



March 2018

Dear Friends,

I am sure we all are looking forward to Springtime when the Winter weather abates and things start to get warmer and the garden starts to dry out. The Spring Equinox is March 20th so we soon will be able to plant the garden up with various flowers and shrubs. Also if we have a vegetable patch we need to be preparing the soil. Digging over the ground, weeding and raking ready for sowing. The parable of the sower comes to mind. We need to sow the seed in "Good Soil" to produce a good harvest. (Matt 13 v.8)

I spotted the following in a publication recently entitled "Planting up your Spring Garden" This relates to our Daily Living.

Plant Three Rows of Peas:-

Peace of Mind
Peace of Heart
Peace of Soul

Plant Four Rows of Squash :-

1. Squash Gossip
2. Squash Indifference
3. Squash Grumbling
4. Squash Selfishness

Plant Four Rows of Lettuce :-

Lettuce be Faithful
Lettuce be Kind
Lettuce be Patient

Lettuce Really Love one Another

No Garden is Complete without Turnips :-

Turnip for Meetings
Turnip for Service

Turnip to Help One Another

To Conclude our Garden we must have Thyme :-

Thyme for Each Other
Thyme for Family
Thyme for Friends

Water Freely with Patience and Cultivate with Love. Question for us all – Is there much Fruit in your Garden? because you Reap what you Sow.

There is much in the above which is very laudable but we must cultivate our lives with much Grace so that we Live Out our Faith to show others the wonderful characteristics we have been given in Jesus. (Colossians 4 v. 5 & 6)

We must show what God has sown the Seed of Redemption, Faith and Trust in Jesus in our hearts. We have been Transformed by the Gift of Salvation. We are growing just as a plant grows in the soil, for we have been Rooted and Grafted in to the True Vine. (John 15 v. 4,5 & 7) All we have and all we are is down to Him.

May our Lives reflect the Beauty of Jesus, just like our Plants and Crops reveal their Harvest in due Time. May we all "Go and Bear Fruit" (John 15 v.16). As we Live for Jesus, may our Lives reflect His Radiance that will be a Blessing to you and all who you come into contact with in your Daily Living to His Glory.

Roger

Church Family Life Resources

The charity CARE have produced a new website designed for the (or soon to be) **active retired** to resource, challenge and enrich those seeking to live life to the full in their post P45 era. More information and resources available at:

<http://afterworknet.com/>

At the other end of the age spectrum Care for the Family have launched a new initiative entitled "The Kitchen Table Project" which is designed to **nurture faith in our children**

Statistically just 50% of children growing up in Christian homes will keep their faith as adults. Care for the Family seek to support parents to enable them to change that.

The Kitchen Table Project is a growing movement of mums and dads supporting each other, sharing ideas and encouragement so that we can all succeed in inspiring faith in our children. This project is the start of a conversation, and will be producing resources and ideas to help in the journey of discovering how we can nurture faith at home. More information and the opportunity to sign up to receive further support is available at:

<https://kitchentable.org.uk/>

Church Meeting 14th March at 8pm

Following on from Dhenis Stafford's recent visit to SFC there will be an additional church meeting on Wednesday 14th March at 8pm. The purpose of the meeting is to vote on whether Dhenis should be invited to become the next full time paid pastor of SFC. Members should have already received their voting slips together with a letter from Terence and the meeting's agenda (which is very short!) If you are not a member but are a regular church attendee you are welcome to attend the meeting but will not be able to vote.

For those who were unable to attend the service on 25th February or the subsequent sessions at which Dhenis answered a number of questions raised by church attendees and gave his testimony, the sessions were recorded. The service is available on the church website in both audio and visual formats. Please speak to the church administrator if you would like a copy of the Q&A or testimony sessions. Dhenis has also provided his sermon notes and answers to the church questions in response to requests made to him for these – please speak to Terence if you would like copies."

Welcome

Welcome Rota for March

04/03/2018 - Breda & Peter J

11/03/2018 - Amanda & Don

18/03/2018 - Brenda & Graham

25/03/2018 - David & Nicola

Café closure

Please note that due to the inclement weather **this Saturday's café session (3rd March) has been cancelled.**

As previously discussed at the last church meeting the café staff are sad to announce that the **last café session** for the foreseeable future will be **Saturday 24th March**. The café staff would like to thank all those who have supported this community project over the last 6 years.

The leadership would like to **thank all those who have given up many hours of their time over the years to support this outreach into the community.** The team's time, energy, commitment and endeavours have been greatly appreciated by all.



The Natural Evangelism Course

I have mentioned before the “**JustOne** “ event with J.John at the **Priestfield Stadium**. This is:-

One Day – Saturday 9th June 2018. Over 10,000 people of all ages will gather at Priestfield Stadium (the home of Gillingham Football Club).

One Message – The Good News of Jesus Christ can transform our lives and give us purpose.

One Invitation - Your opportunity to invite a relative, friend, neighbour or colleague.

Do look on the website for more information about this event : <http://justonepriestfield.com>

We have registered as a Partner church for this event and **Roger** is the key contact with the JustOne event so he will be keeping us up to date on prayer requests etc.

Might I suggest that house groups consider following the Natural Evangelism Course in preparation for this event? It is a 6 week course designed as a practical course to stimulate the church into evangelistic action in preparation for the JustOne event. Please let me know if you would like to find out more about the course so that we can order the course booklet for those who wish to take part in the course.

We will run the course at the church over 6 **Sunday evening services** from **18 March to 6 May at 6:30 p.m.** and the Sessions are as follows:-

Session 1: 18 March 2018 : The “Why” of Evangelism;

Session 2: 25 March 2018 : What is the Good News of Christianity?;

Session 3: 8 April 2018 : What is Friendship Evangelism?

Session 4: 15 April 2018 : This is My Story

Session 5: 22 April 2018 : Demonstrating the Good News

Session 6: 6 May 2018 : How Can We Be Empowered for Evangelism?

If anyone would like to help me run this course on those evenings, I would be delighted to hear from you! There is very little preparation needed because it is all there in the course book – so it is little more than chairing the sessions and you can do just one or more of the sessions.

Read on about this course.....

WHY?

The act of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ is called evangelism. Evangelism is the cry of Jesus as he weeps over lost people. Evangelism is the whole work of the whole church for the whole age. The gospel is not something we come to church to hear, it is something we go from church to do.

Unfortunately, many of us are like Arctic rivers: frozen at the mouth.

Research has shown that only a small proportion of churches actually train their members for evangelism rather than just tell them about it.

‘Sadly the Church over the years has had an imbalance, often neglecting witness and focusing more on worship and well-being. Evangelism is not just about numbers; we count people because people count. Because we are made in the image of God, every individual is a person of intrinsic worth.’

This course is a result of J.John’s own experience of preparing hundreds of churches for mission on six continents.

INSIDE...

The Natural Evangelism Course is a six-session course, which provides a simple, yet insightful training programme for all churches wanting to encourage and equip their members towards more effective friendship evangelism.

The Natural Evangelism Course provides churches with a ready-made training programme to help members engage actively in evangelism; providing insights, activities and talking points to help individuals understand how to share their faith and become more confident and effective in connecting with people of the twenty-first century.

Covering the 'Why' of evangelism as well as defining the correct message of the Good News and the meaning of friendship evangelism, the course advises Christians on how to tell their story, how to demonstrate the good news in their lives and actions and how they can be empowered for evangelism

Please consider joining us on those Sunday evenings and consider and pray about your "plus ones" to invite to the event on 9th June.

Terence

Win Blackmore

Following the death of Win Blackmore on the 10th February, the family would like to invite everyone to Win's funeral on **Monday 12th March**. The arrangements are as follows:

- **12:30pm** at the Vinters Park Crematorium
- **2:30pm** Thanksgiving Service at Staplehurst Free Church

The family have requested family flowers only, however any donations to "Torch Trust for the Blind" (a charity close to Win's heart) would be appreciated and should be marked as such before being given to either the church or to the funeral directors :

J. Perigoe & Son, 'Bardens', Bank Street, Cranbrook, Kent. TN17 3EFF

Refreshments will be provided after the Thanksgiving Service. All are welcome at both the crematorium and the Thanksgiving Service. There is no particular dress code requirements but the family have observed that Win did like purple!



Ros Mitchell

We were very sad to hear of the death of Ros (Beryl's daughter-in-law) also on the 10th February.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Beryl and the family, particularly Robbie and the children.



Church Office

Please note that **next week only** the church office will be open on Monday (5th March) instead of Thursday (8th March). The office will be open as usual Tuesday and Wednesday and office hours for all days remain unchanged i.e. 8:30am to 4:30pm

Advance warning: the church office will be closed for holiday the week after Easter (Tuesday 3rd April to Thursday 5th April)

Turning the Tide: Barnabus Fund

The Barnabus Fund works with the worldwide persecuted church but have recently launched a new initiative which seeks to reclaim religious freedoms in the UK. The charity has produced a booklet entitled "Turning the Tide" which explains the history of religious freedoms achieved in the UK over the centuries and identifies seven specific aspects to freedom of religion:

- Freedom to read the Bible in public (achieved 1537)
- Freedom to interpret the Bible without government interference (achieved 1559)
- Freedom of worship (achieved 1689)
- Freedom to choose, or change your faith or belief (achieved 1689)
- Freedom to preach and try to convince others of the truth of your beliefs (achieved 1812)
- Freedom to build churches and other places of worship (achieved 1812)
- Freedom from being required to affirm a particular worldview or set of beliefs in order to hold a public sector job or stand for election, work in professions such as teaching and law, or study at university (achieved by the repeal of various Test Acts between 1719 and 1888)

Most of these were achieved by the repeal of various restrictions on freedom of religion, rather than a positive law affirming freedom of religion. They are therefore vulnerable to being eroded. **The campaign includes a petition calling for a new law specifically guaranteeing all seven aspects of freedom of religion** which over the centuries have emerged in the UK (**please see Don to sign it** or click [here](#) for more information) Thank you

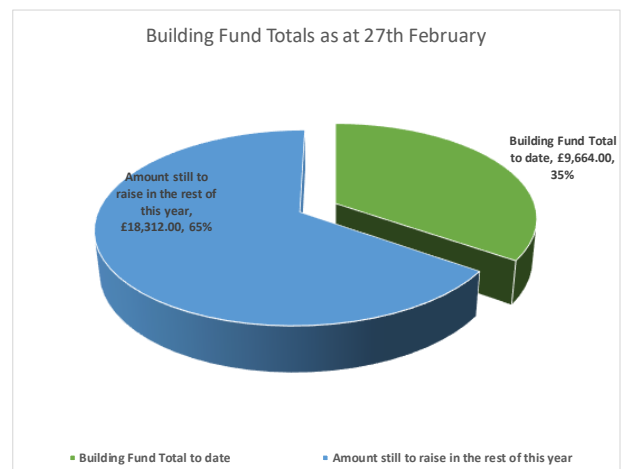
Building Fund Update

As at 27th February we have **£9664.71** in our building fund. Our target this year to repay our outstanding interest free loans is £28,000 which equates to £7,000 a quarter or £2,333 a month! This is in addition to our mortgage payments which are also paid from the building fund each month.

To enable us to stay on our target with our repayment schedule on the **21st April** we are hoping to organise a **sponsored walk** to help raise funds. In the meantime when shopping online please take a look at the following links to see if you can shop via them. We receive a small percentage of applicable sales if you make use of them. However the sales data is anonymised before the church receives the information so that we never know who has been purchasing through these sites.

- [Easyfundraising \(please click here\)](#)
- [Amazon links \(please click here\)](#)
- Or if you prefer use the links on the church website please click [here](#)

Alternatively, if you would like to take one of the blue money boxes in the foyer to collect your loose change for the building fund then please do so. So far this financial year we have already raised over £107 this way!



General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

As mentioned last month in Surface between now and the 25th May you will probably hear a great deal about GDPR in the media! Essentially these European wide regulations update the 1998 Data Protection Act to take account of the explosion in technology and the way data is used by organisations. Currently as per the regulations, we have started reviewing what data the church holds, its relevancy and the most appropriate legal basis for holding your data in the future. Due to the nature and complexity of GDPR the church will need written consent to be able to hold and use information held about you in future. This applies to everything from the Church Directory, emailing out Surface and Enews, to sending information about church meetings, prayer drum beats and Gift Aid. ***Without your express written consent we will not be able to keep you informed.*** The nature of GDPR means that the consent form has to be very carefully worded as failure to comply with the consent means that the church is potentially liable for huge fines.

Once the consent form has been finalised you will receive a copy of it to sign together with the information the church holds about you (e.g. name, address, email etc.). Please accept my apologies but until this process has been completed it is not possible to produce to a new church directory. Anyone who either does not wish to be in the church directory or does not give specific consent will have their entry removed. If you have started regularly attending SFC and wish to receive church communication and have your details included in the 2018 directory please contact the church administrator. Thank you

March Services

Sunday 4th March	10.30am	All Age Worship Led by: Mel & Toby Hughes "I am the Bread of Life"
	6.30pm	Evening Praise and Communion Service Speaker: Steve Parsons
Sunday 11th March	10.30am	Communion and Teaching Guest Speaker: Bruce Malcolm Colossians 1 v15-23
	6.30pm	Evening Praise Guest Speaker: Joseph Anderson
Sunday 18th March	10.30am	All Age Worship Led by: Sophie Hawkes "I am the Good Shepherd" -
	6.30pm	Evening Praise Natural Evangelism - Session 1
Sunday 25th March Palm Sunday <i>Start of British Summer Time</i>	10.30am	Communion and Teaching Guest Speaker: Rev. Dennis Nolan
	6.30pm	Evening Praise Natural Evangelism - Session 2
Friday 30th March Good Friday	10:30am	Good Friday Communion Led by Terence Hawgood

Leadership Team at Staplehurst Free Church:

Elders

Terence Hawgood

Roger Bashford

Stephen Parsons

Deacons

Paul Davey

Sophie Hawkes

Bob Howse

Maggie Martin

Staplehurst Free Church Office tel. no. - 01580 893993
Church Administrator Email: churchadmin@staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk
Treasurer Email: treasurer@staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
25	26	27	28	1	2	3
				10:00 - Toddlers Group Cancelled 14:00 – Singalong Cancelled 18:30 - Junior Badminton Cancelled 20:00 - Adult Badminton Cancelled	10:00 - Ladies Badminton Cancelled 11:30 - Service at Staplehurst Manor 19:00 - Women's World Day of Prayer at URC	10:30 - Cafe Cancelled
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10:30 - Family Service 18:30 - Evening Praise & Communion	10:00 - Men's Walking Group 20:00 - No Choir <i>Church Office Open today</i>		10:30 - Prayer fellowship 15:30 - Service at Sobell 15:30 - SKIDS	10:00 - Toddlers Group 18:30 - Junior Badminton 20:00 - Adult Badminton <i>Church Office closed today</i>	10:00 - Ladies Badminton	10:30 - Cafe
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10:30 - Worship & Communion 18:30 - Evening Praise	10:00 – Men's Walking Group 12:30 – Wins funeral at Vinters Park Crematorium 14:30 – Thanksgiving Service for Win at SFC 20:00 - No Choir		10:30 - Prayer fellowship @ 15:30 - Service at Sobell 15:30 - SKIDS 20:00 – Church Meeting	10:00 - Toddlers Group 18:30 - Junior Badminton 20:00 - Adult Badminton	10:00 - Ladies Badminton 11:00 - Service at Abbotsleigh	10:30 - Cafe
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
10:30 - Family Service 18:30 - Evening Praise & Communion	10:00 - Men's Walking Group 20:00 - Choir		10:30 - Prayer fellowship 15:30 - Service at Sobell 15:30 - SKIDS	10:00 - Toddlers Group 18:30 - Junior Badminton 20:00 - Adult Badminton	10:00 - Ladies Badminton	10:30 - Last ever Café!
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Palm Sunday & Start of British Summer Time 10:30 - Worship & Communion 18:30 - Evening Praise	10:00 - Men's Walking Group 20:00 - Choir	15:30 - Service at Iden Manor	10:30 - Prayer fellowship 15:30 - Service at Sobell 15:30 - SKIDS	10:00 - Toddlers Group 18:30 - Junior Badminton 20:00 - Adult Badminton	Good Friday 10:30 - Good Friday Communion Service	