

Unity News

Autumn / Winter 2014

Hastings and St Leonards Church Together

EBOLA

Surely none of us can have missed news of the Ebola outbreak which has so far killed over 5,000 people in Africa. For us this news is all the more real because many of those deaths have occurred in our very own twin town in Sierra Leone. Ebola does not transmit easily, but it has particularly spread in the capital, Freetown, which accounted for 168, or nearly one-third of Sierra Leone's 533 confirmed cases in the week to November 16th. So far five doctors and many nurses have died of the virus caught while caring for their patients.

It's not only the medical issues, there are also economic and social repercussions. The social fabric of these three countries is in danger. A Senior Director at the World Bank recently confirmed "Relief efforts must focus not only on those directly affected by the virus, but also on those in the poorest communities for whom market access, mobility and food security continue to get worse."

The Hastings Sierra Leone Friendship Link is raising money to support various partners in Hastings. You can make a donation via their website www.hastingshastings.org.uk

Unity Service date announced

The well attended Unity Service returns to Hastings on Sunday 25 January 2015 at 4pm. This year the service will be looking at Israel and the Palestinians - and asking who is really at fault. Our guest speaker will be Tony Higon of Paradox, a Christian ministry which seeks to further balanced understanding of and prayer about the Israeli-Palestinian situation. Tony worked for many years as Director of the Church's ministry among Jewish people in Jerusalem, alongside both Jewish and

Palestinian staff. If you would like to find out more about Tony's work for reconciliation go to www.prayerforpeace.org.uk.

The Unity Service will be held at the Hastings Centre, The Ridge, Hastings, TN34 2SA and, as well as the popular displays from local Christian organisations, this year's programme will include worship led by Hannah Latty from Ashburnham Place and a programme for kids led by the Christian Schools Workers.



Dementia Awareness course a success...

On September 13 local Christians met at St Barnabas Church for a workshop led by Acorn Christian Healing Foundation and entitled 'Staying in Touch – equipping those effected by Dementia'. Many of those who attended were already involved in the care of loved ones suffering from this condition. Two experienced tutors, Jacky Wright and Mary O'Brien, led us through a handbook provided to each participant. We started looking at how we listen to others – do we deflect them from what they want to tell us with ill timed questions, advice, judging, telling our story or spiritualising rather than listening with full attention and without interruption but asking a few key questions and then reflecting back what we have heard. This was tried out on each other and has obvious wide applicability whoever we listen to. We were also given a clear outline of the features affecting people with dementia and some simple ways of improving our communication with them including looking at photo albums and listening to them telling us about the photos, using simple words and phrases and staying focussed, even when long delays in response occur. The handbook included a useful list of contact details for supportive agencies. All who attended valued the course for their own family circumstances and were glad to have been present.

Watch out for details of further such workshops we hope to provide next year. We are considering such areas as domestic violence and supporting those with mental health issues. Let us know if there is another topic you would particularly value...



2015 will see the country take to the polls - make sure you know who you are voting for by attending the Church Together Hustings. Tuesday 28th April. More details coming soon.

LOAF Christmas Appeal 2014

LOAF Project is two thirds of the way to the £10,000 target to provide water filters to villages in East Africa where there are no sources of safe drinking water. Over one billion people worldwide have no access to clean water and waterborne illnesses kill 6,000 children each day. The £6,600 raised by LOAF so far could provide nearly 200 of these amazing filters, each of which can give clean water to 15-20 people for five years or around 30 of the larger community version costing around £200 each. These can be installed in churches and schools. LOAF Project would like to invite local churches and church groups to consider using Christmas events or carol singing collections to get the money up to £10,000 and save many lives. More details of the project and the pumps is on the LOAF website visit www.loafproject.com

We have just heard from Rwanda where similar filters are being tested... "We have made random, unannounced visits to the homes using the filters and sampled their water before and after filtering. One lady said her children have not had upset stomachs since she started filtering their water."



News from around our local congregations:

“My name is Richard Stein and I'm the new minister for **St. Mark's URC Church (Hastings)** and **Bexhill URC**. I am married to Jo and we have a daughter named Aria (2 years old). I am passionate about making people passionate for Jesus. We are on a journey to hear God's voice and discern the way forward here at St. Mark's. We believe God wants to see His churches overflowing and that His love and goodness should spill over into the surrounding community. Right now our vision is to speak and live out the gospel to those already accessing our services and our building and we pray that God will produce the fruitfulness that glorifies His name.” Richard was inducted in July.



“My name is Paul McMichael and I come from the not so sunny city of Glasgow but was chased from there about eight years ago. (I wasn't really chased I left on my own accord) I have been a Pastor for just over five years working firstly with the Elim Church in Stafford as their Youth Pastor & Evangelist and then for the last four years as the Youth Pastor in Lakeside Christian Centre in Southport. I feel really passionate about seeing the people of Hastings encouraged about the fact that God loves them and wants only the best for

them. I am really happy to be here in Hastings and I am looking forward to seeing what God has In store for me here and the **Elim Church** here too.”

Rev'd Paul McVeagh currently vicar of St Mary the Virgin, Westerham has been appointed Priest in Charge of the **Benefice of Ashburnham with Penhurst**. “Nikki and I are looking forward very much to joining St Peter's early next year. We have learned a great deal about St Peter's and we are impressed to see all the work you are doing in the Lord's service. We eagerly await sharing in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and walking with you in faith. We hope to meet some of you before my licensing which is on 31st January 2015. In the meantime may God continue to bless you all.”



and last but not least **Kings Church** celebrated their 40th Anniversary on Sat. 21st November.



Christian Schools Work Hastings is again hosting two major initiatives to reach school children with the significance of the life and teaching of Jesus. For Secondary pupils we have the GSUS Live trailer sited at Rye College April 20th - 24th, ARK William Parker Academy April 27th - May 1st, Hastings Academy May 4th -8th, Helenswood Academy May 11th - 15th and Bishop Bell School, Eastbourne, May 18th - 22nd. For primary pupils the Life Exhibition will be sited at Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Parkstone Road from April 15th – 22nd. To staff these two events there will be a need for a number of volunteers from local churches. If you would like to be involved please contact Roger Mitchell on 01424 422299.

Could your church be a collecting point for Surviving Christmas?
Email admin@survivingchristmas.co.uk

Dates for your Diary

December

- Fri 5th Faith in Politics Breakfast at Ashburnham Place, Battle. TN33 9NF 7.45am. Booking essential. email: bookings@ashburnham.org.uk Breakfast donations of £10 per person
- Sun 7th Taize Advent Service at St Thomas of Canterbury, Magdalen Road, Hastings TN37 6ET from 4pm
- Tues 9th Vintage Market at Sussex Coast College, Station Plaza. Hastings TN34 1BA from 12 noon to 4pm
- Weds 10th Carol Service at Sussex Coast College, Station Plaza. Hastings TN34 1BA from 5.30pm

January

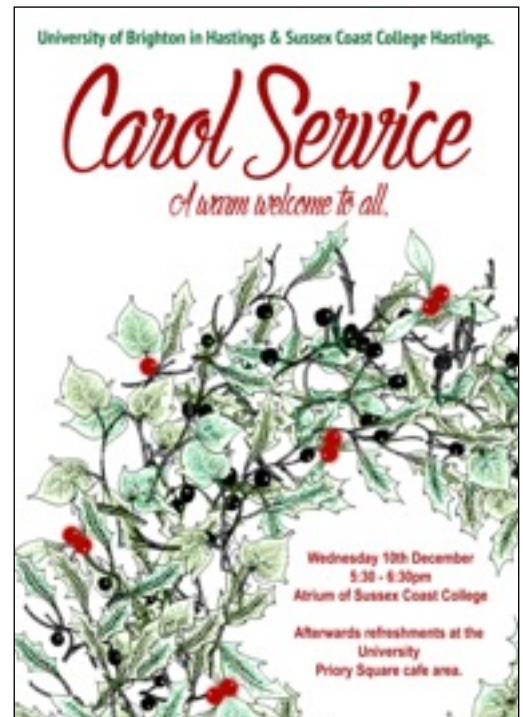
- Sat 24th Holocaust Memorial Day Service. St Mary in the Castle. Pelham Crescent. Hastings at 11am. All welcome. Guest speaker His Excellency, Mr Andris Tiekmanis the Latvian Ambassador speaking on war time Riga.
- Sun 25th Unity Service "Israel and the Palestinians - who is really at fault" at Hastings Centre, The Ridge. Hastings TN34 2SA at 4pm. Including displays from local ministries, free children's session and live worship
- Thurs 29th Faith in Healthcare, Ashburnham Place, Battle. TN33 9NF. Details to follow.

March

- Sat 28th Inter Church Quiz 2015 will be held at St John's Church Hall, Brittany Road, St Leonards from 7pm. If your church would like to enter a team please contact Mike Cooper by email: michael.cooper17@virgin.net

April

- Tues 28th Church Together Hastings at Hastings Centre, The Ridge, Hastings, TN34 2SA. More details to follow.





The Snowflake Night Shelter will provide warm overnight accommodation, companionship, evening meals and breakfasts to locally homeless persons between 27th of this month and at least 28th February. 2015. Last

winter 65 homeless persons (guests) were accommodated in the Shelter on at least one night. The average number of guests was 13 per night with a peak of 19. The signs are that there will be more persons requiring shelter over the coming winter. The Shelter is made possible by services of a corps of volunteers working in the halls provided gratuitously by seven Christian Communities. The Shelter provides the opportunity for local residents to live the Gospel as clearly stated in Matthew 25: "For I was hungry, and you gave me food, thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

More volunteers are needed to ensure that the Shelter can operate properly and if very cold weather is forecast, extended into March 2015. For more information on becoming a volunteer or the latest news please visit the website www.snowflake.nightshelter.org

The Myth of the Undeserving Poor

This new book, co-authored by local Christian Natalie Williams, suggests a Christian response to poverty in Britain today. When you think of poverty in Britain today, do you picture innocent children going without food or scroungers lounging on the sofa all day watching TV and cheating on benefits claims?

For Christians, what we think about the poor in our nation needs to be shaped by biblical values, but can so often be framed by the dominant narratives of the day, which affect our attitudes and actions. Have we fallen for the myth of the undeserving poor?

Available from Amazon and other leading book sellers

Faith in Education

Thursday 20th November saw the first Faith in Education meeting take place at Ashburnham Place. This is part of 'Faith in the Market Place' series of meetings aimed at Christians working in key environments and aiming to provide fellowship, support and inspiration.

The speaker on Thursday was Dr Ann Holt OBE, who is the recently appointed Director of Education for the Diocese of Chichester. Ann spoke of the key moment in her life when one of her students asked her how her Christian faith affected her teaching of history? That question changed her life and led her not only to change the way she taught history, but led to her meeting her husband (they have just celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary), and also put her on the path to her vision of Christianity in Education. Ann was awarded her OBE for services to education in 2004.

It is hoped that 'Faith in Education' will have three meetings a year devoted specifically to the needs, problems and aspirations of those working in education. The next meeting will be in Spring 2015.

