

In touch



information from Dawlish URC

the church with the spire

January 2015

FROM THE MINISTER

As the New Year approaches, I have been reflecting on the privileges of being the minister of this church and the new opportunities and experiences which it has given me. To be involved in a church which has a unique position in the town centre and which has literally offered its building to the community is exciting and challenging. To be with a congregation which is not divided or uncertain about its vision is very encouraging. Of course it is less exciting to seek to change a listed building and it is testing to see how with our limited resources we can deliver what God is calling us to do. But that does not diminish my sense of calling to this ministry and my confidence in God's purposes as they are revealed.

I believe that our future is in taking St Paul seriously when he says "When I am weak, then I am strong because God's grace is all we need". Our weakness in human resources should renew our prayers for strength and support and above all for vision. Our prayers are not telling God what we think the next steps should be in our journey of faith. We need to be humble, because we often find that God's route for the journey is not what we expected and sometimes not what we want. The challenge is the life of Jesus. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus struggled with committing himself to God's way ("Let this cup pass from me"); but in the end he committed himself to the Father's way ("Nevertheless, let your will be done") even to the point of death.

So the journey may mean dying to some things we hold precious, even some of our traditions, and being willing to share our building more with others than we do now (ecumenical sharing is another unexpected privilege of my ministry here). Yes, there are and will be frustrations and disappointments - but what keeps us going is knowing that we are doing what God wants - and for God's kingdom.



ROGER WHITEHEAD



Synod report

The Synod has had preliminary discussion about forming five areas within the Synod (the Strand Church would be in south and east Devon) holding two open meetings a year bringing people together, but without any decision making authority.

Listed Building retrospective consent

Progress was made at a meeting that had been held with Raoul Hewitt and our architects when it was agreed exactly what was required to support the applications for the retrospective planning applications. The architects will work together to produce the necessary documentation; one suggestion is to return the pulpit to the church building to use some bits to create a temporary altar in the Chapel and to store the remaining parts in the boiler room.

Visit of the Moderator of the General Assembly

It was agreed to mark the visit of the Moderator of the General Assembly by holding a cream team on Saturday 7th March 2015 for members of local URC congregations; and to hold a lunch on Sunday 8th March for those who attend the UCADD Board meeting. Following the urging of Churches Together, representatives of the other churches will be invited to the morning service. It was also agreed to discuss the idea of 201+ Appeal at the next meeting.

Snippets Clearly the rush to rearrange the furniture after the service on the **Street Market Sunday** was unacceptable, and how to manage this will be discussed well in advance of December 2015. There is concern over the crackling of the lapel microphone. Various ideas will be tried out to minimize the noise. Perhaps the most satisfactory answer is a head microphone. We are trying to arrange regular **lifts to church**. It was agreed to hold a **Service of Welcome for new members** on 1st February 2015 when Pat Sage will be welcomed. Others wishing to join are asked to talk to Roger Whitehead. The service will be followed by the first of the quarterly bring-and-share lunches. The URC General Assembly has asked each church for the views of its members on permitting URC churches to conduct **same-sex marriages** if the Church Meeting agrees. Dick Gray (Synod Treasurer) and his wife will lead in a discussion as part of Café Worship on 15th February. More details later.

Family news Concern was expressed about several members, which has³ emphasized the decline in the number of senior church members who have been the backbone of the church for many years. It brings into sharper focus the need to discern the future of the congregation and the building.

The elements at Holy Communion

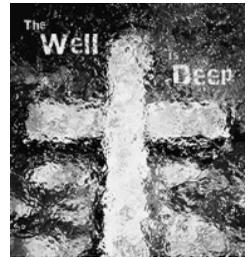
Those who prefer to receive with a wafer instead of bread and/or water instead of our unfermented Communion wine should make this known to the elders before the start of the service.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Theme: The well is deep.

with materials focussing on the church in Brazil

The Brazilian churches recognise that intolerance should be dealt with in a positive way - respecting diversity and promoting dialogue as a permanent path of reconciliation and peace in fidelity to the gospel. We can share this recognition. Although the competition between churches is less obvious in our islands, we are well aware that competition and violent discrimination lie beneath the surface of our lives together. Jesus challenges us to acknowledge that diversity is part of God's design, to approach one another in trust and to see the face of God in the face of all men and women



Local services and prayers

The annual evening service for the Week will be held for the first time in St George's Church, Holcombe *at the earlier time of 4 pm.*

There are daily prayers during the week. These are at:

	Time	Venue	
Sunday	18 th	16.00	St George's Holcombe
Monday	19 th	12.00	Cofton
Tuesday	20 th	12.00	St Agatha's
		7.30	DCF
Wednesday	21 st	12.00	Strand Church followed by lunch & CTDD AGM
Thursday	22 nd	12.00	St Gregory's
Friday	23 rd	11.00	Methodist Church



STRAND CENTRE NEWS

Property

Replacement **water heaters** are now in the hall top floor toilet, kitchen and in the vestry/office toilet. The curtains are promised for the end of this month. A new boiler **temperature control** has been fitted; instructions are beside it. The **rehangng of the banners** in the Carey Room has been completed. It is hoped that recent work on **the hall ceiling leak** has been sorted out. Full details of a scheme for new **auditorium lighting** are being considered: something like £15,000 will be needed and the result will be spectacular.

Treasurership

At the next Board meeting the Revd Tom Bush will be nominated as Treasurer. Tom, who is a long standing Dawlish resident, has recently retired as non-stipendiary minister in Teignmouth, brings experience of running a large department in Exeter University as well as an advisor in mental health to the EU and British governments. This brings to an end a period of over a year without a Treasurer and much relief to those who have had to caretake the work.

Until the accounts for 2014 are done it is hard to assess the financial situation of the Strand Centre, but it is clear that the building is being used far more than it was (particularly the auditorium – the top floor of the hall is under-used), but also the maintenance budget for 2014 has been greatly exceeded. This means that hire charges will have to be increased from April 2015. Multiple use is also being encouraged such as the Foot Clinic being held at the same time as the café is open and Cancer Research has its table top sale.

The December Table Top Sale was the last of Pat Willis' monthly sales which have usually generated over £170 for the Centre each time. These will now be bimonthly. We are immensely grateful to Pat and Geoff for the hard work they put into the Sales (and many other things for the church and the Centre).

Cleaning

There is also relief at the appointment of Dave and Patricia Mackie as cleaners; they now work daily in order to relieve the café staff of responsibility of doing all the cleaning as it closes. The auditorium is increasingly used twice a day, and Dave also does some of the setting out of the auditorium for successive users.

The Inspire Café

Sales have kept up so far during the autumn which is a tribute to the tasty menu and the increasing use of the café by groups to meet socially, sometimes before going on to another venue.

NOTICE BOARD

Church Action on Poverty

We have almost reached the £3,000 needed to set up a Debt Centre for Christians Against Poverty. A pre-Christmas CAP newsletter has been circulated, which invites churches to suggest people who might be trained to be debt coaches and befrienders. We hope to be able to go on to raise a further £3,000 for another debt coach to meet all the needs in Teignbridge.

Torbay URC Churches annual New Year Party

Our annual get-together will be held on Saturday 24th at 3 pm in Central Church, Torquay. This year each church has been asked to bring two items of entertainment so your ideas and contributions will be welcome! Lifts are available.

Taizé Service

From this month the Iona Service which we held with the Methodists is replaced by a CTDD Taizé service, based on the reflective liturgy of the ecumenical community in France. The quiet simple chants and songs are a helpful way to end a Sunday. The Iona Service will be held bimonthly as part of the 5/30 Fellowship.

Love, Life and Praise

Resumes on Friday 16th January. This time of praise and worship built on modern Christian music is uplifting and powerful, led by Lawson Spiller who is an international worship leader, now resident in Dawlish.

OFFERINGS AND OTHER SPECIAL INCOME

	Sunday Offerings*		Special Collections and Events
	2014	2013	Donations in Nov (Nov £13 = £10) £9
November	£1,875	£1,372	Sunday coffee money now goes to the
Year (so far)	£23,661	£14,884	Inspire Café which provides the coffee

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

CHRISTMAS IN ONE PART OF CHINA

Christmas in the rural communities of Luhe reminds me of Psalm 96:12: "Let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy." The senior pastor of the main church in Luhe, which is a farming district in Nanjing, is the Revd Liu Xiaofan. In 1982, when China allowed rural churches to reopen after the Cultural Revolution, he with 100 Christians went to reclaim the church, which was then used as a cinema. Returning Christians had to rely on the few Bibles that were not destroyed during the revolution, some of which were hand-copied. But God has blessed them. In 1982, there were 120 Christians in Luhe; today the district has 414 churches and 40,000 Christians. The church, however, lacks resources. There is a great shortage of leaders, as all those Christians share three ordained pastors. At Christmas, the three of them move from church to church to celebrate the season, and churches take turns to celebrate Christmas before the actual day.

Come Christmas, every church in the district will be filled with thousands of people. Church members carry chickens or bags of vegetables and rice to share with others. In the kitchen, farmers turned chefs cook a meal for the thousands of believers who come to worship the Lord. At the Christmas Eve service firemen came to clear the aisles for safety reasons, but they quickly filled up again by enthusiastic worshippers. Even a second hall could not accommodate the multitude, and many had to stand outside, hoping just to catch a glimpse of the celebration. Some were so eager to get a seat in the sanctuary they came at 1.30 pm for the service that would start at 6.30. Christmas is not a public holiday in China, so the huge turnout in church is truly remarkable. In addition to prayers, hymns and a sermon, the Christmas service has two hours of performances, including music and dance, a candlelit procession and the Nativity scene. Many Christians come with seekers who are in church for the first time. The sermon and performances point to Jesus as the Saviour of the world; the one who died on the Cross for our sins and then rose again to give us abundant and eternal life. From the overwhelming attendance, the passion to bring non-Christians to God was clearly evident. God's fields in Luhe are jubilant that Emmanuel has come and is with them! Truly his people have experienced the presence and glory of the Lord Jesus.

From Reform



FOR YOUR PRAYERS



THOUGHTS ON THE TURNING OF THE YEAR

Do you remember the Millennium Resolution? It is worth praying:

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.

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.



The URC supports other parts of the world through Christian Aid which works with partners throughout the world. The URC's focuses on three countries, one of which is Zimbabwe.

We pray for



Ezra, his wife Zenko and son Nkosiphile as they benefit from understanding more about personal and food hygiene. We give thanks that cases of diarrhoea have dropped dramatically in their village through the work of Christian Aid partner, the Dabane Trust;



staff in the Christian Aid office in Harare and the 15 local partner organisations they work with;



the partners who deliver help in the form of essential health services, training farmers in new techniques and advocating for changes to national policies to help the poorest.

A prayer for our church at the start of the year

Loving Father,
grant us strength,
guide us by your Spirit
to achieve your purposes;
as we renew our church's life.
Deepen our love,
fill us with faith
for your Son Jesus Christ
Help us to discern your way;
so that as we serve you here
others may be drawn
to your Kingdom
for your glory. Amen.

SERVICES IN JANUARY

Morning Services at 10.30 unless otherwise stated

4	Epiphany Holy Communion	Mrs Jean Potter
11	Family Worship	Roger Whitehead
18	Prayer for Healing Service	Revd Roger Whitehead
25	United Service	Mrs Margaret Noel



Other services

18	4.00	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	United Service, Holcombe *
25	6.30	Taizé Service	Dawlish Christian Fellowship

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Daily Services see page 3

REGULAR CHURCH EVENTS

Thursdays 10.00 - 12.00 **Coffee & Kids** (Toddlers Group resume 8th) §
2.30 - 3.30 **Keep Fit** §

Fridays 11.30 - 12.30 **Prayer Meeting** vestry

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

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS IN JANUARY

(on our premises unless otherwise indicated)

Sat 3 10.00 **Table Top Sale** §

Wed 7 6.30 **Elders Meeting** ¨

Fri 9 7.30 **Filling Station**, Shaldon School*

Fri 16 3.45 **Messy Church** (Methodist Church Hall)
6.30 **Love, Life & Praise** §

Wed 21 12.30 **Churches Together AGM** with lunch ¨

Sat 24 3.00 **URC Torbay Churches New Year Party** Central, Torquay *
* lifts available

THE STRAND CHURCH



Minister

Revd Roger Whitehead 28 High Street

889 098



Acting Sec

Mrs Jean Potter 1, Ivy Lane, Teignmouth

773856

Church phone: 01626 889038

church website www.StrandChurch.org.uk

For information about the church visit www.strandchurch.org.uk

aAbout Jesus visit www.rejesus.co.uk