has been altered, and we will need to re-register a number of people.

However, the trustees are buoyed up with the positive reception of the new kitchenette and toilets, particularly among the groups which previously ran coffee mornings. The trustees are less happy that the ancient boiler is not delivering the required heat to the auditorium. Discussions are taking place with heating engineers about what to do and the cost.

There is still no user for the upper floor of the Strand Hall, but it is hoped that discussions in Churches Together on new ways of working together to serve the community may produce some ideas.



CHURCHES TOGETHER IN DAWLISH AND DISTRICT

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of CTDD appointed Roger Whitehead and John Teed (part-time non-stipendiary priest at St Gregory's) as Co-Moderators, the former to chair meeting and the latter to oversee the working groups. The meeting agreed to continue the success of setting up separate working groups to plan the three major CTDD events – Holcombe is running the Good Friday Act of Witness; Dawlish Christian Fellowship is running the Carnival Service; no church has yet agreed to run the next Christmas Nativity. All are held on The Lawn.

The Council's finances are in good order, but the subscription was increased to £50 to cover advertising and giving *It's Your Move* to each pupil moving up from our local primary schools. This booklet is specially written for children as they make this significant transition in their education.

Setting up the CTDD website is the longest running activity – but all concerned agreed to make it a priority.

FORUM MEETING

Prospects

CTDD has joined the national *Prospects* organisation. The local group now runs a bi-monthly accessible service particularly designed for disabled people. The service moves around the churches which have disabled access, and is usually held on the second Tuesday of alternate months, though the next is on 19th May.

Developing Christian Action in Dawlish

Churches have been asked to consider a proposal to set up a charitable company through which united Christian caring action can be organised, financed and delivered. Among ideas currently being discussed by the different churches which could be undertaken through the charity are a food bank, a debt advice centre, new youth work and more support for the elderly. Non-church organisations would be welcome to participate in specific projects. Each project would be responsible for its own organisation, finances and delivery. A small annual membership fee would be expected from the member churches to cover administration, but otherwise the churches would not be expected to contribute financially unless they wanted to. Churches are being asked to decide whether they would want to join the charity if it were set up.

Hustings

The election for County Councillors is on 2nd May, and CTDD has agreed to hold a Hustings for the candidates for Dawlish in the Strand Centre. It is not yet known what the date will be or who the candidates are. This follows CTDD's holding Hustings for parliamentary candidates and for the post of Police & Crime Commissioner, as well as a public meeting on Electoral Reform.



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 URC has not yet reached a denominational position on same-sex marriage. During the government's consultation period in April 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 .

OFFERINGS AND OTHER SPECIAL INCOME				
Sunday Offerings*		Special Collections and Events		
2013		2012		
February	£363	£1,838	Coffee Mornings in Feb (2012 = £191)	£129
Year so far	£1,074	£2,632	Coffee Mornings to date (2012= £274)	£299

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



NOTICEBOARD

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING FROM THE SYNOD

Our Synod offers the following opportunities for learning this year:



Reading Party Sat 25 May Taunton

John Pritchard's *Going to Church: A User's Guide* (SPCK 2009)

Retreats and Quiet Days

Sat 29 June Quiet Day

11-13 October Retreat, Glastonbury "Landscapes of the Spirit"

28 - 30 June Conference on **Courage, Conscience and Conviction** Swanwick
A URC & Congregational Federation study of our history and present experience.

Further details on all of these from Jean Potter or Roger Whitehead.

SOIRÉE

The Strand Centre is hosting a Soiree on 20th April in aid of the Mayor's Charities. Buffet and entertainments. An evening to enjoy and an opportunity to support local good causes.

ART EXHIBITION

Dawlish Art Group Exhibition 23rd to 27th April

The annual Spring Exhibition takes place in the auditorium, and other arrangements will need to be made by those normally using this part of the building.

CHURCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SUNDAY 28th APRIL

The Annual General Meeting will be held after a shortened Café Worship. Papers will be circulated a fortnight before the meeting. Nominations for a new elder to fill an existing vacancy should be given to the Church Secretary as soon as possible.



THE STRAND CHURCH



Minister

Revd Roger Whitehead 28 High Street 889 098

Acting Sec

Mrs Jean Potter 1, Ivy Lane, Teignmouth 773856

Bookings

Mrs Janet Garland 10, Luscombe Terrace 888312

Church Phone: 01626 889038

website: www.StrandChurch.org.uk

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



Commitment for Life Prayer

We pray for those who are in flight and those who cannot stay in their homeland. We pray for those facing terror because of gang or tribal rivalry.

We are committed to life.

Action: *Take off your shoes (or go and get the ones you've been wearing today) and hold them front of you. Imagine if you had to use these shoes to flee your home right now because of a conflict or disaster. Image your shoes and clothes which you would take with you on your long, difficult and unpredictable journey. Give thanks for your freedom and security, and pray for all those who do not have that luxury. Pray for a safe journey and quick return for those people.*

A MEDITATION FOR THE EASTER SEASON

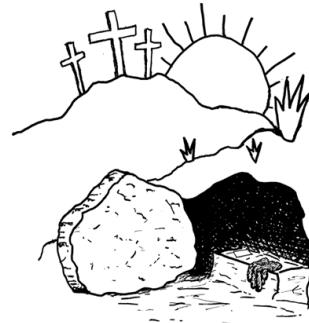
The Power of God

When all seems lost and no hope is left....

When the future is bleak and the tunnel endless....

When you want to give up and bury yourself....

The power of God breaks in and reality is changed!



A stone rolled away, an open tomb,
light in the darkness, hope in the gloom.

Why are we surprised when God breaks in?

Why do we doubt when new things begin?

Remember; remember the story; remember the love,
remember you are one connected to God through the power of God's love.

Loving God,
as we celebrate your Good Friday power and your Easter love,
give us the courage to take our celebration beyond this day.
May we learn to live in the truth of the resurrection,
as your people, a people with a future, your future,
By the power of your love
may we see the dawning of a new day and a new way
when all that holds the world captive is rolled away
and a new adventure begins. Amen.

SERVICES IN APRIL



Sunday Morning Services at 10.30 unless otherwise stated

7	Holy Communion	Revd Adrian Phippen (URC minister) §
14	Family Service	Mrs Rosemary Quin (Methodist preacher) §
21	Family Service	Revd Roger Whitehead §
28	Café Worship & AGM	Revd Roger Whitehead (see page 6) §

Other services

28	6.30 Iona Service	Methodist Church
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REGULAR CHURCH EVENTS

Tuesdays	2.00 - 4.00	Knit & Chat (9 th only this month) §
Thursdays	10.00 - 12.00	Coffee & Kids (with play area for children; not 4 th & 11 th) §
	2.30 - 3.30	Keep Fit § (<i>in hall on 25th</i>)

Fridays	11.30 - 12.15	Prayer Meeting Carey Room
	1.15 - 2.15	Bible Study Group (<i>not 5th or 12th</i>) Carey Room
	5.45 - 6.45	Choir practice #

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

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS IN APRIL

(in the Strand Centre unless otherwise indicated)

Sat	6	10.00	Table Top Sale §
Mon	8	11.00	Café Training meeting #
Tues	9	10.00	Home Aid Coffee Morning , for Rowcroft Hospice §
Mon	15	11.00	OPENING OF INSPIRE CAFÉ (see page 2) §
Thurs	18	12.30	CTDD Ministers meeting, 28 High Street
Fri	19	3.45	Messy Church , Methodist Church Hall
Sat	20	8.30	Men's Breakfast St Mary's Hall, Dawlish Warren (ask for a lift)
		7.30	Soiree in Aid of the Mayor's Charities §
Wed	24	10.30	Methodist-URC Liaison Committee ☰
23rd - 27th	all day		Art Exhibition by Dawlish Art Group §

	Jesus	www.rejesus.co.uk
	Christianity:	www.christianity.org.uk
	The Strand Church:	www.strandchurch.org.uk
	The Strand Centre:	www.strandcente.org.uk