

insight

the magazine of Easthampstead Baptist Church

November/December 2009



**Toward
Wonder**

Contents

Chris Porter Column	2
Church News.....	3
Towards Wonder	4-5
Classifieds.....	6
Reviews.....	7
Interview	8
Service Plans	i
Monthly Diaries.....	ii-iii
Prayer Points	iv

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Insight

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From jetlag to wonder

Welcome to this edition of **Insight**, our Easthampstead Baptist Church (EBC) magazine.

We produce *Insight* every two months and it includes articles, updates, diaries, prayer pointers and news about our church. If you are part of the EBC community it is 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. This is the tenth edition of *Insight* and in this edition we are focusing on a big series we have coming up in November and December called "Toward Wonder".

Earlier this year I had the chance to travel to Chicago to attend a conference hosted by Willow Creek Community Church. It was an amazing and inspirational experience. When you leave home, travel all that distance and put up with jet lag you really hope that the conference will be worth the investment. I had also managed to convince a couple of others that they should come with me and so it was with some trepidation that I sat in my seat awaiting the launch of the opening session. Would my expectations be met? Would those who had travelled with me enjoy it? Would there be things that we could apply back at home?

Well I shouldn't have worried, that first session was worth the trip alone. The theme was 'Wonder' and the talk was well. . . wonderful! We were all blown away as we were challenged and inspired to look again at who God is and the amazing things he has done and to be in awe and wonder over and over again. The speaker was Nancy Beach who has worked for over 20 years as programming director at Willow Creek and who now serves as a teaching pastor. She has written several books and speaks all over the world. The Willow Creek Association have kindly given us permission to reproduce part of

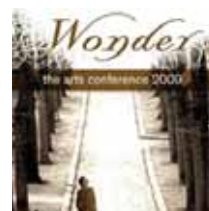


Chris Porter

that talk in this edition of *Insight* and it launches us into a brand new series we are going to do together in our Sunday morning services starting on Sunday 22nd November. I hope Nancy's talk on pages four and five will inspire you with what is to come in that series and to be people who are easily wowed by God.

And just in case you haven't noticed Christmas is rapidly approaching and our theme for our Christmas events this year will be 'The Wonder of Christmas.' We are a long way into planning our Christmas events and these will include our Christingle service on Christmas Eve, a very special Christmas Carol service and a joint service on Christmas Day!

Over the next few weeks we also have a great opportunity to share the wonder of knowing God with others who might not have yet discovered it for themselves. On Saturday 7th November we have our next big social event. We shall be having a great meal with great entertainment and through it all will be raising money for a great cause – Toybox, who are an organisation who help children living on the streets in Latin America. On Sunday 8th November we have our next guest services and we shall be using Remembrance Sunday to help us look at the theme 'War: Does Anybody Win?' These services should help all of us but will be particularly suitable for those who wouldn't normally go to church. Please do take advantage of these events to invite friends, family and neighbours to come with you. Who knows it might be the first step in them becoming people of wonder too!



Church News

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

We had the first of our new guest services

On the last Sunday in September all our different Sunday services joined together for one combined event. It was also the first of our Guest Services and the theme was Guardian of Eden? The hall was decorated beautifully, we had a live cooking demonstration on stage, we had lots of visitors and most importantly we talked about how this amazing world that we live in is a gift to us from God. After the service we had a ploughman's lunch together and the children enjoyed playing on the bouncy castles. The feedback has been great and we are really looking forward to our next Guest Events which will be on Sunday 8th November coinciding with Remembrance Sunday.

We completed our Hope Bracknell weekend

From Friday 25th – Sunday 27th September we engaged in another Hope Bracknell event. Following the success of Hope 08 we joined together with the Warfield Churches for a weekend of prayer and social action. On the Friday night we joined with Eternity youth church for a prayer event and then on the Saturday around 100 people went out across the town on social action projects. Gardening, litter picking and painting projects were all completed. On the Saturday evening there was a dinner and jazz event and then on the Sunday evening we had a combined Hope Bracknell service which rounded off the weekend. It was an amazing time and many people in our community have been helped and blessed.

A group went to the Willow Creek Leadership Summit

Every August at Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago some of the world's foremost thinkers and speakers about leadership gather together for a Leadership conference

for Christian leaders entitled the 'Leadership Summit.' The sessions are recorded and then in September and October taken around the world in summit conferences. 17 of us attended the summit hosted by Kerith Community Church and the Willow Creek Association. It was a fantastic event and the speakers included Bono (from U2), Bill Hybels (Senior Pastor of Willow Creek Community Church) and Tony Blair. Over the course of two days we heard many different speakers all talking about how we could use our leadership gifts and improve our leadership in our local church. We have already booked up to go again next year – hope to see you there!

We ran our fun day at Crown Wood School

On Saturday 12th September we ran a fun day at Crown Wood School. It was a great day, the sun shone and over 500 people came to enjoy the giant inflatables, the barbeque and the farm. We had many great conversations with people who couldn't believe that we would have cared enough to run something like this for our local community and who couldn't believe that it was all free!



We have agreed to take on a new member of staff

In October we agreed together to take on Paul Kerslake for a day and a half a week to work for us at EBC. Paul will be working as our 'Creative Director' and will help us generate ideas and content for our Sunday services. For an interview with Paul about his new role please see page 8.

We had a special Baptism and Dedication Service

On Sunday 4th October at our 11.15am service we had a very special celebration. Alex, Jo and Daniel Richens were dedicated and **Continued on page 7**



Toward Wonder

On Sunday 22nd November we are starting a new series together in our Sunday morning services.

This series is called 'Toward Wonder' and we will be looking together at how we can rediscover a sense of awe and wonder at who God is and what he has done. The series is based on a verse in the Bible from a book called Isaiah. The verse says this "Once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder." The series was inspired by a talk three of us heard when we travelled to Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago given by the speaker and writer Nancy Beach. We have received permission from the Willow Creek Association to reproduce part of that talk here. We hope that it will inspire you with what is to come in this series and what we shall be learning together.

One of my favourite books is *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, where Annie Dillard describes a compulsion of her childhood when she was growing up in Pittsburgh. Here's what she writes, "For some reason I always 'hid' the penny at the roots of a sycamore, say, or in a hole left by a chipped-off piece of sidewalk. Then I would take a piece of chalk, and starting at either end of the block, draw huge arrows coming from both directions. And after I learned to write, I labeled the arrows: SURPRISE AHEAD or MONEY THIS WAY. I was greatly excited during all this arrow drawing at the thought of the first lucky passerby who would receive in this way, regardless of merit, a free gift from the universe."

Years later, Annie reflected on her penny hiding. And here's what she said that so inspires me: "I've been thinking about seeing.

There are lots of things to see, unwrapped gifts and free surprises. The world is fairly studded and strewn with pennies cast broadside from a generous hand. But—and this is the point—who gets excited by a mere penny? ... It is dire poverty indeed when a man is so malnourished and fatigued that he won't stoop to pick up a penny. But if you cultivate a healthy poverty and simplicity, so that finding a penny will literally make your day, then, since the world is in fact planted in pennies, you have with your poverty bought a lifetime of days. It is that simple. What you see is what you get." (Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*).

The world is planted with pennies. I believe that our Creator has lavished this earth with wonder upon wonder. And he watches to see who will notice and who will give thanks for those wonders.

In Psalm 40, David writes that the world is a huge stockpile of God wonders and God thoughts. The question we are going to explore today is, are you and I awake to those wonders? Are we cultivating the kind of spirit and rhythm of life that is likely to pay attention and to be truly delighted by the discoveries all day long of God as he is manifested in creation and also in our meaningful relationships?

Wonder points us to God. Our worship leader, Matt Lundgren, says that wonder is the basis of worship - it's truly our call to worship. Wonder is closely connected to beauty, to awe, to goosebumps, mystery, and imagination. The early church knew all about wonder. In Acts 2, we are told everyone was filled with awe among those rookie believers.

And children are naturally filled

with wonder. According to the research of Rolf Smith, children ask 125 probing questions every day. Some of you have children who do this. But adults ask only a half dozen probing questions per day. Somewhere along the line, we lost 119 questions a day. Children are naturally curious. They can be entranced by even the most ordinary things.

But, you know, something terrible happens to us as we grow toward adulthood. Virginia Stem Owens describes this tragedy. She says: "The child, newborn, is a natural spy... Sent here with the mission of finding the meaning buried in matter, of locating the central intelligence, he goes about his business briskly, devouring every detail within his developing grasp. He is devoted to discovery, resists sleep in order to consume more data He has to learn the world from scratch, but the task seems nothing but a joy. Yet gradually, over time, something goes wrong. The spy slowly begins to forget his mission. He spends so much time and effort learning the language, adopting the habits and customs ... that somehow, gradually, imperceptibly he becomes his cover. He forgets what he's about. He goes to school, grows up. He gets a job, collects his pay, buys a house, waters the lawn. He settles down and settles in. He wakes up each morning with the shape of his mission, what brought him here in the first place, grown hazier, like a dream that slides quickly away ... Then one morning he wakes up and only yawns." (Virginia Stem Owens, *And the Trees Clap Their Hands*).

How many of us are stuck in a cycle of routine, yawning through life? Have we exchanged awe and adventure for apathy? Are we buried in boredom? I know

how easy it is to get caught up in lifeless habits and miss out on the potential of wonder.

Just a few weeks ago, I was taking my usual run through a part of the neighbourhood—and that's part of my problem right there: my usual routine, my usual run; I should try a new path—and my mind was consumed with thoughts of what I had to accomplish that day. Then out of the corner of my eye I saw two adult geese walking along with five little goslings. I assumed they were the mother and the father. And I figured out they were probably headed to the small pond up ahead that was right in front of a housing development.

But I kept running. And I invite you now to the battle scene between my left brain and right brain.

Right brain: Those goslings are so small ... this might be the very first time they would get into water. That would be really cool to see!

Right brain: But what if this really is their first time? How long could it take to cycle back and see them hit the water?

Left brain: When running, the heart rate needs to stay elevated; and if you stop now, you will ruin the effects of this entire run.

Right brain: But Annie Dillard wrote that nature is a now-you-see-it/ now-you-don't kind of affair. This is like a penny from heaven and I might miss it!

Well, you get the idea, and I'm happy to report that in this particular instance, right brain won. It doesn't always win. But I stopped. And it took awhile for those five little goslings to get down the hill and make their way into the placid pond. But I got to see it. And it was really cool. I think it might have been their very first time. My little stop took a few minutes, and I'm sure my heart rate was just fine. But I almost missed the wonder.

When we cultivate a sense of awe and pay attention to the everyday miracles of God, you and I are driven to give thanks to the source of every good and perfect gift. We become more humble and more grateful, and we live out the attitude of David who wrote: *My heart is not proud, O Lord, my eyes are not haughty... But I have calmed myself and quieted my*



“
**Our
Creator
has
lavished
this
earth
with
wonder
upon
wonder**
”

ambitions. I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content (Psalm 131:1-2).

Cultivating a spirit of wonder involves paying attention and waking up. In Isaiah 26:19 we read, *You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy!*

Throughout the Scriptures, whenever people wanted to praise God they would often use the word 'Hallelujah!' We don't use that word often these days except maybe in some of our music. But I think there's another word that captures the same spirit. It's the word 'Wow.' I think we should go through life saying 'Wow' whenever possible.

As we close, my question for all of us is this: Are we 'Wow' kinds of people? Are we cultivating the kinds of lives that have a spirit of wonder? We've only got one life, one chance to notice what God has lavished on this earth.

God promises us in Isaiah 29:14 that he will astound us with *wonder upon wonder*. It's almost as though he has strewn pennies all over the earth for us to notice and he's waiting to see who's going to pay attention and who will celebrate those pennies and give thanks.

One of my friends told me that when she sees something in creation, she almost disciplines herself to look up to heaven and to say to God, "I saw that. I saw that. That was great. Thank you."

That's what you and I need to do to awaken to wonder, because when that happens, we are driven to thank someone. Someone once said, "It's a terrible thing to be grateful and have no one to thank." Well, when you see these wonderful gifts, there is someone to thank and it's our Magnificent Creator. He made our bodies; he gave us families and friends; and he's the one that we can go to and say, "God, you are so amazingly good."

Wonder is our call to worship. It calls us to gratitude and to praise. So let's be 'Wow' kinds of people all day long.

Our series 'Toward Wonder' at EBC starts on Sunday 22nd November and will be continuing for four weeks. More information is available at www.ebc-bracknell.org/wonder.



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 of these require more time

Sound Team. We could have the best musicians, the best preachers but if they can't be heard there would be no point. Our sound team are some of the most important people at our gatherings. We are looking for people to control the sound. You need to have some understanding of technical things but full training is available. Contact Chris Porter for more information.

Refreshments Food is very important in the life of our church! With our format of Sunday morning services it is very significant. Our refreshments times help people meet up, chat and build community. Would you help with this vitally important area. If you are a bit handy with a kettle and have a passion for doughnuts, come and cater for us. Contact Eileen Charlton for more information.

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. Eileen Charlton is contactable on 01344 487744 or via email at officestaff@ebc-bracknell.org.

Lunch Club
On the fourth Thursday once a month we run a lunch club for older people. And we also run Midday Munch on the second Thursday of the month. We are looking for people to come and help on these days. You need a Food Hygiene Certificate (or be prepared to work with us to get one). Contact Eileen Charlton for more information.

Remix Children's Helper/Leader (2-11 year olds)
There is never a dull moment in our children's work! Would you like to help out this dynamic area of our church life? You need to like children and have lots of energy and enthusiasm! Contact Ruth Porter on 01344 482162 or email her at rej.porter@googlemail.com for more information.

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. Contact Eileen Charlton for more information.

Welcomers
WANTED people to make visitors feel at home, if you have interpersonal skills and possess a good handshake, come and join our welcoming team. Contact Eileen Charlton for more information.

Coffee Break Helper
On Wednesday mornings during term time we run Coffee Break for parents/carers and their pre-school children. Could you come and be part of this amazing event that serves our local community so well. We need people to welcome, make teas and coffees and help setup and take down the equipment. Contact the church office for more information.

Unity Youthwork Helper/Leader (12 year olds and older)
Unity is one of the fastest growing ministries in our church. Unity run Sunday morning work at our 9.15am gathering, a monthly club on a Friday evening and various social events and trips. If you would like to be involved with this dynamic work please contact Phil Darby via the church office.

Office Staff Volunteer
On Monday to Friday mornings our church office is staffed by volunteers. They answer the phones; help people using the building find their way around and offer a great welcome to those using the building. If you have some free time during the day and would like to volunteer please contact Eileen Charlton who can provide you with lots more information.

PC Operators
On a Sunday at each of our gatherings we use PCs to show song words, medias and film clips on our big screens. Would you be able to help operate a PC – its very simple and training is available. Contact Eileen Charlton for more information.

Musicians and singers wanted to play at our Sunday morning and evening gatherings. Need to be competent on your musical instrument or be able to sing in tune! Contact Chris Porter who can put you in touch with the band leaders.

Multimedia creators wanted to produce great looking medias for our Sunday morning and evening gatherings. You will need to be able to use a computer. We can provide the right editing software and training. Contact Chris Porter for more information.



**An evening of great food, great music and great questions...
...all for a great cause**

**Saturday 7th November
7.30pm
at Easthampstead Baptist Church**

Church News

Continued from page 3

their mum - Helen was baptised. Lots of their family and friends were able to come and it was an amazing celebration of what God has been doing in their lives.

Remix had a social event

Our Remix children had a fantastic games and food social event. There were giant board games, air hockey, table tennis and Wii games consoles. Many of our regular Remix children came and invited their friends. Our next Remix social will be closer to Christmas when children's entertainer 'Fred in the Shed' will be coming!

Queues of people lined up for Storehouse

On Monday 26th October people queued up from 8.30am for our latest Storehouse event. We run Storehouse twice a year and people are encouraged to give good quality used household goods, toys and clothes and then we set them all out and people can come and take what they need. Yet again we were overwhelmed by the amount of stuff that we were given and by the numbers of people who came. Many thanks to all those who worked so hard to make it happen.

We have heard more details from our architects

At our Church Meetings in September and October we have been hearing more details on the costings for a phased approach to any building extension we might consider. We have also been working on the options for a permanent Storehouse facility and for youth work. We believe that the best option for a permanent Storehouse facility may well be to buy or rent a modular building to have on our site at South Hill Road. We think this will be around £20,000. We have also heard back from our architects on possible phased approaches to the building extension. The most viable option for a phase 1 extension would cost around half a million pounds and would involve extending the ground floor of the building, moving the kitchen and creating an open 'hub' area. We now have to think and pray about whether this is the right way forward. If you have not seen the plans and would like to see them please speak to Chris Porter or Steph Littlejohn.



reviews



Faced with what must have seemed like an impossible task, the folks behind Passion - the US based student movement - have pulled off a simply stunning two-disc 30-song compilation of live worship tracks from over 10 years of conferences and nine best selling albums. The David Crowder Band open the proceedings with the expectant call to worship "Come And Listen" before stepping up the pace with the high octane rockers "Our Love Is Loud" and "No One Like You" - the latter resonating with a very enthusiastic and vocal crowd. Elsewhere, fellow American worship leaders Charlie Hall and Chris Tomlin maintain the pace set by Crowder and his band by giving their all in the likes of "Marvelous Light" and the heartfelt song of adoration "Indescribable" respectively. The calibre of artists on show is furthered by an appearance from Matt Redman who throws in the evergreen "Blessed Be Your Name", "All Over The World" and a spectacular version of "You Never Let Go" for good measure. Whilst Crowder, Hall and Tomlin largely dominate the compilation, appearances from arguably lesser known worship leaders such as Sam Perry, Christy Nockels and Kristian Stanfill only add to the diversity and quality contained in this collection. The standard of musicianship, songwriting and God centred performance on display here is astounding and you will struggle to find a better live worship release this year.

Reviewed by Lins Honeyman

All music reviews are reprinted here by kind permission of Cross Rhythms. More such reviews are available at www.crossrhythms.co.uk and all regular albums are available from Cross Rhythms Direct at £9.97 + p&p.



Top new songs for Kids from the people who do them best - that's what the Kids Praise Party series is all about. On this, the 4th in the series, the latest music trends and highest standards are employed to bring them the great news of Jesus in a relevant, pop-flavoured way. A mix of the grown-up songs they know and love from 'big-church' with some fun and funky flavoured tunes written specifically for them. This double album (there's a 15-song 'Bonus' CD) contains a good selection of the most recent praise songs arranged for children by those dependable people at Spring Harvest. Matt Weeks and Dan Weeks have produced the album and included over 30 lively songs by the likes of Dave Godfrey ("You Know"), David Ruis ("Every Move I Make") and Nigel Hemming ("Down On My Knees"). They're performed with skill and energy by a very capable set of musicians (including the aforementioned Messrs Weeks) and have some great vocals, which include some clearly enthusiastic kids' voices. The songs are great for children but they are in no way patronising, and would equally appeal to older people. If you already have a good number of children's worship CDs in your collection, you may feel you don't need this one, but if you haven't, then this is well worth getting hold of. As ever with Spring Harvest products, this is a really good example of British worship aimed at children but accessible to people of all ages. Pull on your dancing pumps and get down with the grandchildren!

Reviewed by Ian Hayter

Interview

**Paul
Kerslake**



As a church we have just agreed to take on a new member of staff. From the new year Paul Kerslake will be working for us for one and a half days a week. The role that Paul will be taking on is that of Creative Director. This means that Paul will be helping us generate creative ideas and content for our Sunday services. We have sensed for some time that we need to lift our services to the next level and have been keen to take on someone to help us do that. As well as his gifts as a musician Paul also has lots of other creative gifts and can write songs and drama. We thought that we should catch up with Paul to find out a bit more about him and his vision for the future.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I'm Paul, I am 25 (give or take ten years) and have been married to the gorgeous Hannah for over ten years (I know, we don't look old enough). We got together

at university in Kingston where we were studying music, and I have been Hannah's drummer of choice since we met on a Christmas musical that she was musically directing. We have three children, Abigail, Naomi and Joel, who are all developing an interest in music themselves (we will be the Von Trapp family Kerslake in time...) and have been a part of EBC for over eight years, having moved here to set up the Explore congregation when it was in it's initial planning stages. I also write and record music in our little studio at home (some would call it a boys den), and have engineered and produced many recordings. I am a mean cook, as evidenced by my huggable girth. And I am a music reviewer for the Cross Rhythms website during the five minutes of the day that I have left after all that.

What kinds of things are you involved at EBC?

I am visibly one of the worship leaders and musicians at EBC, probably best known as a shy and retiring quiet drummer; but in addition to that I have been planning creative content, writing dramas and sourcing artistic ideas ever since I've been a part of Explore. My degree and generally geeky interest in music and technology means that I have also contributed extensively to the PA and lights in the main hall, and I wile away many happy evenings with a soldering iron and circuit tester. I generally have a bagful of cables and am not afraid to use them. I was on the leadership team for the Explore congregation, and recently transitioning from drums to guitar in the worship teams means that I still have a valid reason not to do the actions in the children's worship!

Tell us a bit about your new role?

When not doing my day job (Royalty accountant...I count money for musicians) and being a dad and husband, I have been doing all of the above in my spare time. The new role (Senior VP Creative Artistic Musical Technological Media Director Supreme...or something like that) will free me up to be able to devote more time to planning, sourcing and creating supportive content that enhances the Sunday gatherings. I hope to write more drama and resurrect my songwriting. And also a day less a week commuting on the M25...

What are your hopes and dreams for our Sunday services at EBC?

My long term goal is to set up and run EBC Honolulu or the Bermuda Beach Baptist Church! But before that, I hope that we will continue to augment and support the Sunday gatherings with the creative content that we produce. The main thing has always been, and will always be, God's word, which is central to all that we do. I want to continue to explore further ways that this can be understood and communicated through music, drama, visuals, and interactive ideas. I want our faith and worship to be more alive when we are together on a Sunday, and through the week. And I hope that we will make Sundays so much more exciting and attractive that we will have floods of people coming to see what the buzz is all about. And that when they come through the door, they will experience the Great Big God that we sing about and want to keep coming back for more.