

In touch



information from Strand Church

the church at the centre of town

October 2013

FROM THE MINISTER

Each week I copy the new prayer requests so that they can be put in the weekly notices sheet for prayer. Even while the west foyer is the main entrance to the church and so not conducive to prayer and reflection at least four and sometimes many more prayer requests are received; and each day at least two candles are lit.

This is encouraging and makes the elders and me ever more anxious to see the ramp built so that this vestibule is no longer the main entrance into the church, and to raise the money to make the west vestibule into the Strand Chapel (each costing about £15,000).

It also means that each week I reflect on what people want prayer for. Some requests are poignant - a very premature baby struggling for life or a young mother with terminal cancer; many are for healing, and others seek blessings on family members and friends. There is also a growing number of 'messages' about deceased relatives such as "Mum, always remembered and loved" - it can be up to half the prayer requests.

We never forget loved ones and when others have forgotten, we remember a husband's birthday or the day a child died. When the dead were buried rather than cremated there was often a visit to the grave to put flowers on it; now we often live far from the final resting place of loved ones, and it can be hard to express our feelings in a tangible way other than a prayer request or lighting a candle. Is there more we can do - because I sense people feel a need. I would be glad of comments and suggestions because I am not sure how to take this forward.



ROGER WHITEHEAD



ELDERS MEETING

Apart from the two meetings with the Synod officials the normal business of the Elders Meeting has continued.

200th anniversary of the church

It was in 1814 that the group of dissenters who had been meeting in Dawlish on and off for four years decided to covenant together to form a Congregational Church. After meeting in homes a building was acquired in Chapel Street and in 1870 the York Hotel was bought and demolished so that the present building could be built. The elders have been thinking about the best way to mark the bicentenary, and one thought is to have a series of three events focused around Dawlish in 1814, 1914 and 2014.

The Moderator of the General Assembly is likely to be able to visit Dawlish for the weekend of either 14th or 28th September 2014 when other Torbay URC churches will be invited to meet the Assembly Moderator, and there will be events for the other churches in Dawlish and District as well as a civic occasion.

A temporary ramp

A visitor earlier in the year gave £500 for a temporary ramp, and one has been purchased to enable access to the Strand Chapel, which will always be up steps until the floor in the building is lowered. We expect it to be delivered next month. Funds are still being sought for the main ramp across the front of the building to the east vestibule.

United Christian Action in Dawlish and District (UCADD)

One of the first things which UCADD has done is to appoint Kay Partridge to work for UCADD for two days a week (one paid), supporting the ministers and others who already go into schools. She came to the Elders Meeting to explain some of the things that she hopes to do and she will be speaking at the morning service on 20th October.

Kay stressed the importance of prayer support and she hopes people in each church will commit themselves to pray for schools and her work – these folk might meet together from time to time to pray.

Snippets

Authority was given for necessary **work to be done on the manse**. It was unanimously agreed to seek Synod for authorisation for **Jean Potter to preside**

at the Sacraments in cases of pastoral need for the next twelve months – Jean already does Home Communion.



The **temporary Street Chapel** in the west vestibule is working well considering the space remains the primary entrance to the building. It will continue like this indefinitely. There are several new prayer requests each week and many candles are being lit. Despite repeated requests from Elwyn Jones, there was still not a report on the work which needs to be done to **the organ**. It is hoped that the **new frame to lift the grand piano** off the floor will be fitted this month. The congregation contributed £264 to **Commitment for Life**.

The **Prayer Meeting and Bible Study** will move to Mondays from 14th October. Roger Whitehead suggested that there were many issues about the Strand Church's resources for all the work which is necessary to continue to deliver the church's vision. He suggested that for the remainder of the year it would be good to have **prayer group** focusing solely on the future of the church. Speak to him about this.

Personal news

The Hibberds have moved to the Heavitree area of Exeter and are enjoying being within easy reach of Southernhay Church. Their address is available on request. The Elders Meeting took the opportunity to record its thanks to them for their outstanding contribution as members of the church in spiritual development, preaching, leading a Bible Study group and Services of Prayer for Healing, as well as to the banner group and the Building Committee and in many other ways. **Reg Williams** had been moved to Charterhouse Care home in Teignmouth, but **Margaret Williams** remains at home supported by care workers. **Andy Chancellor** has moved from Brixham to Okehampton, but the home in Brixham was not willing to give his new address in Okehampton. We are hoping to find out where he is.

OFFERINGS AND OTHER SPECIAL INCOME IN AUGUST

	Sunday Offerings*		Special Collections and Events	
	2013	2012		
August	1,420	£1,417	Coffee Mornings (Aug 2012 = £73)	£21
Year so far	£10,149	£12,089	Gifts/fund raising (Aug 2012 = £0)	£0

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



THE STRAND CENTRE

The Financial Situation

Despite several reminders, the builder has still not submitted the final bill for **Phase 2A**, and so it is not possible to work out the final cost of the work or to claim VAT on the bills at the recent SCT Trustees meeting.

A draft budget based on the cash flow from January to July was considered in detail. Mike Keith, our external financial advisor, pointed out that in the first six months of 2013 there was a deficit of £850 which included paying £4,000 in fees. It is likely that the deficit in the second half of the year would be £2,500. Because SCT is heavily dependant on loans a repayment plan is being prepared.

To increase income there will be a new rigorous system in issuing invoices for the hire of the building and prices will be increased in The Inspire Café.

It was noted that generally community centres are having a difficult time in the current financial climate which is one reason why the rental income of the Centre is down.

The Board was reminded that with the exception of the Manager, the Inspire Café is staffed by volunteers and there are not enough of them. One consequence is that the Café is only open on Mondays when Oakwood Court College is in residence and occasionally on Saturdays when there are other events in the auditorium. United Christian Action in Dawlish and District is considering arranging an afternoon programme of activities mainly for the elderly, to encourage more people to stay for lunch and stay for the afternoon.

Advertising

Leaflets will be produced advertising the facilities including for children's parties which have dropped off this year. There will be an advertising campaign to draw attention to the Centre's facilities. The Volunteer Bureau will be asked if there might be someone willing to do this work. The Town Centre Manager has been asked to offer the premises of the Strand Centre when planning events in the town. There has been no progress in finding someone to market the auditorium commercially for fairs (eg weddings, antiques etc). The Centre might seek to host or to initiate more activities, and Bridge was suggested as an activity for which the auditorium was well suited.

Building

The organisers of the Jazz Concert held in late July had hung blankets over the front of the gallery to reduce the echo in the auditorium, and it was agreed to put **curtains across the front of the gallery**. This would fit in with the plan to curtain off the storage areas in the southeast and southwest corners of the auditorium.



The architect and the builder paid a second visit to look at the **snagging**. Everything has been done except sorting out the radiators in the foyer, which hopefully will be completed shortly. A **significant roof leak** developed outside the old toilet. South Hams Roofers, which was responsible for the re-roofing in 2007, is working out what to do. The architect has been asked for the final drawings for **the ramp** across the front of the building now that the LBAC has accepted the glass balustrade. £600 has been given towards the ramp. An estimate is still awaited for the sealing of the **auditorium floor**. It has been decided to replace **the defective handbasins** in the hall toilets with pedestal basins rather than seeking to strengthen the walls on which the current basins are hung. Estimates are being sought for **sorting out the numerous switches and meters** in the meter cupboard in the hall, and for supplying a three-phase meter.

Digitising the bookings diary

The web-based booking diary is on line. It can be seen at: http://www.communitybooking.org.uk/public_webpage.php?cl_no=6. It identifies users by numbers rather than by names. A list of giving details of the organizations related to the numbers is available on request.

It is not possible to book on line so we have control over who books.



Very good

Congratulations

Both the Inspire Café and the Lunch Clubs have been graded 5 (the highest) for Health and Hygiene in a recent surprise visit by the Inspector. This reflects the high standards which are set up and upheld by those who work in them. Well done!

TWO SPECIAL ELDERS MEETINGS WITH SYNOD OFFICIALS

At the beginning of September there were two meetings with Synod officials.

Payment for Ministry & Mission

The first meeting was with the new Moderator, Treasurer and other officials to discuss the shortfall in the church's contribution to the Ministry & Mission Fund through which the ministers are paid and the wider work of the church is sustained. The church's target for 2013 was £19,000 and the Elders Meeting said the church could pay only £13,000 in 2013, because all the church's resources were focused on developing its mission in the centre of the town, and altering the building. The Synod officials explained the fellowship of the church involved every congregation sharing in support for ministry, paid or unpaid, and for the supportive work of the Synod and General Assembly. If one church contributed less than asked, others would have to make up the difference. At the end of it was accepted by the Synod officials that the church would not be able to contribute more than £13,000. The elders promised to try to meet its 2014 target.

The Strand Hall

The Synod Property Officer reminded the church that it had borrowed £93,000 from the Synod for the roof repairs in 2007/8 with a promise that when the internal re-ordering of the main building was complete the Strand Hall (then called the Hamilton Hall) would be sold to pay off the debt. Planning permission for four flats in the Strand Hall would expire in three years, and might not be renewed which would reduce the sale value, so it was important that the sale of the hall started in the foreseeable future.

After the meeting the elders discussed the importance of the Strand Hall for the work of both the church and the centre, and various ideas were discussed about how the debt might be repaid and the hall retained for Christian work.

The second meeting

The Moderator and Synod Pastoral Advisor returned a week later for a review of Roger Whitehead's ministry. Last year he was appointed for five years with annual reviews. This was discussed separately with the minister and the elders and it was decided that the ministry should continue with a review in two not one year when discussion might begin about future ministry.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

We pray for those who give generously of their time and treasure. Those who write letters, sign campaign postcards and pray for an end to injustice.



Uphold them and give them strength to carry on in your name so all may have a life full and free.

We are committed to life.

Action:

"The pen is mightier than the sword"

Take a pen and hold it in your hand as if ready to write something down.

It may seem like such a simple thing but the humble pen has the power to do great things.

To write a letter, sign a campaign postcard, make out a cheque, fill in a gift aid declaration.

It also gives you the freedom and ability to document, record, inspire, motivate and encourage.

It is life changing.



For our Church as we look forward

God gave us a vision of serving the community from the unique position in the town centre. We must strive to now carry it out. Please use this prayer every day.

Loving Father,
 guide us by your Spirit
 as we commit ourselves to your vision:
 fill us with faith
 as we seek to be followers of your way;
 grant us strength
 to overcome obstacles;
 give us Jesus' love
 that we may serve whoever is in need:
 May your Kingdom come
 your will be done on earth through us.

THE PRAYER CHAPEL

The west vestibule remains open as a temporary chapel until the permanent ramp is in place. Please use its prayer board for prayer requests. Prayer requests by lunch time on Friday will be included in the weekly sheet. Prayers can also be emailed to prayer@strandchurch.org.uk or phone 889098.

SERVICES IN OCTOBER**Sunday Morning Services at 10.30** unless otherwise stated

6	Holy Communion	The Worship Group §
13	Family Service	Miss Catherine Harris (Kingsteignton) §
20	Family Service	Revd Roger Whitehead §
27	Café Worship	Revd Roger Whitehead §

Other services

27 6.30 **Iona Service** United with Methodist Church (in Methodist church)

Coming up during Sunday Services

Sunday 13th Roger Whitehead will baptise his second grandson, Leo

Sunday 20th Kay Partridge will speak about her schools work

CHURCH EVENTS IN OCTOBER

Mondays	11.30 - 12.15	Prayer Meeting #
	1.00 - 2.00	Bible Study Group #
Tuesdays	2.00 - 4.00	Knit & Chat §
Thursdays	10.00 - 12.00	Coffee Morning (run by Strand Church) §
Fridays	5.45 - 6.45	Choir Practice §

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS IN OCTOBER

(on our premises unless otherwise indicated)

Sat	5	10.00	Table Top Sale §
Wed	9	7.00	QuizAid for Christian Aid , Brunswick Arms (see below)
Mon	14	6.00	Elders Meeting
Fri	18	3.45	Messy Church (in the Methodist Hall)
Sat	19	8.30	Men's Breakfast , Dawlish Warren (lifts available)

§ in the auditorium † in the Strand Hall ✕ Strand Hall lounge # in Carey Room

CHANGE OF DAY OF BIBLE STUDY TO MONDAYS

From 14th October the Prayer Meeting will be held experimentally at 11.30 and the Bible Study at 1.00 in the Carey Room.



QUIZAID for CHRISTIAN AID
Wed 9th in the Bruswick Arms

£7 inc buffet t 7 pm; £3.50 quiz only at 7.30 from the Willises