

SHARING THE VISION
throughout the Wessex Synod
Issue 49 : February 2012

PASTORAL NEWS

We have two new ministers moving into the Synod later this year.

Harry Lanham will be coming to the Havant, Emsworth and Lovedean pastorate in May, from Charlton and Eltham in South London. His induction date has yet to be fixed, but should be in the next e-letter.

Mike Shrubsole, presently serving in Coggeshall and Great Notley, Essex, has been called to serve at Ringwood and Fordingbridge. He will be moving in early autumn, after the present Methodist Minister at Ringwood, David Hookins moves. The likely induction date is 29th September - but this will be confirmed later.

Just to clarify the ministry situation in the South West Hampshire Group, Tim Searle serves as Minister to the whole SW Hants Group, and there is also a ministerial vacancy for the whole group. Apologies if previous information suggested that the vacancy was specifically at Avenue St Andrews.

FROM THE MODERATOR

Full details of the February Area Gatherings will be found in this newsletter. Please encourage people from your church to come along - it doesn't just have to be ministers and elders. As well as spending time encouraging each other with stories of what is going on in our churches, we will be spending time looking at the question of what the priorities of the Synod should be. If you want a say in how the Synod uses its resources - people and finance - then this is your opportunity.

Last year, some churches wished to take part in "Back to Church Sunday", but had problems registering. I'm pleased to be able to tell you that this year the URC is signing up as a whole, rather than as individual Synods. If you want to know more, then visit their website - www.backtochurch.co.uk

WHAT'S THE SYNOD FOR?

Wessex Synod Area Gatherings February 2012

Places:

North East - Monday 13th February - Bracknell

North West - Wednesday 29th February - Trinity, Abingdon

South East - Wednesday 22nd February - Bitterne

South West - Thursday 2nd February - Parkstone

Time: 7.00pm to 9.15pm (refreshments available from 6.30pm)

Purpose:

A chance for people from around the Synod to play a part in shaping the way in which Wessex Synod supports local churches and plans for future projects in the area.

There will also be opportunities to share stories of what is happening in their churches and communities.

All are welcome and it would be good if all churches were represented at one of these meetings.

In order that we have an idea of numbers for refreshments could you please let Deborah know how many will be attending from your church at least 2 days before your area's meeting.

Telephone her on 023 8067 8570 or email her at office@urcwessex.org.uk

We look forward to seeing you there.

SYNOD CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2012

A couple of dates have changed for Committee Meetings in 2012. An updated version of the calendar is now available on the website.

These dates are: F&P should have been June 28th NOT 26th. SE ASPC have changed March to 13th and November to 12th. SW ASPC is now having a meeting in July on 25th.

There is an Occupational Requirement that the post holder is a Christian.

SYNOD DIRECTORY

The Synod Executive has decided that **Church Treasurers will not receive a Synod Directory automatically**, as many treasurers said that they had no need of one. However if any Treasurer would like one would they please contact the Synod Office as soon as possible so that the appropriate number of copies is ordered. The new Directories will be available in time for the March Synod.

DIRECTORY AMENDMENTS

There are no amendments this month due to the next Directory currently being updated and which will be available at March Synod.

LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

Woking

Icy Welcome Planned In Woking!

After a redevelopment project costing around £2m in order to provide a warm welcome at Woking URC, this sounds just the opposite! But read on. Borrowing an idea from Goring URC in the Southern Synod, the Woking Church talked to a local charity, *Children with Special Needs Foundation*, which obtained generous sponsorship for an ice skating rink to be installed in the Sanctuary for nearly a week in February. Apart from one day when the use of the rink (and it is synthetic ice) will be for the exclusive use of the children known to the charity, there will be three other days when it will be open to the whole community. For a small charge, skaters of all ages and abilities, will be able to book a slot and all profits will go to the children's charity and Woking Hospice. Alongside the rink there will be other activities, including FairTrade chocolate tasting and lunches and refreshments. This outreach event coincides with the first anniversary of the rededication of the Church (formed in 2005 by uniting York Road and St Andrew's Churches) and the Diamond Jubilee (yes, another one) of the opening of the original Church building, believed to be the first consecration of a Church in the reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

Anyone who would like to come along to see the Church premises during this special week from **Tuesday 14th to Friday 17th February**, or to book a skating slot is invited to telephone the dedicated booking line - 07516 246434. Full details on the Church's website - www.wokingurc.org.uk

Please be assured that it will not be *Synod on Ice* when the meeting takes place in Woking on Saturday 10th March. Everything will be back to 'normal' - shame!

Free Cradle Roll on Offer

An unused and brand new *First Steps* Cradle Roll is available to the first caller or email writer to the Woking Church Secretary, Keith Bradley - 01483 727167 or secretary@wokingurc.org.uk. To save postage it may be collected at the Synod meeting in Woking on 10th March.

Aston Tirrold

You are invited to the Centre for Reflection at Aston Tirrold or as a member and friend of the U.R.C. here, to **A Quiet Afternoon** to think together about the future for the Centre and to meet its new Director, the Rev Ulrike Bell who is also the Minister of the Church on **Sunday 5th February, 1.00-3.30pm** in the Centre including a simple lunch RSVP to the Centre for Reflection Office, Aston Tirrold United Reformed Church Spring Lane, Aston Tirrold, Didcot, Oxon OX11 9EJ 01235 850423 or coordinator@reflect.freeuk.com

WORLD CHURCH GROUP:

Prayers: Two areas of the world really need our prayers at the moment - Syria and Northern Nigeria. Please pray for people caught up in the violence, a lessening of tension and a real striving for peaceful solutions.

Le Weekend:

All are welcome to Le Weekend 4,5,6 May 2012 St Quentin, France

The parishes of Aisne and St Quentin in the north of France are the location for this year's Le Weekend. The theme is Journey. As usual we will explore the theme through Bible study, prayer, games, and good food. There will be opportunities to visit the area which is steeped in history and

be welcomed by good French hospitality and food.

It is a bank holiday in England and the end of the school holiday in France. This is a chance to meet old and new friends, without needing to speak a foreign language as all will be translated. It's a chance for kids to practise their French just before exam time, and for keen political followers to witness French Election Fever!!

To find out more please contact Helen Everard at Helen@alexeverard.co.uk or on 01252 516622

YORK LENT COURSE

HANDING ON THE TORCH - Sacred words for a secular world Archbishop Sentamu (97th Archbishop of York), **Clifford Longley JP** (Roman Catholic writer and broadcaster) and **Rachel Lampard** (Methodist Adviser on political and social issues) are among the distinguished contributors to the new Lent course CD from **York Courses**. **Dr David Hope** introduces the course and **Bishop Graham Cray** provides the thoughtful closing reflections on the CD. **Canon John Young** has written the course booklet for **Handing on the Torch - Sacred words for a secular world**. Each of the 5 sessions offers a good selection of stimulating questions aimed at engaging every group member. **Course synopsis:** *Christianity is the largest movement our world has ever seen. It continues to grow at an immense pace - especially in Asia (including China), Africa and Latin America. At the same time, Christianity in the West struggles to grow and - perhaps - even to survive. In this course we consider some of the reasons for this and what it might mean for individual Christians, for churches and for Western culture, in a world where alternative beliefs are increasingly on offer.* **Prices: CD Taster Pack** (comprising 1 CD, 1 booklet, 1 transcript) @ £17.50 each (a saving of £2.23 over buying these 3 items separately) **Booklet** @ £3.75 or £3.25 each for 5 or more **CD** @ £10.99 or £8.99 each for 2 or more **Audiotape** @ £8.99 or £6.99 each for 5 or more **Transcript** @ £4.99 or £2.99 each for 2 or more **Free packing and 2nd class postage within UK.** York Courses, PO Box 343, York YO19 5YB, UK Tel: 01904 466516 www.yorkcourses.co.uk

FROM THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

A message from the General Secretary Revd Roberta Rominger:

"We have quite a year ahead of us. The Queen celebrates her diamond jubilee in June and the 2012 Games come to the UK in July. National events like these provide opportunities for creativity in church mission. What can we do that will catch the public imagination, deepen our community engagement and enable us to share what we believe? "Alongside these national events we have celebrations of our own to look forward to. 2012 begins with a service in Westminster Abbey to express reconciliation between the United Reformed Church and the Church of England. It's the fruit of bilateral conversations that resulted in resolutions at URC Mission Council and the Anglican General Synod in 2011. This service, on 7 February, will mark the 350th anniversary of the 1662 Great Ejection by looking to a future of shared work and witness. "And, when General Assembly meets in Scarborough this July, we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the URC as well as the 350th anniversary of some of our churches. The unofficial theme for this commemoration is 'Courage, conscience and conviction' and these three qualities are indeed what we offer in our determination to live faithfully in these challenging times. Our valiant Church makes contributions out of all proportion to its size. God bless you for all the lives you will touch in the year ahead and the faith that will shine from you."

Spending cuts now necessary

The United Reformed Church, like many other organisations, is facing a financial challenge - and needs to act now to ensure a balanced budget for 2013. At its November meeting, Mission Council instructed all General Assembly committees and the General Secretariat, to present theoretical "scenarios" for how they would deploy their committee budgets in the event of 25 per cent and 50 per cent cuts to their expenditure. These scenarios are to be presented to the treasurer by 9 March, in advance of the next Mission Council meeting on 21-23 March. The expectation is that the cuts finally agreed will focus on particular areas of church activity and will amount to between 15 and 20 per cent of total committee and secretariat spending. The Revd Roberta Rominger, general secretary, comments: "The task ahead will be challenging as the United Reformed Church thinks afresh about its priorities and discerns 'What kind of Church are we meant to be in 2012?'" Mrs Rominger concludes: "I ask for your prayers for all of us, particularly the staff at Church House

who are facing a period of uncertainty as the Church decides its priorities. Pray too, that the process may be Spirit-led, based on a commitment to be the church God is calling us to be. There will be times when it is tempting to lapse into competitive struggles to protect our own pieces of the jigsaw – but it is God's jigsaw and it needs to be Jesus-shaped. I believe that if we undertake this process faithfully, the end result will be a mission-centred church, newly focussed on its identity and vocation, re-energised for what lies ahead.”

Can you help?

David Tatem, the URC's secretary for ecumenical relations, is engaged in research on the subject of changes in the image of God within the experience of people (now) in the URC who would describe themselves as having moved out of a fundamentalist or strongly conservative background. He is looking for people who would be prepared to be interviewed about their experience to contact him on 07830 113794 or at: davetatem@googlemail.com The research is being carried out under the auspices of the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges and potential interviewees may be assured that normal rules on confidentiality will be followed.

Have your say...

In late February the URC's Faith and Order Reference Group will be engaging in a discussion on the future of the Church and is keen to consider contributions from a broad spectrum of thinking. Contributors should seek to answer one or more of the following questions: What do we see as the future of the Church (URC and other) and why are we where we are? Where are we going – and where could we go? Where is God calling us? To have your say please send in your positive contributions of no more than 750 words to david.tatem@urc.org.uk All submissions need to be received by 15 February 2012.

VACANCIES

Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre, East Sussex a place of Christ's healing is seeking a Senior Chaplain and a Deputy Chaplain. Both posts are resident and full time.....

The Trustees seek to appoint someone who is enthusiastically committed to God's Healing, to be part of an experienced Team that seeks to continue His healing, preaching and teaching ministry in the centre.

Applicants may obtain a Job Description. Please apply with CV and Introductory Letter, including the names of three referees, by 1st March. Short listed candidates will be invited for a 3 day visit in March, and formal interviews will take place in April.

Contact: Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre, The Old Rectory, Crowhurst, Battle East Sussex Tel: 01424 830204 Email: crowhurstrectory@btconnect.com

Children's Worker

This full-time post offers a salary in the range £20,000 - £26,000 pa according to experience.

The Central Farnham Church Partnership are looking for an experienced, motivated and dynamic Christian to lead in the strategic development of children's work for the age range 5-11 and to build up, encourage and support existing volunteer leadership across our partner churches whilst also working with the local Christian Trust in their work in schools.

The Person

- Will have a proven track record in creating and developing children's ministries
- Will be passionately committed to enabling children to develop spiritually and nurturing them in their faith
- Has a flexible approach to work and life which will facilitate positive relationships between the four partners involved

Details and application pack available from:

John or Heather at FCCT 01252 714414 or email CFCP@fcct.org.uk

Closing date for applications: 24th February 2012 Interviews w/c 5th March 2012

PRAYER CALENDAR APRIL 2012

Week Beginning:

April 4	United Church, Winchester; Ferndown; Synod Meeting at Woking;
April 11	Christchurch and Pheasants Hill Henley on Thames; Wareham; United Church of Zambia, Lusaka Presbytery;
April 18	Guernsey; Woking; Skinner Street, Poole;
April 25	Parkstone; Salisbury

SUBSCRIBE TO THE WESSEX SYNOD E-NEWSLETTER

Don't forget that others in your church are welcome to sign-up to receive future editions of this e-Newsletter direct to their inbox (this may be particularly relevant for Elders and Magazine/Newsletter editors and others in leadership within your congregation). Tell them that they simply need to send an e-mail to the Synod Office, and assure them that they'll not be bombarded with other unsolicited e-mails.

PLEASE SEND ITEMS FOR THE MARCH 2012 Edition to CAROL ROGERS : carannrog@aol.com by February 22nd 2012.