

# Unity News

Winter 2015

Hastings and St Leonards Church Together

## The Crisis in the Middle East



These aircraft, RAF Tornado GR4 and Typhoon, are now flying combat missions over Syria. Raids commenced within hours of the dramatic vote in the House of Commons extending RAF bombing to the heartlands of Daesh/IS.

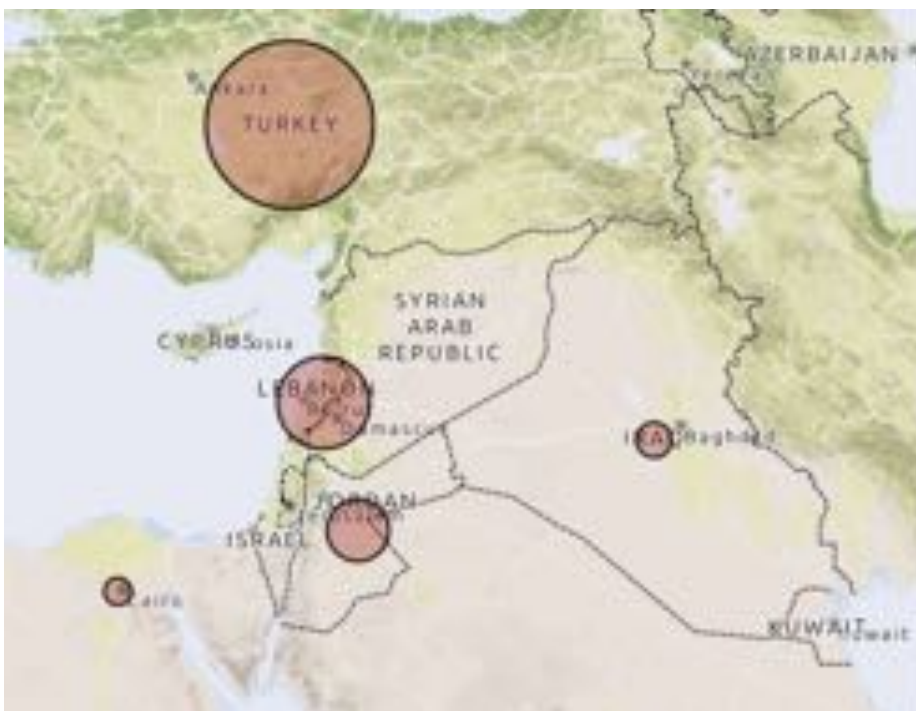
How should we, as Christians, react to what is happening in the world right now?

Some of us recently attended the Faith in Politics breakfast at Ashburnham Place addressed by Michael Ensor. Michael is a well known Christian from Bexhill who is currently Vice-Chair of East Sussex County Council, Chair of the East Sussex NHS Overview Scrutiny Committee, as well as serving as a Street Pastor and personally providing young people in Bexhill with a multi-use community centre.



Michael drew a wide perspective for us on the current crisis rooted in the Middle East, and has agreed for us to share some of his ideas with you.

### What is happening to people as a result of this conflict?



The United Nations produced this map in November which shows an estimate of the number and locations of refugees from the war in Syria and Iraq. There are another four million persons displaced but still within the borders of Syria, and another 400,000 scattered across Europe.

Turkey	2,181,293
Jordan	633,644
Lebanon	1,075,637
Egypt	127,681
Iraq	244,765

Michael in particular highlighted the plight of unaccompanied minors, children without adult family members with them. East Sussex has received around 20 such children to date. Kent has received around 700 unaccompanied minors and the local authorities are legally obliged to provide care for them. This is proving a major strain on existing services.

There is therefore an urgent need for more foster families to care for these children and Michael appealed to any of us, or for others known to us, to apply for the process of approval to become foster parents.

Syrian families, vetted in the refugee camps are already arriving in the UK with visas agreed beforehand and each borough and district has been asked to provide places for numbers of these. The major difficulty is housing, already in short supply in the South East. Local authorities have said that they will not release their small stocks of social housing for refugees as this will displace British nationals already on waiting lists. Therefore, the private sector must be the source of housing and Michael asked us “Do you know of anyone who has a private, commercial housing capacity that could be used for a Syrian asylum seeker?” Housing benefit for this group of pre-approved asylum seekers will be paid by central government.

### **What does God think of all this?**

Many Old Testament stories tell of battles. In 2 Chronicles 20;12 we hear King Jehoshaphat, when faced with an overwhelming enemy, pray “We do not know what to do, but we are looking to you for help.” His subsequent battle plan is outlined - “After consulting the people, the king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the Lord and praising him for his holy splendour. This is what they sang: “Give thanks to the Lord; his faithful love endures forever!” Their enemies fled in confusion.

At the time of the defeat of the French and British armies in France in 1940, thousands of troops were trapped around Dunkirk. His Majesty King George VI requested that Sunday, 26 May should be observed as a National Day of Prayer. In a stirring broadcast, he called the people of Britain and of the Empire to commit their cause to God. 1/3 million troops were rescued.

Let us follow these examples in prayers for God’s intervention in the hearts and minds of those consumed with fear and hatred.

Despite our revulsion at the actions of Daesh/IS we must always remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 5;44-45.

“I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike”.



# Unity Service 2016

- Worship led by Hannah Latty & Ashburnham band
- Display of Christian ministries in and around Hastings
- Refreshments
- Children's event by CSWH
- Arranged by



Church Together in Hastings & St Leonards

**Speaker: Joel Edwards**  
*The Art of Translation*

Every Christian generation has a special privilege: it is to plumb the depths of the Christian tradition and the timeless message of hope and present it with confidence and conviction to our neighbours.  
*It is the Art of Translation.*

**3.30pm on**  
**Sunday Jan 24th**  
**Hastings Centre**  
**The Ridge,**  
**TN34 2SA**  
Free parking



**Next Unity Service coming up!** Some of us heard Joel Edwards speak at a recent Faith in Politics breakfast at Ashburnham Place and we all agreed on an immediate invitation to the Unity Service 2016. Joel Edwards is the International Director for Micah Challenge, a global Christian response to extreme poverty. Joel was previously General Director of the Evangelical Alliance UK, a post he held for over 10 years. He was also formerly a Commissioner on the Equality and Human Rights Commission for the UK. A regular broadcaster with the BBC and other UK and international media channels, Joel is often asked to bring a Christian perspective to current issues.

We are grateful to Christian Schools workers Hastings for again providing a providing a programme for young folks who will therefore be most welcome. Bring the whole family!

Those of you who heard Hannah Latty and band lead our worship last year will be pleased to hear they're coming again! Christian Ministries in and around town will be displaying their work for us. Thanks again to King's church for letting us use the Hastings Centre again. It's the only place we fit now!



Fancy a little exercise?

**LOAF First Sunday walks** are starting again in the new Year. Here are the first two and more are ready. Watch out for further publicity

**February 7<sup>th</sup>** Alexandra Park and Old Roar Gill – meet 2pm at the Café in the Park

**March 6<sup>th</sup>** Fairlight Country Park – meet 2pm at the information office in main car park

**May 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday Bank Holiday** LOAF May Day Walk in aid of Wheels of Mercy to help disabled and disadvantaged children in Pakistan – choice of routes;

5 – 20 miles; – see Grapevine for details or go to [www.loafproject.co.uk](http://www.loafproject.co.uk)

The **LOAF 'Wheels of Mercy'** project to buy a minibus to transport children with physical and mental disability to a special centre in Pakistan is underway. At the launch event on Oct 23rd a great start was made with £1200 being raised. Subsequent donations have raised this to £2300 of the £10,000 target. To find out more check the LOAF website <http://www.loafproject.co.uk/current.html>





## Mandy

1 in 12 families in the UK are suffering in debt.

“Five out of seven days a week we didn’t eat”

See how CAP is lifting people out of debt poverty and transforming lives by watching Mandy’s story at

<https://capuk.org/get-involved/your-church/cap-sunday>

Mandy says, “I am so glad that I discussed things with Christians Against Poverty. There was a huge weight lifted off my shoulders.”



## TRANSFORM SOMEONE’S LIFE FOR JUST £90.

With just £90 you might

- prevent a suicide
- prevent homelessness
- help a family to eat properly
- help to keep families together
- free a family from the crippling effects of debt
- introduce someone to the transforming love of Jesus Christ

These are just some results from the work of Christians Against Poverty Debt Help Service, delivered free to clients in their homes.

**Every one of our client meetings costs our local CAP Centre £90** and we conduct over 230 meetings each year.

We remain heavily in demand with our Debt Coaches booked 3 months ahead.

We are recommended to clients by the Job Centre, Housing Associations, Social Services family & children’s workers, NHS professionals, Hastings Council and local Churches – all of whom have seen desperate situations turned round through the work of CAP.

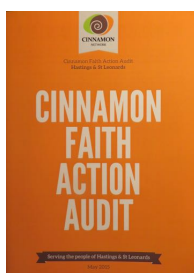
But we need more funds to meet the ongoing demand for our help.

**Without further funds we will have to reduce the number of meetings and turn clients away in 2016.**

**Would you or your Church consider a donation to support one or more client meetings?**

If you are able to support this vital work, please contact Nick Warren, Hastings & St Leonards CAP Centre Manager on 07942 880858 or email [nickwarren@capuk.org](mailto:nickwarren@capuk.org).

Or send a cheque payable to “Hastings & St Leonards CAP Centre” to Nick Warren at Chapel Park Community Centre, St Leonards Baptist Church, Chapel Park Road, St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex TN37 6HR.



The town wide audit of faith based social action, carried out under the umbrella of Cinnamon Network was reported to our Mayor, Councillors and Police among others in September. Copies of the report for Hastings and St Leonards will be circulated with the print versions of Unity News so look out in your church for these if you haven’t already seen one. There’ll be some at the Unity Service too.

Hastings and St Leonards Church Together

[www.hastingschurches.org.uk](http://www.hastingschurches.org.uk)

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