

# Forward Together

Building a strong, healthy, vibrant church, and reaching out to the community



September 2013 Issue 3



**A**s I look forward to another year with real expectation, I look back and begin to see

**how far we have travelled as a church.**

The vision statement is as true now as it ever was:

*Building a strong, healthy, vibrant church, and reaching out to the community.*

Speaking for the church leadership, I can confirm that we are fasting and praying, working hard to build the church. The first part of the vision is to disciple and build the foundations of CCC.

The teaching on a Sunday morning is going to be sharper. The Community Groups are to be run as individual courses, and I hope you sign up and complete each course. There are plans for Bible based evening courses, so that each person has the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

All of these initiatives are to maintain our commitment to 'Building a strong, healthy, vibrant church'.

The second statement in our vision is 'reaching out to the community'. This will be mainly focused on 'Lifeline' at the Adult Community College. Of course we are also looking for other opportunities to connect with our local community.

We have seen many exciting connections made with people at the college, but we do need help. Can you offer two hours a month to help? It really is important work, especially for those that we meet. There are so many people out there that just don't know where to turn. We don't counsel or offer advice, but we do listen and pray. We also can offer practical help as we are agents for the Chelmsford Food Bank and we have Co-op vouchers to give out if necessary.

As you know we lead a core leadership team consisting of Steve and Kathe, Chris and Debra. We meet most weeks to pray and plan, and every now and again we have a half day of prayer and fasting. At this point in time we are

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working on a 'Balanced Ministry Model'. More information will be given out over the coming weeks, but basically it looks at four areas of church, the Sunday service, Discipleship, Outreach, and Enablers that help it all fit together. Each section is divided into aims which are

then divided so that we can measure progress. This will all go on behind the scenes, but will result in a healthy and vibrant church.

*Peter Balls*

## Community Groups



**C**ommunity Groups will continue to play a central role in the life of the church. They

**are where community really happens. Our desire is to see as many people attending a group as possible, benefiting from the teaching, discipleship and fellowship.**

As a leadership we have been developing values throughout the church. This involves expectations on the leadership, those with positions of responsibility and, in Community Groups on those attending.

These standards are hardly revolutionary and are common sense. As a group member you should:

- be willing to take an active part in group life
- seek to apply the teaching material to assist your growth as a Christian
- attend regularly for the period of

the course, letting your facilitator know when this isn't possible

- respecting the views of others – even when you think they are wrong. This means no quick answers, snap judgements, simple fixes – and definitely no 'bible bashing'!
- keep confidential what is shared within the Group
- avoid gossip within the group
- resolve differences by following the principles of Matthew 18
- be willing to invite and welcome new members
- make an effort to know other group members and prayerfully supporting them
- allowing other Group members to speak into your life and help you live a healthy, balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God
- be willing, as appropriate, to not behave in any way that might cause another group member to stumble (in other words, being willing to limit our freedom for the sake of the Group).

## Mission

The church will continue to support Basil and Kathy in Mumbai (and Jeevan Asher) and also a pastor in the Philippines. One-off gifts, such as our support for the work in Tanzania, are also likely to continue. Kathe and I hope, health permitting, to go overseas with Peter Butt's School of Ministry, teaching leaders overseas. I will also be exploring the possibility of visiting the persecuted Church with Open Doors. We shall also continue to be in touch with the Well of Living Water church in Izmail, Ukraine.

Our visit to Kosova last year is having an ongoing benefit for Smile Internationals work with widows and children. It has led to sponsoring children's education and school twinning. In addition Chairman is now a Christmas shoebox co-ordinator and Kathe a school rep for Smile.

Love.

*Steve and Kathe Hook*

## The praying church



**A**re we a praying church? We would probably all answer that differently, but I might answer it by asking another question: "are you a praying member of the church?"

Over the past year, we've seen a changing emphasis on prayer in the life of the church. We've regularly 'prayer walked' in the locality where the church meets. We've relaunched the monthly prayer meeting and branded it 'POWERHOUSE' and seen the number of pray-ers coming along double, and better than that, the Holy Spirit has made them some powerful times. We've introduced 'Prayer Focus' to encourage us to pray each at for the same things.

But providing opportunity to pray is only part of it. It needs each of us to spend time in prayer, within our own relationship

with our Father God and together as church.

As we go into the next season at CCC, we'll be exploring personal prayer at Community Groups. Some find prayer hard, so here's an opportunity, in a safe environment to look at how we can improve our relationship with The Lord as we pray. I encourage you all to join a group this time around, especially if you haven't been in one of late.

Also, did you know that there are a few that gather together before worship on Sunday mornings to pray for the church, the worship and preaching? Why not be one of them?

Jesus prayed, and we should be trying to be like Him, so let's pray our way through this coming year, start by setting five minutes a day to chat with our Father - he's happy to hear what's on your mind.

*Jason*

## Worship in the Church



**I**t doesn't seem that long since I was writing last year's forward together. But what a difference a year makes...

Firstly it has been a real blessing to gain a PA operator. Chris has done such a great job in joining our team and serving in this way. We want to thank him for picking this up – it has made such a difference to the worship team. He and Cliff are our early starters every Sunday, setting up the church consistently and faithfully. This is such a blessing to all of us – and it's only right to say thank-you here. So thank-you!

Secondly, this year has seen me take on a part time role in my "other" employment, to release two days working for the church. This isn't wholly devoted to worship (I have other roles in the church as well) but it certainly has meant that the leadership of the worship team has become much more resourced. It's a great relief as well – to be able to concentrate more fully on the church – as my other job had previously been more than a full time commitment.

Further, we now have two worship academy graduates in the worship team – with Simon and Jason finishing their

two year course in July this year. We do notice the difference – and look forward to seeing God work through them still more in the coming months.

We have continued to strive to bring quality musicianship and genuine worship through the team. I believe that it is obvious when the worship team operates as a team of friends, looking out for each other and enjoying worshipping together. I never tire of seeing us worship together and know from experience that worship is infectious. Simon recently spoke at a "Growing Together" and commented that we seek less to be "worship leaders" and seek more to be "lead worshippers". This is absolutely right – and as a team we will continue to worship together and seek for that to be a catalyst for others to worship. For in worship we will see more and yet more of God's power at work. In worship we will see people set free from the burdens that they carry. In worship we will deepen our understanding and security that we – truly – are released into a life eternal and glorious – a life with Him.

"Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven". We really do have reason to worship.

*Chris Jackson*



## Children's and Youth Work



### The Youth Group

I am blessed to work with a lively and friendly group of young people every Sunday. Each one of them has special gifts and talents and each one is a special gift from God. Our topic for the summer term has been looking at what happened to Jesus after his crucifixion and on to his ascension as this followed on from the life of Jesus which we were studying between Christmas and Easter. This coming term the overall emphasis will be to increase the confidence of the young people in praying (both as individuals and as a group). We will be looking at issues that affect young people (peer pressure, self worth and image, materialism, insecurity etc.) and what God says about these things, encouraging them to bring their anxieties and concerns to God through prayer.

My thanks go to Colin for leading the group and to Clare, Jo Fish, Dave, Jannett and Les for their invaluable help throughout the year".

### The Energize Group

This group of primary age children has grown over the last year with a wide age range of children between three and ten years old. This brings some challenges when preparing and running the sessions and I am grateful to Sue and her team of leaders and helpers for their dedication and commitment. This coming term

they will be trialing resources from Scripture Union. The group particularly enjoys craft and games and some good friendships have been formed within the group.

### Spree 2013

This year 24 of us attended the Spree weekend of challenging and fun activities combined with worship and Christian teaching. One of our young people



made a commitment to follow Jesus and we thank God for this. We have a responsibility to encourage those who have made a commitment to walk closer to God and a responsibility to continue to bring the good news of Jesus to those who are still to make a commitment.

*Charm Hobbs*

## Supa Club



**I t is hard to believe we have been running Supa Club in Westlands School for two**

**years now.** Supa Club meets on a Thursday after school from 3:15 till 4:15 and is open to all children in years two and three (age 6 – 8). We use Scripture Union schools material as a basis for our planning. Each session includes games, bible story, song and craft. Over the last year we have had the maximum number

of children (12) and it has been great to get to know them and see them develop over the year. Three of the children have been coming for most of the two years and they were given a book on behalf of the church at the end of last term as a reminder of their attendance at Supa club. As we re-commence in September my prayer is that the year three children will come back for their second year and any new children will quickly gel as a group. That they may learn something of God's big story and how much He loves them.

*Sue Smart*

## Dare you test God?



**I t may come as a surprise to you to read in Malachi 3:10 that God encourages us to TEST Him... specifically in**

**the area of giving.** Why? So that He can prove to the tither how faithful He is to “throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it”.

That is not to say that we are “bargaining” with God. If we do that we dishonour Him and His promises.

It is a matter of us firstly responding to his invitation. “If we honour the Lord with

our wealth, with the first fruits of all our crops; then our barns will be filled to overflowing and our vats will brim over with new wine” (Proverbs 3:9-10).

Of course – whilst we refer to “our” wealth we have to realise that all we have is given from God in the first place. And we must also recognise that He has no need of our money in the same way that He has no need of our time and talents. But He wants US to honour Him by freely giving all three... time, talent and wealth.

Once again we encounter the “upside down” nature of Jesus’ teaching. If we give FREELY... GLADLY... WILLINGLY ... we effectively gain infinite riches in Eternity. What is stopping us? Over to you !

*Paul*

## Balanced Ministry Model

**We are now working on, but have not finalised, a Balanced Ministry Model for 2013 – 2014. This looks at the whole church and assesses where we are now, and where we want to get to. Built into it is a strategy with S.M.A.R.T. goals, so that we can chart our progress.**

We are looking at four aspects of church, each with several sub divisions.

So under Sundays we have the vision to create an environment of excellent welcome, worship and word through the regular gathering of the church, in and with the community. We see the key areas as the children's work, the welcome, growth and the worship team.

Each key area has a set of aims and the steps needed to reach and maintain the aim. This applies to all four aspects.

The next area is Discipleship with the vision to create a culture of growth and maturity, with training and equipping in which members of the church grow in their walk with Jesus.

The key areas are, Community Groups, Membership, Relationships and Maturity.

The next area is Outreach with the vision to create a culture of personal and corporate evangelism throughout the church membership.

The key areas are, Reaching the neighbourhood, Reaching those

who are living under difficult circumstances, Evangelism and our Overseas connections.

Finally we have the Enablers with the vision to create a culture where the ministry of the church can be facilitated well.

The keys areas are Finances, Prayer, Leadership and Communication.

This whole model is very much a work in progress, but we are meeting every week to put in place the final touches.

You may be asking what difference this will make to you. Well our intention is that as a church we can all grow together and be more effective in our own walk and be more effective in reaching others.

The overall priority is that we maintain a culture of worship, honour and blessing of our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



**Service time:** 10:30am Sunday  
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## Philip Yancey on prayer - Does it make a difference?

### **The Community Group Course starting in September is all about our relationship with God.**

In these thought provoking and inspiring sessions, award-winning author Philip Yancey helps you and your group explore and experience the very heartbeat – the most fundamental, challenging, perplexing, and deeply rewarding aspect – of our relationship with God: prayer.

What is prayer? How does it work? And more importantly, does it work?

*“Prayer is the act of seeing reality from God’s point of view,”* says Yancey. Filmed in different locations in the Rocky Mountains, Prayer takes you to the mysterious intersection where God and humans meet and relate.

*LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*You have set your glory in the heavens...*

*When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?*

*Psalms 8:1, 3-4*

<b>Session one</b>	The view from above.
<b>Session two</b>	Why pray?
<b>Session three</b>	Keeping company with God.
<b>Session four</b>	How to pray.
<b>Session five</b>	Prayer problems.
<b>Session six</b>	does pray change anything!
<b>Session seven</b>	Time for feedback and evaluation.

Please sign up for this course. If you have never been in a group before, or if you have but it didn't work out for you, please give this course a try.

Enjoy the opportunity to be part of a group, enjoy the fellowship, enjoy learning together.

You will not be put under pressure to 'Do' or 'Say' anything.

Please give it a try.

*Peter*