

The LINK

30p

February 2016



The Parish Church of St Michael Braintree
www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

DAMASCUS TRUST PRESENTS

DAMASCUS
OVERSEAS

RWANDA AND THE POWER OF GOD

Inspirational presentation about the transforming work of Christ through His Church bringing forgiveness, healing, restoration and hope for the future.

With Archbishop Onesphore Rwaje &
Andy Paine of Damascus Trust

BISHOP'S STORTFORD - Fri 12th February @
7:30-9:00pm - United Reformed Church,
Water Lane, CM23 2JZ

Hear about what God has done, the vision for
the future and how we can be involved.

Freewill offering - sale of Ubushuti basketry
and cards made by widows and children from
Byumba and Gasabo dioceses.

Light refreshments
available



Local contact:
Pete & Heather Ellis - 01279 851 850

Damascus Trust:
01827 437 265
info @damascustrust.org;
www.damascustrust.org
registered charity 1013236

DAMASCUS
THE DAVIDSON TRUST
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My dear Friends

The clergy of the Colchester Area recently had a study day (or half a one) at the feet of Dr Bill Bolton, whose subject was: “Innovation & entrepreneurship, mission & ministry – what have they got to do with each other?” Bolton is a Chartered Engineer with experience both in industry and academia. His presentation was full of fascinating analogies and anecdotes. For instance, IBM had been likened to the Brontosaurus, which, when land mammals started to assert themselves, retreated to the swamps until eventually they ran out of swamps... IBM obviously took some suitable action before they ‘ran out of swamps’, as they are still around today, unlike the Bronto’s. We also learned how in 1937 Dave Packard and Bill Hewlett had their first business meeting and started up in a one-car garage with \$538 capital (the company’s name was decided by the toss of a coin).

Bill Bolton defined an entrepreneur as ‘a person (or persons – it can be a communal thing) who habitually creates and innovates, to build something of recognised value, based on perceived opportunities’. That last bit is particularly important. The entrepreneur sees when ‘the moment has come’ to put an idea into action, and is not put off by apparent difficulties; indeed they have a knack of turning problems into opportunities. For instance Anita Roddick (The Body Shop) initially decided on a green livery for her stores because green paint was the cheapest. Subsequently she saw how this could be used in reinforcing a message about the company’s ecological credentials. When Charles Wesley was expelled from the pulpit of St Mary, Islington in 1739, he perceived that God was calling him to join his brother John and George Whitefield as an open-air preacher.

We were also introduced to a number of biblical entrepreneurs: Noah the Innovator, Abraham the Risk Taker, Jacob the Cheat,

Joshua and Caleb the Undaunted ones, Paul the Mould-breaker, and the early church as seen in the Book of Acts as a collective entrepreneur. Jesus himself is the supreme entrepreneur, whose creativity is truly cosmic (John 1.3) and yet also effectual in the life of an individual (2 Corinthians 5.17). Modern Christian entrepreneurs include John Wesley (Methodism), William Carey (Church Missionary Society) Catherine and William Booth (Salvation Army), J Arthur Rank (Rank Foundation charity), and Dame Cecily Saunders (hospice movement).

An exciting thing we learned is that 10-15% of people are entrepreneurs, which means there should be quite a number of them in our church membership! I am aware of some of them, but perhaps not all. One of the most important things the clergy can do is spot this talent and train, coach and mentor it, open doors of opportunity, link people into the right networks, build their confidence, give official endorsement where possible, and above all not get in their way or distract them for their entrepreneurship with tasks which could be done by someone else. We should develop the instinct of saying Yes to ideas, although entrepreneurs also need reality checks!

Dr Bolton also underlined that people are always more important than ideas: this was neatly illustrated by a scheme introduced by the Egyptian government that backfired. The idea was to provide healthy drinking water for the Nile Valley population, many of whom suffered from bilharzia caused by parasitic flatworms in the river. However, putting standpipes in the village streets put paid to the riverside as a place of socialising and community cohesion, and cunning born of laziness that found a way of making the standpipes run continuously meant the reservoirs were soon empty!

Your sincere friend and Vicar

Charles

PCC MEETING 7 JANUARY

Derek Chapman led a time of prayer, referring to our 2016 Verse of the Year.

We **reviewed Christmas**. Generally it was felt that things had gone well, with *Experience Christmas* being a particular highlight. Good use had been made of the electric candles. Overall numbers had been about average: the Crib and Christingle service had attracted record numbers (270), but attendance at the Midnight Communion was well down, with just 75. A few people had commented on the lack of a choir, but it had just not been possible this year. Next time we hope to light the porches externally and do more leafleting of streets.



David Henfrey presented the **Treasurer's Report**. Gift Day had ended just over £3,000 short of the target of £15,000. He also reported that the Diocesan Quota had risen by 3.7%. After a lengthy discussion we decided to hold a Weekend of Thanksgiving and Giving on 14/15 May.

Lin Terris gave the **Evangelism Group** report, and we agreed that at their next meeting the Group should discuss the possibility of having the church open during the week again.

Charles reported on the **CHIP Group**. The plan was to carry out street visitation in the summer, making contact and offering to pray for people. We would aim to recruit volunteers during Lent.

Charles also reported on the first meeting of the new **Diocesan Synod**. There had been a full report and discussion of *Transforming Presence* and what steps now needed to be taken. The other major item concerned the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns and the desirability of a programme of

Unconscious Bias training. Bishop Stephen has been appointed to the CMEAC.

The next scheduled PCC meeting is on 17 March.

Charles Mason

COFFEE MORNING

In aid of
OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD
(Part of Samaritan's Purse)

Saturday 12 March
Small Hall, Church House
10am to 12 noon



Please come to:

- Enjoy coffee and cake
- Share the joy of children receiving shoeboxes
- Be surprised at the range of work done
- Discover what items are needed to fill a shoebox



For further information please contact:
Jenny Chapman / Frankie Winning

<https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>

MISSION OF THE MONTH
ACTS MINISTRY
“Love and Hope for Mother and Child”



ACTS work in Burkina Faso is very much at the cutting edge of poverty and provides a transformational way out for those in its care. Burkina Faso remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with 45% of the population under the age of 14 years. ACTS works through many programmes e.g. education, medical care, HIV/AIDS awareness, evangelism, human rights and feeding orphans. Through its education programme it reaches over 1000 students from varied backgrounds with no discrimination. Burkina Faso's population is 60% Muslim, 23% Christian and 17% Animist.

A widow recently came to Joanna Ilboudo (Executive Director of ACTS) a few weeks ago. She was unable to care for her three children and had decided to give her eldest to ACTS Ministry. The woman had AIDS and was getting weak from lack of food. She did not want her children to suffer, so she came to ACTS.

Joanna was able to tell the woman that she could keep her children with her, that her eldest child would be accepted at Acts school and that she would receive emergency food to feed herself and her children.

The mother and children will be examined by a physician at the Ellel Medical Centre. There are now 5 physicians at the Medical Centre as well as lab technicians, a midwife and pharmacist. They serve the rural population within walking distance of the ACTS Centre in Saonre, with a population of about 34,000. In Burkina Faso there is one physician for every 15,000 people.

ACTS is a wonderful Christian organisation that reaches out to the needs of local people in and around Saonre. Currently they would value prayers for the following:

1. Continuing prayer is asked for the country to remain at peace.
2. Protection and health for staff, women and children.
3. Thank God for his provision for families and for boys and girls under their care.

If you would like more information about the work of ACTS Ministry please take a look at the display in church or come and speak to me.

www.acts-burkina.org

Terry Clark

HELEN LAWRENCE

We were sad to hear of the death of Revd Helen Lawrence on Saturday 16 January at the age of 85. Helen was a deaconess at St Michael's for many years and was one of the earliest ladies to be ordained just before she retired in 1990. Further details will be available from Janet Bamforth.

Janet Bamforth

LADIES GROUP

Joel and Lauryn Wicks were our first speakers of the New Year.

Joel told us that the first eighteen years of his life were spent here in Braintree. He was brought up in a Christian home and gave his life to Christ whilst at school. Joel studied English and Drama at university and then had a job at All Souls Church in Langham Place in London, where he met Lauryn. Romance blossomed, but Lauryn had to return to New Zealand because of visa problems. Joel later followed her there and they married in August 2008. Joel continued to look for a job and a friend from their Church introduced him to International Student Ministries. Their aim is to help and guide students who do not have English as a first language. This is done through a variety of ways, such as “Newswatch” where current news reports are watched and then discussed, Bible studies, and one to one mentoring when necessary. Many students become Christians as a result of this work. Joel had signed a two-year contract with ISM, and as this was starting to come to a close, felt that it was time to look for something else. After much prayer Joel heard that the position here was vacant; and in January last year he and Lauryn along with Elijah and Sarah left the hot New Zealand summer for the wintery cold of England.

Since taking up the position of Children and Families Worker Joel has co-organized the annual SMASH Club, and Light Party, and done numerous activities in local schools as well as meeting with parents of young children.

Next month Jean Bell will be showing us some card making.

Helen Kemp

LENT LUNCHEES 2016

This year the Lent Lunches will be held in Braintree Baptist Church each Wednesday between 12 and 1.30 starting on 10 February and running to 23 March. The cost will be £2.75 for adults and £1 for children. Our chosen charity this year is Sure Start.

St. Michael's and St. Paul's will be hosts on 2 March. If you can come and help that will be appreciated, but please come and support us each week.

Cyril Bamforth

ST MICHAELS LENT COURSE

Wednesdays 7.30pm Church

This year we are going to look at some questions that people may have put to you at some time or other.

The evening will be led by members of the Monday night 'Good Book College'. There will be time for discussion as well opportunity to look at the Bible.

Hopefully, the Wednesday evenings will help us the better to give 'a reason for the hope that is in you' (1 Peter 3:5). And, to borrow a phrase from days gone by, 'nourish our souls' as well.

24 February *'Is God really there?'*

2 March *'Science has disproved Christianity'*

9 March *'Jesus fascinates me, but the church puts me off'*

16 March *'Isn't it time to stop thinking about God as male?'*

Stephen Bailey

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY UPDATE

Junior Church

Last term we all followed a curriculum plan called 'The Bible in Ten Easy Lessons' which each group adapted to suit their age. We looked at one of 10 key Bible stories each week and over the ten weeks made a banner that tells the story of the bible in picture form. This was to help the children understand the way the Bible fits together as the story of God's relationship with people and his plan for our salvation.



Experience Christmas

We were privileged to be joined by pupils from John Ray Junior School in the church for Experience Christmas. The children participated in six different interactive scenes around the church that told the Christmas story. We were really impressed by the way the children joined in and asked questions.

We received some lovely thank you letters; here is a sample of the positive comments:

“Thank you all so much for letting us come and see you at St Michaels Church and talk about the wonderful things linked with Christmas. We had such an amazing time learning about Jesus and all the other wonderful things you let us take part in.”

“Thank you very much for all that you have done for us and for teaching me so much!”

“I would like to come again but we’re only in year 6 once.”



Christingle

On Christmas Eve 270 people bustled into the church to share in our annual Christingle service. Children read out six passages from the book ‘The Christmas Promise’ and the crib scene was assembled as the service progressed. After the Christingles were distributed the lights were dimmed and the church was aglow with the light of the glow stick ‘candles’. Together we raised £285.92 for The Children’s Society, which we have received a thank you letter for. Many thanks to all who helped in any way, both up front and behind the scenes.



Joel Wicks

FEBRUARY DIARY

1 Monday

- 12.15pm Spotlight
7.30pm Bell Ringers AGM – Ringing Chamber
7.30pm Good Book College
8.00pm Badminton

2 Tuesday

- 1.15pm Tiddlywinks

3 Wednesday

- 9:45am Meeting Point Bible Study
10.00am Holy Communion – Revd Stephen Bailey
6.30pm 4th Braintree Cubs & Scouts
8.00pm Bible Study Groups: Lifebuilder, Notley Road

4 Thursday

- 2.15pm Women's Fellowship
3.30pm ASK
7.30pm Rose Hill Bible Study
8.00pm Carry on Exploring Bible Study

5 Friday

- 5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts

6 Saturday

- 8-10am SuMMiT Prayer Breakfast – Church House

7 Sunday **Next before Lent**

- 8.00am Holy Communion – Revd Stephen Bailey
10.00am Church Family Worship – Beauty for brokenness –
Revd Charles Mason
5.15pm Evening Prayer – Jesus Chapel –
Can. John Turton
6.30pm Evening Worship – Diary of a clay jar –
Revd Charles Mason
7.30pm Focus
8.00pm Prayer Meeting – Jesus Chapel

8 Monday

- 12.15pm Spotlight
- 7.30pm Bell Ringing
- 7.30pm Good Book College
- 8.00pm Badminton

9 Tuesday

- 10.00am Funeral of Doreen Richardson
- 1.15pm Tiddlywinks
- 7.45pm CFW Planning Group – 10 Parklands
- 8.00pm Ladies Group

10 Wednesday ASH WEDNESDAY

- 9:45am Meeting Point Bible Study
- 12.00pm Lent Lunch – Braintree Baptist Church
- 6.30pm 4th Braintree Cubs & Scouts
- 7.15pm Elders – Church House
- 8.00pm Holy Communion – Jesus Chapel
- 8.00pm Bible Study Groups: Lifebuilder, Notley Road
- 8.30pm SuMMiT – Wagon and Horses, South Street

11 Thursday

- 2.15pm Women's Fellowship
- 3.30pm ASK
- 7.30pm Rose Hill Bible Study
- 8.00pm Carry on Exploring Bible Study

12 Friday

- 5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts

14 Sunday 1st of Lent

- 8.00am Holy Communion – Tom St John-Coleman
- 10.00am Morning Worship– Jesus arrives –
Revd Charles Mason
- 6.30pm Holy Communion – Home and away –
Cyril Bamforth
- 7.30pm Focus

15 Monday

- 7.30pm Bell Ringing
- 7.30pm Good Book College
- 7.30pm Standing Committee – 10a Marshalls Road
- 8.00pm Badminton

16 Tuesday MARCH LINK SUBMISSION DUE

17 Wednesday

- 12.00pm Lent Lunch – Braintree Baptist Church
- 8.00pm Bible Study Groups: Lifebuilder, Notley Road

18 Thursday

- 2.30pm Holy Communion – The Hawthorns
- 7.30pm Rose Hill Bible Study
- 8.00pm Carry on Exploring Bible Study

21 Sunday 2nd of Lent

- 8.00am Holy Communion – Revd Sarah Hayward
- 10.00am Holy Communion – The man with authority –
Roger Cooke
- 6.30pm Evening Worship – The language of diplomacy? –
Revd Charles Mason
- 7.30pm Focus
- 8.00pm Prayer Meeting – Jesus Chapel

22 Monday

- 12.15pm Spotlight
- 7.30pm Good Book College
- 8.00pm Bell Ringing
- 8.00pm Badminton

23 Tuesday

- 1.15pm Tiddlywinks
- 7.25pm Elders – Church House

24 Wednesday

- 9:45am Meeting Point Bible Study
- 12.00pm Lent Lunch – Braintree Baptist Church
- 6.30pm 4th Braintree Cubs & Scouts
- 7.30pm Lent Course I – Church (see page 10)
- 8.00pm Bible Study Groups: Lifebuilder, Notley Road

25 Thursday

- 2.15pm Women's Fellowship
3.30pm ASK
7.30pm Rose Hill Bible Study
8.00pm Carry on Exploring Bible Study

26 Friday

- 2.30pm Bradbury House Service – Rosa Read
5.30pm 4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts
7.30pm Flower Club

28 Sunday 3rd of Lent

- 8.00am Holy Communion – Revd Charles Mason
10.00am Morning Worship – Healing then, healing now –
Revd Stephen Bailey
6.30pm Evening Worship – Appearance and reality –
Can. John Turton
7.30pm Focus

29 Monday

- 12.15pm Spotlight
7.30pm Good Book College
8.00pm Bell Ringing
8.00pm Badminton

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

- 3 January Isabella Allen
Amelia Pullum

Funerals

- 4 January Maureen Godden (82)
13 January Kathleen Rataj (83)

4th BRAINTREE SCOUTS

The 4th Braintree Scout Group and Costa Coffee Marks Farm collected food during November to make Christmas hampers for the Salvation Army's New Directions shelter.

Over £1000 of food was collected from generous public donations. The 19 hampers that were made up from this collection were donated to the Salvation Army at the group sleepover in Church House in December.



This capped a busy term which has included: the parents beating the scouts at the 3rd annual Scout v Parent Camp; Cubs hiking miles exploring and the Beavers making lava lamps and seeing what happens when menthos and cola mix. The latter was impressive in Church House garden.

This coming term is already setting out to be busy with the Scouts working on their first aid badges, Beavers using recycling to make art, and the Cubs starting to celebrate their 100 years.

James Hopkins and Dave Marriott

OFSTED CALLING



The last week of term is never quiet. We still had two carol concerts, a Christmas disco and the legendary Christmas lunch to navigate. The finish line was in sight; however, we were only just entering the last straight.

Ofsted were due, well overdue in fact. Our data was strong and we were on an upward trend. Although no scout, I was prepared, but deep down I believed we would be clear for at least another term. My training as an Ofsted Inspector had given me a little inside information. My Ofsted prediction was based on sound information. What I had failed to factor in was that as a head I had never managed to avoid an inspection by more than a term. This was despite three Outstanding inspections at my previous school.

So picture me in my office busy organising the rota for Christmas dinner and ensuring that we had enough potatoes and brussels to feed 420 children. When Jane said Ofsted was on the phone it never crossed my mind that it was notification of an inspection. For the last term they had rung regularly to check my availability for inspections and I took this call without any fear or trepidation.

It is hard to describe how you feel when you take “that” call. You have a quick few minutes to breathe deeply and slap on a smile. You then open the office door, looking totally relaxed and you inform the office staff and your deputy that Ofsted will be coming. It is so important that you look confident and totally fine with what is going to happen.

The next few hours pass in a frenzy. Fortunately we have an Operation Ofsted File which staff are familiar with and many questions that may have arisen have already been covered. A brief meeting was set for 12.30 and another more detailed one

set for 17.00. From this point on everyone pulled together. Teachers and support staff were there supporting each other. Chocolates and biscuits appeared on the staffroom table and mince pies were dropped off.

A break in preparation took place so that staff could attend our Year 3 and 4 Carol Concert. That brief pause served to remind us why we do our jobs. The children sang beautifully and we received so many good wishes from our parents that we returned to school feeling ready to take on the mighty Ofsted.

The actual inspection is carried out at such a whirlwind pace that there is very little time to catch your breath and assess how things are going. The HMI conducting the inspection was thorough but fair. By 11.30 she said that she had seen evidence that we may be more than a Good school and was thinking about converting the inspection to a Section 5. This would involve four more inspectors joining us for another day. Whilst I jumped at the opportunity at having the chance of an Outstanding judgement, my concern was putting the staff through another day, only for us to come out as Good. I took a deep breath, and went to inform Andy, my deputy, and Karin, my assistant head, what would happen next.

If the first day went at a whirlwind pace the second day was a hurricane. Every aspect of the school was looked at and evaluated. My staff were heroic and lifted their game for the second time. Our children were fantastic. I could not have been more proud of them. They are such outgoing, confident children and the inspectors heaped their praises on them. The HMI commented that she had not had the door opened for her so often before.

By the time the final meeting came I had no idea what the final judgements would be. From my Ofsted training I knew that if we were given an Outstanding judgement for *outcomes* then it was likely to be the case across the board. After ten minutes of

looking at evidence they went around the table giving their verdict. When the HMI confirmed the judgement as Outstanding I realised I had been holding my breath for a long time. The rest of the judgements passed in the same vein. We then had to join the governors for formal feedback. We were asked to keep our faces neutral but to be honest we were in such a state of shock it was not difficult.

As the inspectors packed away we were left to celebrate with staff. It was an incredible experience, a real roller coaster of emotions. The experience left us exhausted but at the same time exhilarated. The feeling of team was incredibly strong across all staff, reflected in the fact that they all waited until half past six for feedback. It is not an experience I would recommend to others but it has been a really positive force for St Michael's. Staff have returned for the spring term determined to work even harder to make our school the best it can be and our children are so keen to show visitors what it is that makes our school special.

When you single out people for thanks or praise there is always the danger that you will overlook people and our experience and the judgements made were the result of five years of hard work by everybody at St Michael's. However, this would not have been achieved without the drive and commitment of three key figures: Jennifer Bailey, Chair of Governors, Andy Cumpstey, Deputy Head and Karin Farran, Assistant Head. They have been beside me every step of the way, sharing my vision and driving change, as well as supporting me when difficult decisions had to be made. I am very fortunate to have had this team beside me and there is no way we could have achieved this without them.

Mandy Short

BELFRY BULLETIN

We had an enjoyable and busy end to 2015 ringing for all the Christmas Services and holding our party. We have started the New Year with some interesting practices and good service ringing.



Before the St Michael's School years 3 and 4 carol service we rang 30 mins of Rounds and Call Changes. This was the first time that Ellie Gray had rung for a service, which is a big step in a ringer's progress, congratulations Ellie.

For years 5 and 6 carol service we rang 420 very nice changes of Plain Bob Doubles conducted by Debbie Hill and rung by Gareth Davies, Queenie Brown, Lin Ould, Peter Smith, Bradley Hill and Richard Ould.

To welcome the congregation to the candle light carol service on Sunday 20 December 20 mins of Rounds and Call Changes was rung with Debbie Hill calling some interesting changes.

Prior to the Midnight Communion Service on Christmas Eve we again rang Rounds and Call Changes for 20 mins.

We were back again to ring for the 10am Family Service on Christmas Day to ring 480 changes Grandsire Doubles, with Debbie again in attendance.

During these activities we held our Christmas Party all looking very smart with Phil wearing a Christmas tie being the sartorial star. It was a very happy and fun occasion. Thank you Debbie for making all the arrangements.

At practice nights recently Bradley Hill, who has been running the practices, has had us doing bell handling exercises which have been taxing our abilities and helping to improve the quality of our ringing, its good fun too. Keep it up, Brad.

Peter Smith