



Hi Everyone

Here is an amusing story that I found uplifting and encouraging.

Once a man was walking along a beach. The sun was shining and it was a beautiful day. Off in the distance he could see a person going back and forth between the surf 's edge and the beach. Back and forth this person went. As the man approached, he could see that there were hundreds of starfish stranded on the sand as a result of the natural action of the tide.

The man was struck by the apparent futility of the task. There were far too many starfish. Many of them were sure to perish. As he approached, the person continued the task of picking up starfish one by one and throwing them into the surf.

As he came up to the person he said, 'You must be crazy. There are thousands of miles of beach covered with starfish. You can't possibly make a difference.'

The person looked at the man. He stooped down and picked up one more starfish and threw it back into the ocean. He turned back to the man and said, 'It sure made a difference to that one!'

In Galatians 6: 9-10 Paul says, 'Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up, Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.'

So, let's never give up doing all the good we can and making a difference. Best of all, in Matthew 25: 40, Jesus says, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did unto me.'  
Wow! Who wouldn't want to hear that from our Lord and Saviour!  
Lots of love

Kate Henry

## Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association



On Sunday 15th March, the speaker in our morning service will be Jamie Campbell from SASRA (The Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association). Jamie will be sharing the Word of God and speaking on the work of SASRA. Please make every effort to join us as we learn more about this important ministry to the armed forces.

## Churches Together Good Friday Witness

Churches Together will be holding their usual Act of Witness outside the library on Good Friday between 9.00a.m. and 12.00noon. Please start to consider now whether you can give up 30 minutes, or more, of your time to support this event. We approach people to offer Hot Cross Buns, but other than that there is no need to talk about why we are there, unless people ask of course!

Nearer the time the opportunity to sign-up will appear on the church noticeboard!  
Thank you.

Peter



## Advanced Notices for April

In addition to celebrating Easter next month, we have the following events to look forward to:

**Ramble & Picnic on Easter Monday 13th April at 2pm.** Organised by Nayland at the URC this Ramble is open to all the Staplehurst churches and will be about 4 miles long. The ramble will start and end at Nayland's house near Kilndown. Parking will be available. Children and dogs welcome but please ensure you have a dog's lead to hand in the event of coming across sheep and cattle. Please do bring a picnic to eat after the ramble. For more information or to advise him if you intend to come along please speak to either Nayland or Linda D.

On Sunday **19th April**, our morning service will be led by Ryan Ahern and will be followed by a **sharing lunch**, when we are hoping as many people as possible will be able to join us - please make a note of this date in your diary now.



## **Welcomers Rota - March**

Sunday 1st - Amanda and Clive  
Sunday 8th - Linda and David  
Sunday 15th - Brenda and Graham  
Sunday 22nd - Becky and Gordon  
Sunday 29th - Jo and Peter

Copy deadline for March Surface by Thursday 19th March to Maggie please

### Making a Difference!

Following on from Kate H's front letter about making a difference to those whose lives we touch, **thank you to everyone who contributed** to our two recent appeals. As a result of your generosity we have been able to make the following gifts:

- **Tear Fund £300.50**
- **£351.53** to the appeal by Peter Goodchild, to purchase a **house and land for a church in Maputo, Mozambique** for Domingos an evangelist and teacher. If you would like to learn more Peter's letter is the one on the prayer letters noticeboard in the church corridor or you can click on the link [here](#)

Kate M has also asked for prayers as she embarks on her latest venture to raise funds in memory of Nigel. Kate wants to make a difference to other pancreatic cancer sufferers through funding research into treatment and a cure for, in her words, "this vile disease". So whilst attending a family event she and her son-in-law Alvin, (Laura's husband) will be making a skydive! Kate has asked if people would pray specifically for her and Alvin and said, "I don't want anyone or the church to feel the need to sponsor me as so many have been so generous in the past, so perhaps [everyone could just] pray for a safe trip!" However if you would like to respond to Kate's courage or just see how much she has raised, (which is an amazing amount!), Kate's Just Giving page can be found by clicking [here](#).

*Maggie*

Many of you will remember J. John from speaking at the Just One event in Gillingham in 2018. This is an article he recently wrote about the role of Lent in our lives.

#### Why Keep Lent?

Lent, the forty days before Easter (not counting Sundays), is a somewhat curious period in the Church's calendar. Most things in the Church's year are festivals and we happily talk about celebrating them. Lent is very different: it is a minor-key period which is never 'celebrated' but only 'kept'. Some churches and Christians treat Lent very seriously, while others ignore it entirely.

Even among those who keep Lent, there is no agreement on how it should be kept. Many Christians try to give up something: for instance, chocolate, social media or television. It's even become a period for us to try to break bad habits, almost as if Lent gives us another opportunity to retake those New Year's resolutions!

***Now what exactly is Lent about? Lent is 'preparation'. Lent is about three preparations.***

Lent is a preparation for Easter. Easter, with its message of Christ destroying sin and death through his death and resurrection, is the most exciting moment in the Church's year. Yet we can undercut this note of victory by being so occupied that, amid the frantic busyness of our lives, we carelessly stumble upon Easter. Lent provides us with forty days' build-up to Good Friday and Easter Sunday that forces us to prayerfully ponder the death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As the best way to appreciate a sunrise is to be there in the darkness before dawn, so the only way to appreciate Easter is to have come to it through Lent. We as Christians are, of course, an Easter people living in a Good Friday world.

Secondly, Lent is a preparation for Existence. A fatal flaw in our culture today is that people do not know how to say 'no' to bad things. It is now almost a virtue to give in to every desire that comes upon us. Yet a great element in Christian morality is to be able to say no to wrong desires. Paul, in Titus chapter 2 verses 11 and 12, says this: 'For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives.' Lent gives us the opportunity to practice resisting harmful and hurtful desires that will continue for life. Trivial as it may appear, a battle won over chocolate, coffee or cake at Lent may help us win a battle over lust, lying or laziness shortly afterwards.

Finally, Lent is a preparation for Eternity. If you take Lent seriously, then these forty days can seem to be a long and often wearying season in which we never get our own way. Here, for a time, pleasures are put to one side and joys are postponed. But Lent doesn't last. The darkness is broken by the joyful light of the glorious triumph of Easter Day. Here there is a splendid parallel with our lives. For many of us, much of our life seems to take place in what we might call 'Lent mode': things do not go as we hope, we do not get what we want and our joys are absent or at best short-lived. Yet, for the Christian, there is that wonderful and certain hope that however deep and hard the darkness is in our lives, it will ultimately be lifted and replaced by an indestructible joy.

For those who love Christ, life's long Lent will end, one day, in an eternal Easter in which death and sin are destroyed for ever.

Whether or not you keep Lent, starting on Wednesday 26th February – and in what way you keep it – is your choice. But to keep Lent, thoughtfully and prayerfully, is to come into a rich and lasting inheritance. Be blessed this Lent and bless others.

## What's on in March? Dates for your Diary

### Regular Weekly Activities

<b>Sunday</b>		9:30am	Prayer in the Upper Room
		10:30am	Morning Service
	<i>3rd Sunday of the month</i>	3:30pm	Service at Iden Manor
		6:00pm	Prayer in the Prayer Room
		6:30pm	Evening Service
<b>Monday</b>		10:00am	Men's walking group
		8:00pm	Choir
<b>Tuesday</b>			
	<i>2nd Tuesday in the month</i>	10:00am	Friends Together Coffee Morning
		7:30pm	Housegroups at various locations around the village
<b>Wednesday</b>			
		10:30am	Prayer Fellowship in the Café Room
		3:30pm	Weekly Service at Sobell Lodge
	<i>Term Time Only</i>	3.30pm	Care Free Families
	<i>3rd Wednesday in the month</i>	7:30pm	Filling Station at Kilndown Village Hall
		7:30 & 8:00pm	Homegroups at various locations around the village
<b>Thursday</b>			
	<i>Term Time Only</i>	10:00am	Free Bees
	<i>1st Thursday in the month</i>	2:00pm	Singalong
	<i>Term Time Only</i>	6:30pm	Junior Badminton
		8:00pm	Adult Mixed Badminton
<b>Friday</b>			
		10:00am	Ladies Badminton
	<i>1st Friday of the month</i>	11:30am	Service at Staplehurst Manor
	<i>3rd Friday of the month</i>	11:00am	Service at Abbotsleigh
<b>Saturday</b>			
		8.00am	Prayer in the Upper Room
		9:15am	Leadership team meeting

### Extra Activities this month (& Next)

- 6th March - World Day of Prayer - 8pm at the United Reformed Church
- 15th March - Hymn Night 6:30pm at SFC
- 21st March - Easter Coffee Morning - 10am - 12.30pm at the United Reformed Church
- **29th March - Clocks go forward 1 hour** & Churches Together Evening Service at the URC
- 10th April - Good Friday Witness (9am - 12) & Service at the URC (10:30am)
- **12th April - Easter Celebration**
- 13th April - Easter Monday ramble organised by the Churches Together
- 19th April - Ryan Ahern preaching followed by a sharing lunch



## World Day of Prayer

There will be a  
World Day of Prayer service at  
8.00pm on Friday 6th March  
at The United Reformed Church  
Staplehurst  
Open to All!



## FAVOURITE HYMN NIGHT Sunday 15th March at 6.30 pm

Anyone who missed the opportunity to choose your favourite hymn or song has a second chance to have it included in the programme.

Sharing the reason for your choice would be really great.

Please can you let Judith have your choice by Wednesday 11th March.



If you are unable to choose anything, just come along and sing, giving praise and worship to God.

Many thanks.  
Judith

## **EASTER COFFEE MORNING**

Where? **The United Reformed Church**

When? **21st March**

Time? **10.00 - 12.30pm**

Plants, Cakes, Crafts, Produce  
As well as refreshments!

Raising funds to support Friends of Five  
Acre Wood School to purchase a Mobile  
Sensory Unit.

## **Want to try something new?**

*See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; do you not perceive  
it?*

*I am making a way in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland.*

*Isaiah 43 v19*

Have you always wanted to have the opportunity to serve the Lord in a new way? or perhaps wanted to try your hand at being involved in services but don't know where to start?

If you have answered yes to any of the above why not speak to **Roy** about being involved in organising and delivering our newly formatted All Age services?

PS You won't be expected to do a whole service by yourself (unless you want to!) so why not surprise yourself give it a try?

**Staplehurst Free Church Interim Leadership Team**

Terence Hawgood  
Bob and Mary Howse  
Clive Jones  
Kate Henry

**Treasurer: Roger Bashford**

**Staplehurst Free Church Administrator - Maggie Martin**

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**[www.staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk)**

**Services in March**

Sunday 1st	10.30am	Recharge on Sunday <i>Theme: The Wedding House - John 2 - Obedience</i> <i>Led by Ian MacDonald</i>
	6.30pm	Worship, Word and Holy Communion <i>Theme: Philippians</i> <i>Speaker: Clive Jones</i>
Sunday 8th	10.30am	Worship, Word and Holy Communion <i>Speaker: Clive Jones</i>
	6.30pm	Worship and Word <i>Speaker: Paul Davey</i>
Sunday 15th	10.30am	Worship and Word <i>Speaker: Jamie Campbell from SASRA will be sharing God's word and speaking about the work of SASRA</i>
	6.30pm	Hymn Night <i>Favourite Hymns</i> <i>Led by Judith Hawgood</i>
Sunday 22nd	10.30am	Worship and Word and All-Age Holy Communion <i>Speaker: Martin Chapman</i>
	6.30pm	Worship and a time of Sharing together <i>Please come prepared to share what the Lord is doing in your life at the moment.</i>
Sunday 29th <i>British Summer Time begins: Clocks go forward 1 hour!</i>	10.30am	Worship and Word and Holy Communion <i>Speaker: Chris Tolley</i>
	6.30pm	Churches Together in Staplehurst At the United Reformed Church (No service at the SFC)

Enabling everyone to know Jesus  
and grow in a personal relationship with Him

**STAPLEHURST  
FREE CHURCH**