

insight

the magazine of Easthampstead Baptist Church

May/June 2008

**reflecting on
the future:**

vision and values of EBC
Centre Spread



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What a ride!

Welcome to the first edition of our Easthampstead Baptist Church (EBC) magazine – *Insight*.

We are planning to produce *Insight* every two months and it will include articles, updates, diaries, prayer pointers and news about our church. If you are part of the EBC community it will be vital to update you on things that are going on across the church and if you are not yet part of our community we hope that it will help you understand a bit more about us.

Not so long ago Ruth (my wife) and I had a child free couple of days. Amongst other things we went to the theme park at Thorpe Park... You see I love roller coasters and our children are not yet old enough to enjoy the big, scary rides so I usually have to be content with the smaller, child friendly rides. Not this time though, this time we got to go on the big rides and I loved it! One such ride was called Stealth and this ride involved being strapped in tightly and then being flung down the track going from 0-80mph in two seconds. Then the ride went vertically upwards before going over the top and then vertically downwards. Ruth was screaming in my ear and all I could say at the end was "how cool was that!"



Chris Porter

us feel that now about things at EBC. We have identified where we think God is calling us to go over the next few years and have written those things down in the form of a set of values, a mission statement and a vision (for more information about these please see the centre pages). We call these things our ethos. We are working our way through restructuring our Sunday mornings to live out that new ethos – we feel that we are being catapulted in a new direction. It can be a bit scary as we realise some change will be involved and as we try to work out all the practical implications. I firmly believe, however, that this new ethos and our restructuring changes will enable us to be much more effective for God. It will open up more opportunities for us on a Sunday, it will enable us to do more in our local community and do more to make God's love known to our friends and family. It will enable us to serve those in need and to grow together in our relationship with God. We will need to work together to see it happen. I have sensed over the last couple of months a real togetherness about us and a spirit of unity. There seems to be a buzz at all our congregations about where we are going. We need to keep working on that togetherness, keep supporting and encouraging one another and remain honest and open with each other.

**“0-80mph
in two
seconds ...
...how cool
was that! , ,”**

It will be quite a ride, but I am certain if we stick with it and work together we will all be able to say together "how cool was that!"

God bless
Chris

P.S. Ruth and I are so grateful for your love and support over the last few months and we are delighted to be working together with you on what God has in store for us in the future.



Stealth at Thorpe Park

Sometimes I confess I feel like that about church life. Sometimes things seem to be moving so fast, so much to do, so many things to think about that I feel like I'm being catapulted down a fast track. I suspect many of

Whole Church News

Did you know in the last few months at EBC...

We have been looking at restructuring:

Following Chris Porter's appointment as Senior Minister we have been discussing how we might restructure our church to bring our congregations closer together, to function with more effectiveness and to help with our feelings of being overstretched on a Sunday morning.

At our Church Members' Meeting in February we agreed to investigate an option that would involve having three Sunday morning services – two at South Hill Road and one at Crown Wood. This would save us nearly £10,000 a year in rental costs at the Sports Centre and would mean we could share resources more effectively.

It would also enable Chris Porter to be at more than one Sunday morning service. We have been working on proposals that would see us have 9.15am and 11.15am services at South Hill Road and a 10.15am service at Crown Wood. We are also thinking about having one leadership team for

the church instead of one for each congregation. We will be giving further consideration to these proposals at our Church Members' Meeting (which is also open to regular attenders) on Thursday 22nd May.

For more information about these proposals please contact Chris Porter.

We have welcomed lots of new members:

In the last few months 15 people have become Church

Members...welcome to Barbara Blench, Lisa McCann, Margaret and Malcolm Mack, Pam Garner, Ann Gristwood, Michael Culley, Faith Fisher, Noah and Tamara Abothu, Jo Millett, Kelly Hales, Helena Heidebrecht, Grace Ekama and Karen Currie.

If you would like to know more about what Church Membership means please contact Chris Porter via the church office.

We have heard stories of how God has been transforming lives:

On Easter Sunday four people were baptised and as part of the service each told their story of how God had been at work in their lives. As we listened at one moment we were laughing and at another moment we were moved to tears. What a privilege for us as a church for God to be working



through us to transform lives. Watch out for our next baptism service on Sunday 11th May at 4pm at South Hill Road when others will be telling their stories. **Songs of Praise has grown dramatically:**

On the third Sunday of every month we hold a Songs of Praise style service at South Hill Road at 4pm. The service includes interviews, stories, songs and a short talk and is followed by tea. In the last year or so attendance

“In the last year or so attendance has doubled”

has doubled so that now over 100 people regularly come to this service and over 90 stay for tea. If you haven't experienced it yet drop in – you don't know what you have been missing! For more information about Songs of Praise call Eileen Charlton via the church office.

We have served the community:

On Monday 18th February queues of people lined the streets around Crown Wood School waiting to get in to our Storehouse event. We run Storehouse twice a year and give away good quality used household items, toys and clothes to anyone who needs them. It was our largest ever Storehouse at Crown Wood School and we are really grateful to everyone who contributed goods and came to help setup and run it. Our next Storehouse will be in October at South Hill Road.

Over 130 people attended our annual festive meal earlier this year. Entertainment was provided by Lynne Roper from a church in Warfield who sang beautifully. Our lunch clubs continue to serve people in the community twice a month.

We have continued with our plans for Hope Bracknell:

Hope Bracknell is an event we are running together with some other churches in the town. From Monday 25th August to Friday 29th August we are running a week of social action projects in



the town and then on Saturday 30th August we are running a fun day event on the North Lake recreation area opposite South Hill Park Arts Centre. We hosted a reception for community leaders including the Mayor, Councillors and school Head Teachers to let them know of our plans. Over 60 people came and it went really well. Watch out for lots more information about Hope 08.

Planting our totem

In Alaska the Native American tribes erect enormous totem poles.

They are hard to ignore with hand carved animals and symbols displayed in vibrant colours. Each symbol or animal embodies the things that tribe values and holds important. They symbolise what the tribe will need to survive and grow in that hostile land.

"We must be wise as an owl, cunning as a fox, strong as a bear, resourceful as a badger and persevering as a salmon that swims up the river."¹ The totem pole is very significant to the tribe, it is a graphic reminder of who they are, what they value and what the ethos of the tribe is. The pole stands for generations to remind them of who they are.

Churches need a metaphorical totem to remind them of who they are in God and what God has asked them to do and be. Over the last few months we have worked to identify the ethos of EBC. We have identified values and a mission statement that state boldly – "this is who we are, this is what God is calling us to be."

Our values come under five headings each beginning with the letter C... they are:

Community

We want to invite seekers and believers to join us on a journey to discover more of God and his will for our lives.

We want to develop authentic relationships with each other and to support one another in grace and love, by sharing belongings, talents and gifts.

We want to be an inclusive, attractive community.

Communication

We seek to be rooted in the Bible, filled with the Spirit and in touch with the realities of life today.

We desire to be culturally relevant in everything that we do and in particular to use the arts

to effectively communicate the message of Christ.

Non Christian people matter to God and therefore matter to us and are our top priority.

Commitment

We will be dedicated to serving using the gifts, talents, passions and resources God has given us.

We want to be 24 hours a day, seven days a week Christians sold out for God.

Caring

We will be compassionate to others and offer practical help in an imaginative and spiritual way.

We will be aware of and seek to support the needs of each other, the community around us, and those in the world at large.

Celebrating

We want to celebrate excitedly the grace that God has shown us in worship, parties and social events.

You will hear us beginning to refer to the five Cs – our totem that indicate where we as a tribe, a movement of Jesus are moving.

We also have a mission statement that says clearly in a sentence that is easy to remember where we are going. Our mission statement is:

"To love God, to love people and to grow together to become more like Jesus."

This is why we exist, this is what God is calling us to do.

A while ago there was a TV series on called *Blizzard*. In the series two teams were seeking to recreate the epic and ultimately ill



Chris Porter

“ We want to be 24 hours a day seven days a week Christians sold out for God ”

fated journey of Captain Scott to the South Pole. Scott and his team had a vision, a dream of being the first to make it to the South Pole – they did fulfil their dream, but unfortunately a Norwegian team beat them to the Pole and we know that Scott and his team died tragically on their return journey only 11 miles from safety. When a team of adventurers such as Scott's arrive at their destination very often they plant a flag to recognise their achievement, to mark the fulfilment of their vision.

Churches need a vision, they need to identify what God is calling them to do and to be. They need to put a flag in the ground to mark their destination. There is a book of wise sayings in the Bible called Proverbs and one of those sayings found in chapter 29 says "where there is no vision the people perish." Without vision there is no sense of what God is leading us towards, no sense of inspiration and excitement about what we are part of.

Over the last few months we have worked hard together, consulted and prayed about what our vision at Easthampstead Baptist Church should be. We



Captain Scott and his team at the South Pole

¹Taken from Culture Shift by Wayne Cordeiro and Robert Lewis

pole

have sought to know the journey that God is calling us on. Vision is not about reality or what is. Vision is all about our dreams and aspirations and what could be with God's help. We are dreaming of what we might become in the future. With God's help, by 2015 we dream of...

Becoming a church which is a vibrant, exciting and creative place where Christians are encouraged to grow and give, where non Christians are loved and welcomed, valued and included and in turn encouraged to discover the love and grace of God. The church is numbered in the hundreds and thousands and is therefore making a real impact on the community around it. The church is working really hard to help those in poverty and suffering injustice, children are all over the place and older people are respected and included. All the people of South Bracknell have heard of EBC and know it as a vibrant place, they are impressed with what it does and the people in it and they think of it as a place to turn to for help, advice and spiritual experience. We see a church where people, no matter what their spiritual condition are welcomed and challenged to move on in their spiritual journey. For those who are Christians, EBC is a place where they are challenged to see their faith as central to their lives. People are encouraged to let God transform their lives so that their relationship with God matures and deepens and that is then reflected in their desire to serve and bless others.

Growing as we see people daily being saved as they are introduced in creative and imaginative ways to the love of God. Social events, seeker targeted events and lively and relevant services are all being used to attract non Christians and in particular those using the

building. The people who are a part of EBC are challenged and encouraged to build friendships and invite people to things. As well as trying to attract non Christians to come to us the church is also going out into the community to make the love of God known.

Blessing our local community through community action projects with six or seven partner organisations in the town. We are involved with teenage and single mums, we are involved with helping those who have no money or food, we run parenting and money management courses in conjunction with the CAB, local schools and the council.

Exploring creative children's and youth work that means EBC is a place full of children and young people. During the week exciting school assemblies including music, puppets and video clips are taking place in each of the four or five primary schools around

“ who wants to give their lives for a small dream?!”

us. Children are then invited to attend holiday clubs, to take part in musical productions, to attend social events created just for them and to attend fantastic children's work that happens at the same time as some of the services. There is also a children's oriented worship event for children and their parents. During these events the church building is full of children and it has been decorated in a creative way.

Helping people around the world as we reach out to those in need. We are sending teams of people out via Tearfund

and BMS to help on projects alleviating poverty. We have a closer engagement with AIDS victims and AIDS prevention. We are sponsoring 100 children in South America through Toybox and having a real impact on the numbers of children on the streets there. We run practical action services across all our congregations where people are encouraged to contribute to the work of these organisations.

Experiencing God and therefore becoming people who are passionate about God and passionate about EBC. We see EBC as a dangerous place for Christians to be, because they are being challenged to be 24 hours a day, seven days a week Christians who cannot help but reflect the glory and love of God. It is a dangerous place because people are challenged to give sacrificially of their resources to advancing the kingdom of God. It is full of people who dream amazing dreams of what God can do and who are prepared to take risks and embark on an adventure with God. We have a network of small groups whose primary purpose is the building of community. The groups are encouraged to care for one another through prayer and practical help. The groups also explore the topics discussed at the various services in more detail. People are also encouraged to get together in prayer and accountability partnerships or triplets. We are helping people discover and use their gifts and are committed to excellence – right people with the right gifts serving in the right place with the right attitude.

This dream or vision is a bold one, we realise that it is big and beyond our ability to do by ourselves. We recognise that we need and rely on God's help. We could dream of smaller, easier things...but who wants to give their lives for a small dream?!



South Hill Road

February 24th saw the launch of ReMix the new format for the work with children and young people.

From 9.00–9.45 breakfast is available for any one who want it and with adult supervision the young people work on a rota basis to help with serving this. 10.00 they all join together with a time of worship and games and after about half an hour they go into their groups. Around 11.15 the children and young people join the rest of the congregation in the main hall for some to share what they have been doing and then have a final song together before refreshments are served.

The service for adults averages about 60 people with a number of new people attending over the weeks. We have been encouraged with a number coming into membership and also some being baptised. The teaching leading up to Easter was looking at

some of the Psalms and we have welcomed some visiting speakers over the weeks as well as our own members.

Numbers attending Club Unity, which meets monthly for young people aged 11 – 16, have increased with an average of 45 attending each time and a waiting list. They enjoy time together with games, food and music and some have started coming to ReMix on a Sunday.

A new monthly venture, Unity Plus, for 16 + age range began in February; this is for able-bodied young people and also for those who have a disability which is primarily physical. Again the young people enjoy food, games and music together.

We are looking forward to the Fun Day at Fox Hill School planned for July 12th when we can share in this Community activity to build relationships with the school.



Club Unity and Unity Plus



Classifieds

At EBC we believe that everyone who comes regularly to the church should serve in some way in the life of the church. We want to do this for several reasons. We believe that it builds a sense of community as we serve together to achieve a common goal, we also believe that it is a great way to become involved with EBC and to get to know people better. Listed below are a variety of roles that are available to you to serve in at the church. Some

Drivers –
Have space in your car? Happy to give people a lift to church on a Sunday? It would be great if you could help those who can't get to church unless they have a lift. Clean licence preferred.

Technical Team
– We are looking for someone with big ears and a passion for good music, to control the sound. Full training available. Must be sympathetic to drummers!!!

of these require more time than others. However much time you feel able to give, we hope that there is something that interests you and we would encourage you to get in touch with us about what you might like to do.

If you want to discuss any of these roles in more detail or would like to chat about what might fit you best, then please contact Chris Porter on 01344 487744 or email him at chrisp@ebc-bracknell.org

Multimedia Team
– Multimedia creators and operators, must be able to understand computers to edit video and create presentations that enhance our gatherings. Training available.

Venue Set Up Team –
Everything has its own space, if you are willing to help put it there, then join the venue set-up team, where together we will make a room look really nice. aaaaaaaahh.

Musicians Wanted – know your Shakira from a shaker, your No Doubt from a bean sprout? Play an instrument? Be part of the music team in your congregation. No bugles or wobble boards please. Didgeridoos welcome.

Refreshments
– I need a coffee, can you help? If you are a bit handy with a kettle and have a passion for cakes, come and cater for us.

Crèche Helper – WANTED people to help look after our littlest members.

Children's and Youth Helper
– There is never a dull moment in our children's and youth work! Would you like to help out this dynamic area of our church life? You need to like children/young people and have lots of energy and enthusiasm!

Puppeteer – Do you like acting but are a bit shy? This could be the perfect job for you - hide behind a backdrop and use a puppet. People are needed to join this team. Puppets provided!

Drama Team –
We turned down Sandra Bullock, Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman and Ewan McGregor, because we knew you'd do it better. Come and be a part of our drama team. (and we turned

And we turned away cause she's rubbish). Don't worry about learning lines - we have a secret trick to prompt you!

Welcomers
– WANTED someone to make visitors feel at home, if you have interpersonal skills and possess a good handshake, come and join our welcoming team.

Explore

We have had a very exciting start to the year with a number of new people joining and some others become more regular attenders.

We now get around 70-80 people each week including up to 25 children aged between two and 12 in Explorers.

At Explore: Life we have been covering topics such as self image, forgiveness, money and materialism and sex in our latest series Great Sexpectations. At Explore: Worship we have been working our way through a series entitled Unlikely Heroes looking at the lives of some great Old Testament characters including

Jabez, Deborah, Gideon and Moses.

We also enjoyed leading the Italian meal social event to which 100 people from across the church came. Kathryn Curtis played background jazz for us and her husband Dan led a pub quiz. It was a great night!

The Explorers children enjoyed a sleepover party and were sponsored to raise money for Toybox a charity we support that helps street children in Latin America and on April 27th Ashley and Tracy Spencer, Phil Kerlake and Stephen Nower ran the Bracknell half marathon also to raise money for Toybox.



Crown Wood



The official opening of Café Refresh



There are currently between 30-40 of us meeting in "The Studio" at Crown Wood School.

We aim for our services to be informal friendly and fun... but hopefully challenging. On May the 4th (our eleventh anniversary) we will be holding our community action Sunday. Hopefully we will be tidying up around the school and for the less hardy there will be an opportunity to pack some book bags for the children in Kazakhstan schools. It is a great time to spend time together and to worship by making a positive impact in the local community and school that is our home.

During the fortnight beginning April 28th the whole church is being challenged to join with a leaflet drop to publicise the Sunday services at Crown Wood, Refresh; the coffee shop that is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and Reverb the youth cafe which is open the first and third

Friday of the month.

At the beginning of April we received Faith Fisher into membership. This is a great encouragement to our little group. Many of you will remember Joel Baker who has been an active member of this part of the church for a few years now. He has been playing in our band and has been a regular preacher at Crown Wood. Lesley-Ann also sings in the band when she is able. Despite living in Emsworth Joel has been travelling up to see Lesley-Ann most weekends. This will shortly come to an end when they marry on May 10th. We will be sorry to lose them, as they will be moving to their new house just outside Basingstoke where Joel is now working. However we are all very happy for them and wish them every happiness and blessing in their new life together.

Interview



Rob Lea is our church treasurer.

As well as overseeing, helping and advising with our finances Rob is also a key member of the Crown Wood congregation team and is part of the whole church Central Vision Team. We were keen to catch up with him and find out about an exciting opportunity coming up in June as part of our new 'Debt Free in 3' campaign...

Insight: Rob – tell us a bit about yourself.

Rob: I grew up in a small village near Maidstone in Kent. When I left school I worked for a company connected to the Motor Industry, and I have been associated with that industry for most of my working life.

In 1975 I joined ICI as a sales rep working in the Bristol area. After several promotions I joined the international team in 1995. This was great because I travelled business class to many countries in the world and someone else was paying! In 1998 I went on a two year secondment to Singapore, and in 2000 I took voluntary redundancy and became self employed as a management consultant, in which I am still involved.

I live in Forest Park (Bracknell) with my wife Sue to whom I've been married for 37 years, and I'm looking forward to the next 37! We have two children and three grandchildren who are just great!

Insight: How long have you been at EBC and what are your

roles within the church?

Rob: I first attended EBC in 1985 when, with my family, I first moved to Bracknell. I wasn't a regular attendee though until Sue and I returned from Singapore in 2000; we got baptised the same year, and became members.

In 2002, I became the Church Building Manager and was then appointed Treasurer in 2003. That same year I became a member of the South Hill Road Leadership Team. In 2006 I moved to join the Crown Wood Congregation where I regularly lead worship and preach. Also in 2006 I became a member of the Central Vision Team.

Insight: What does your role as Church Treasurer involve?

Rob: As treasurer I am accountable to the church members for all aspects concerning the church money and accounts; both internally and externally. I manage the church's financial resources ensuring that they are spent effectively, whilst preventing the extremes of either overspending or the accumulation of huge reserves.

Thankfully I have the help of two very experienced and capable assistants: Maggie Stevenson who handles the day to day transactions and accounts, and Pam Darby who deals with the Inland Revenue; in particular with regard to Gift Aid Tax.

The area that takes most of my time concerns the church budget; preparing, monitoring and reporting back to the leaders and

“ I travelled business class to many countries in the world and someone else was paying! ”

church members.

Insight: Tell us more about the 'Debt Free in 3' campaign – why are we doing it and what will it involve?

Rob: In the expenditure part of the church budget for this year there is a total of £26500 which is part payment our outstanding loans of £70000. The loans were used for redeveloping the building and buying the house that the church owns. In a few weeks time we are launching a campaign to be "Debt Free in 3". In other words we want to pay off this outstanding debt in 3 years, starting with a gift day on June 15th when we aim to raise at least £30000.

If we can raise this amount, that will release £10000 in our budget this year and £20000 next year. With that money released we can start to consider a number of exciting opportunities like giving away more to those who desperately need it, sending people to help on overseas projects, and so on.

This is a great opportunity for everyone in the church to participate and I would like to encourage all of us to pray about what God would have us do to support this vision. In Malachi 3:9 God issues a challenge to the Israelites and to us I think when he says, "Test me in this, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." I say amen to that!