



information from Strand Church

the church at the centre of town

January 2014

FROM THE MINISTER

In the past few years the Christian church has been involved in debates about changes in our society and the key issue in the frequent arguments has been "equality rights". So the campaign by non-church folk for women bishops is about women's right to hold the same positions in the church as men; the campaign for same-sex marriage is about gay people's right to have the same relationship as heterosexual people. In the public mind, and increasingly in the decisions of the courts, equal rights overrides all others.

The problem is that not all rights are compatible. My right to freedom does not give me the right to abuse or harm another person because s/he has a right not to be abused or harmed. For people of faith, the incompatibility arises sharply when our right as believers is in conflict with someone else's right. Is a Jewish employee's right to observe the Sabbath to be subordinated to an employer's right to run his business on the Sabbath? Is a Sikh's right to follow Sikh teaching about turbans to be dismissed when he is riding a motor bike and is required to wear a helmet? The right to freedom to observe a person's faith is not just about personal beliefs, it is about living out the aims and understanding of the faith. Should a registrar objecting to officiating at a same-sex marriage on the grounds of faith be forced to act against her/his faith or be dismissed?

Perhaps the Christian contribution to this discussion might begin by reflecting that Jesus did not ever talk about rights; he spoke about duties - duties to the poor; the stranger (today including migrant refugees); the homeless; and the prisoners. We could try to move the arguments away from one person's right to override another's towards focusing on how to understand one another and to support one another. That seemed to be Jesus' way.



ROGER WHITEHEAD



ELDERS MEETING REPORT

Snippets The **grand piano** had finally been put on the piano frame and can be moved around with ease. When it is not in use for services, it can be moved away from the front of the auditorium to group seats into more of a semi-circle. Please never leave it in front of a fan heater which is switched on. It was agreed to offer £25 per month for one year from church funds to support Christians Against Poverty (see page 5 for more information).

Facelift grants The Synod has suggested that all the facelift grants should be submitted together. So the facelift grant applications already submitted had been withdrawn pending completion of applications for the new boiler. Rychard Winslade was congratulated on being appointed a lay representative of the South Western Synod to the **General Assembly in 2014**.

Health & Safety Policy The Elders Meeting agreed to adopt the Health & Safety Policy of the Strand Centre. It is available on request.

Dealing with the roof debt The elders welcomed the decision of the Church Meeting to agree to sell enough equity in the manse to pay off the loan. The percentage has not been clarified, but it is likely to be about 37%. A delegation of elders will meet the Synod officers in early February to complete negotiations.

The church's debts The Treasurer reported that there was one outstanding loan of £2,000 from an anonymous source. It will have been paid before the end of 2013.

M&M contribution for 2014 Geoff Willis reported that the M&M target for 2014 is £16,000. It was agreed that it would not be sensible to discuss it until the January meeting when the accounts for 2013 and budget for 2014 were available. Jean Potter reported that the Assembly is facing a budget shortfall of £300,000, and was inviting churches to contribute an additional 1% on their targets so that additional cutbacks will not be necessary. It was agreed that this too would be discussed at the following meeting.

Burns Night The idea of a joint Burns Supper with the Methodist Church came

to nothing so it was agreed to run a church Burns Supper on Saturday 25th January. The Revd Brian Cook (originally from north Wales) will lead and preach at the service on Sunday 2nd March 2014 to mark St David's Day. A Concert for St David's Day by the Silver Chain Singers will be held the previous evening and will include a Welsh meal. Jean Potter is looking for an Irish preacher on 16th March, the day before **St Patrick's Day**.

New pastoral groups are being drawn up following the resignation of Pauline Laybourne. Annie King has moved to Newton Abbot. Reg Williams is now Charterhouse in Teignmouth.

A Celebration Service

Roger Whitehead spoke of his view that the 5.30 Fellowship, which had been run by the Methodist Church (mainly by Ali and Martin Rowe) and the URC (Marie Whitehead), had not become a time of innovative worship attracting younger people as he had hoped when it was started. He also believed that there was nowhere in Dawlish with 'charismatic' worship and there was likely to be a demand for it. Three musicians from Dawlish Christian Fellowship had approached him about holding something of this sort in the Strand Church. This would be monthly event held mid-week and include an extended time of prayer and praise, often led by a band, testimonies, a speaker and a time for open prayer and personal ministry. The elders approved further exploration of a monthly time of worship of this sort which would be a URC activity supported by Churches Together if the CTDD Forum endorsed the details of plans which were being made. It is hoped that the first one might be held on the third Friday in February.

METHODIST-URC LIAISON GROUP

The recent biannual meeting of the Methodist-URC Liaison Group sorted out arrangements for united worship on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday (Tenebrae in the Strand Hall) and Ascension Day. We also learned that the Methodist Church is able to repaint the inside of the worship area thanks to a generous legacy. Some regret was expressed that the two churches are not able to work more closely together apart from monthly Messy Church and the monthly evening Iona Service.

PROPERTY MATTERS - BOILER PROBLEMS



One morning in November the boiler had failed to ignite and the engineer repairing it said the boiler should be replaced because he could not give it a safety certificate. It seems that replacing the boiler might qualify for a facelift grant, but the Synod Property Officer suggested that it was the responsibility of the Strand Community Trust to replace the boiler because the lease required the congregation to maintain only the fabric of the building, and that the Strand Community Centre – not being a local URC church – was not entitled to a facelift grant. The trustees of the Strand Community Trust have made it clear that they do not have the money for a new boiler.

The situation was discussed at Church Meeting which agreed that:

1. the boiler should be replaced as soon as possible for safety reasons and to ensure the building was warm;
2. the congregation had a moral obligation to pay for the replacement of the boiler because it ought to have been replaced before the signing of the lease (it had been condemned before the lease was signed) and decided to apply for a facelift grants for it;
3. three estimates needed to be obtained;
5. the work should include providing a better and safer access to the boiler.

It was suggested that the Strand Community Trust might run a Candlemas Appeal for the boiler, rather as it had done for the kitchenette at the beginning of 2013. J P Woollacott Ltd, which had done the plumbing work for the kitchenette and toilets and which had got the boiler working, had estimated the cost of a new boiler to be around £15,000. It was agreed that when seeking estimates, estimators be asked whether the boiler might be sited in a different and more accessible place. The elders also suggested ensuring that there was annual maintenance of the boiler.

Leak

South Hams Roofing hopes it has corrected the defect which caused the leak which brought down the ceiling outside the old toilet. But as this only occurred in exceptionally heavy and prolonged rain, it is difficult to be sure it is cured. The repairs will be done early next year. The cost will be covered by insurance. Estimates are being sought.



UNITED CHRISTIAN ACTION IN DAWLISH AND DISTRICT

Christians Against Poverty

Mars Hill Church in Teignmouth has taken an initiative and paid for the training of a debt counsellor to work with Christians Against Poverty (CAP) to help those who have unmanageable debts. CAP negotiates with the creditors to produce a personal budget for the debt repayment which the debtor can manage. This removes the threat from bailiffs. CAP also wants befrienders to help those in debt in other practical ways. UCADD is seeking a meeting of interested churches from across Teignbridge to set up a network of churches throughout Teignbridge to support CAP. Churches will be invited to contribute up to £50 per month for the training and servicing of two more debt counsellors, because the Mars Hill debt counsellor is fully booked until April.

Nightshift

A Teignbridge And Dawlish Nightshift Initiative (TADNI) Committee has been set up to run Nightshift. It is hoped training will begin in January for the 45 people who have already volunteered. Grants are being sought for the set up costs: according to the police, night time problems are now greater in Dawlish and Teignmouth than in Torbay and Newton Abbot which have Street Pastors or similar groups. The Strand hall will be used as the base to which people in need can be brought and helped.

A UCADD base

UCADD is also exploring using the top floor of the Strand Hall as its base and headquarters, though this has not been formally discussed by the SCT trustees. We are looking at the costs of a cheap-and-cheerful make-over for the premises and for a radical upgrade so that grant applications can be made.

One of UCADD's greatest strengths is the commitment of the ministers as the sole directors of the charity; but given the demands of ministry and related commitments it is also a weakness. So each church is invited to nominate one other person to become a director of UCADD. In this way it hopes to engage better with local church people at every level in the church and in its activities.



REPORT FROM TORBAY URC MINISTERS MEETING

New Year Party 18th January, Kingsteignton The 2014 New Year's Party will be a Games Afternoon; each church is asked to contribute towards the tea, which is being coordinated by Jean Baker of Central Church. Pat Willis is coordinating the Strand Church's contribution.

Ash Wednesday Service 5th March 7.30 There will be the traditional Ash Wednesday Service at Furrough Cross.

Pulpit Exchange There was discussion about a Torbay URC Churches pulpit exchange but it was impossible to find a date which would be suitable to all the ministers before the late autumn of 2014. The idea of lay preachers' exchange was also mooted.

REPORT FROM CHURCHES TOGETHER IN DAWLISH AND DISTRICT

Churches Directory There will be a 2014 edition of the Churches Directory. It is hoped that a few volunteers will do the bulk of the delivery, and a delivery firm will do the rest.

The Mothers Union is working world wide to hold the largest ever **Renewal of Marriage Vows Service** next February. After discussion it was agreed that the idea was a good one, but the complications of going for a world record were so great that it was likely to detract from the purpose. However, something similar could be arranged in Dawlish at another time.

Discussions are beginning with those primarily involved about how to mark the beginning of the **First World War** on 4th August 2014

Finance

Comparative figures for expenditure for 2012 and 2013 show an overall increase in the amount spent on advertising, Year 6 books, and the Welcome Leaflets distributed in the holiday camps. The balance at the meeting was only £161, despite the increasing subscriptions from the churches. It was agreed to ask churches if they would be willing to have a retiring collection for CTDD on the annual Pulpit Exchange Sunday.

CTDD has decided to see if **Songs of Praise** would be willing to come to Dawlish. This requires each church to fill in a form outlining what they could contribute before the proposal is submitted. It can take up to four years for an invitation to be accepted.



Do you remember the Millennium Resolution? It is still worth saying:

Let there be
 respect for the earth
 peace for its people
 love in our lives
 delight in the good
 forgiveness for past wrongs
 and from now on,
 a new start.

A prayer at the start of the year

Oh God, who is the same
 yesterday, today and for ever:
 Grant us so to pass through
 the coming year
 with faithful hearts,
 that we may be able in all things
 to please you.

Amen.

From Mozarabic, c AD 700

At the gate of the year

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied, "Go into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!"

Minnie Louise Haskins (quoted by King George VI in December 1940)

An Epiphany Prayer

O God, who by a star
 guided the wise men
 to the worship of your Son,
 we pray you will lead to yourself
 the wise and great of every land
 that to you every knee may bow,
 and every action reflect your love
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*The Church in Jerusalem
 and the Middle East*

A Prayer for the Week of Prayer for Unity

Take us from where we are,
 to where you want us to be;
 make us not merely guardians of a heritage,
 but living signs of your coming Kingdom;
 fire us with passion for justice and peace
 between all people;
 fill us with that faith, hope and love which
 embody the Gospel;
 through the power of your Spirit make us one
 that the world may believe,
 that you may be enthroned in our nation,
 that your church may be seen as your body.
 We commit ourselves to love you, serve you.



For more up-to-date information

about the church visit www.StrandChurch.org.uk

About the centre visit www.StrandCentre.org.uk

SERVICES IN JANUARY

Morning Services at 10.30 unless otherwise stated

5	Epiphany (Holy Com)	Revd Eric Carless §
12	Family Service	Revd Roger Whitehead §
19	Prayer for Healing	Revd Roger Whitehead §
26	Family Service	Mrs Val Elms (Furrough Cross) §



Other services

19	6.30	Week of Prayer United Advent Service, Dawlish Christian Fellowship
26	6.30	Iona Service with the Methodists in their church

REGULAR CHURCH EVENTS

Tuesdays	2.00 - 4.00	Knit & Chat (14 th & 28 th) §
Thursdays	10.00 - 12.00	Coffee and Kids Morning (kids from 9 th) §
	2.30 - 3.30	Keep Fit §
Fridays	11.30 - 12.30	Prayer Meeting (from 10 th) †
	12.30 - 2.00	Bible Study Group (from 17 th) ‡

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

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS IN JANUARY

(on our premises unless otherwise indicated)

Sat	4	10.00	Table Top Sale §
Fri	17	3.30	Messy Church , Methodist Church Hall
Sat	18	8.30	Men's Breakfast St Mary's Hall, Dawlish Warren
		3.00	Torbay URC Churches New Year Social , Kingsteignton URC
Mon	20	12.30	CTDD AGM , St Gregory's
Wed	22	6.00	Elders Meeting ‡
Sat	25	7.00	Burns Night †

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - noon prayers

Sat	18	Strand Church §	Thurs	23	Christian Fellowship
Mon	20	St Gregory's	Fri	24	St Agatha's
Tues	21	Holcombe Church	Sat	25	Methodist Church
Wed	22	Cofton Church			



THE STRAND CHURCH



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