

insight

the magazine of Easthampstead Baptist Church

March/April 2009



Building Community

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Building Community

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.

Rabbi Edwin Friedman tells the story of a man crossing a bridge over a high ravine. As he is crossing the bridge a stranger comes in the opposite direction. This stranger has 30 feet of rope wrapped around him and as he passes the man he says "here hold this" and gives the man the end of the rope and promptly jumps off the bridge.

The man on the bridge was almost dragged over the side of the bridge but he managed to hold on. "What are you doing" he calls to the stranger now dangling 30 feet below the bridge. "I am now your responsibility" replies the stranger, "my life is in your hands, you can choose whether I live or die".

The man got very angry. "This is ridiculous" he thought, "I didn't ask for this, suddenly this stranger has made me responsible for whether he lives or dies. This stranger has passed the choices for his life to me."

The man thought for a while and then called down to the stranger "listen, I think I know how to save you. It's simple and up to you. You can decide which way this ends. I will become the counterweight. You do the pulling and bring yourself up and I will even tug from this end to help. But I can't hold on for ever, you have to make the choice yourself to be saved. If you don't choose to help yourself I will let go."

"You cannot mean what you say," the stranger shrieked. "You would not be so selfish. I am your responsibility. Don't do this to me."

After a long pause, the man on the bridge at last uttered slowly, "I accept your choice." In voicing these words, he freed his hands and continued his journey over the bridge.



Chris Porter

We all have to make choices in our lives and we are responsible for the choices that we make. It is not fair for us to ask other people to live our lives for us, for them to hold on to us and make decisions and choices for us. This is true of our spiritual lives as well. God is waiting for us with open arms, but He leaves the choice of accepting or rejecting his love up to us. It is also true about our life in the church. What we as a church can do is offer choices and opportunities for people to grow in their faith. We cannot make people do things – they have to make the choice, but we can help.

This edition of *Insight* is focusing on Community and in particular small groups. At EBC we are very keen to help each person experience a loving and accepting community. We are very keen that each person who calls EBC 'home' should have people who they care for and who care for them. However in order for us to receive that we have to make a conscious choice and that choice is about whether or not we are a part of a small group.

Small groups are the primary way that we care for one another. We are a church of over 300 regular attenders and it is impossible for one or two people to care well for over 300. Small groups give us the opportunity to meet regularly with 8-12 people who we can get to know, who we can support and pray for and who can support and pray for us. They provide an opportunity for us to look at the Bible, discuss our faith and to debate issues so that we can grow as Christians. As we grow bigger we need to emphasise the critical importance of small groups.

I hope that as you read this edition of *Insight* you will be inspired about these groups. If you are part of one already I hope that you will be encouraged to continue going and if you are not yet part of a group I pray that you will make it a priority to be a part of one. We have groups that meet at different times of the day and in different locations, it should be possible for you to find a group that will work well for you. Make the choice!

“God is waiting for us with open arms,”

church news

The first two months of 2009 have been eventful with lots happening in the church and local community. .

We have been saddened by the deaths of three members and our thoughts and prayers are with the families of Sue Lea, Ann Gristwood and Stan Nalson.

Remix: for 2-11 year olds

Our Remix children enjoyed a sleepover in January. 40 children spent the night at the church where they enjoyed fun, games and food together. £200 was raised for the work of Tear Fund. If you would like to know more of what Remix do or are keen to be a part of the team please contact Ruth Porter on 01344 482162.

Work with young people

Club Unity started the year with 54 attending and Unity Plus for the older youth with 12. Sunday Unity attendance averages 11. In March both clubs are planning to raise money for Comic Relief and on March 28th we have booked 40 places for a morning at the Oakwood Youth Challenge in Wokingham. Club Unity will not be meeting in April as it will be Easter although Unity Plus meets as usual. Our youth band practice nights have restarted with about 14 attending. Tuition for guitar / keyboard /singing and woodwind have been made available free of charge. We have also started a youth alpha on Monday nights with six young people. Contact Phil Darby 01344 411995 if you would like to know more of the work with the young people

Work with older people

On a snowy Saturday in February approx 125 people came



to the Festive meal at the church and were entertained by the illusionist Steve Price and then enjoyed a meal together.

A 100th birthday party for a founder member of the Crown Wood Social club was supported by some of the people from EBC who helped out at the event.

Eight people are meeting weekly at Refresh for a Senior Alpha course. Another alpha course is also being held on a Monday evening at the church.

Storehouse

On Sunday 15th February people joined together at Crown Wood School to set up Storehouse ready for it being open the next day. Around 200 people crowded into the hall and in about 45 minutes most of the goods had been taken and any clothing left was collected and will be shipped out to an orphanage in Romania.



Steps of faith

The January church meeting agreed to go ahead with the feasibility study to look at the possibility of expanding our building at South Hill Road.

The meeting also agreed to continue to prayer about employing a children's worker, an older persons worker and employing Steph, our Assistant Minister, full time.

The steps of faith also included looking at how we might experience more of the power of God at work amongst us and this has been seen in various ways through our Sunday morning services

Social Events

We are looking forward to a Barn dance on March 21st with Pitchfork, a local band, and good food.

We praise God for all the good

things which are happening in the life of the church and for all those involved in helping in all the different ministries.

reviews

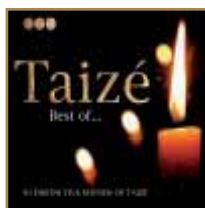
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This is the New Wine worship leader's fourth album and it comes four years after 'Grace In The Wilderness'.

A lot has happened in this time and the story of this can be followed to some extent in the songs - understandable as the whole album's focus is of telling the story of following Christ. Eoghan's songwriting is strong and quickly focuses onto the character of God and the way he impacts his creation. The list of songwriting collaborators working with the Irish songsmith includes Tim Hughes, Neil Bennetts and Brenton Brown and there are really no weak songs here. The full tilt opener "This Is Our Story" is sure to become as well known as the track that follows it, "Blessing, Honour", which is given the full on rock treatment as well. There are some nice changes of pace with the haunting "All To You" and the wonderful closing track "With Me". For a track to stand out here it does have to be very good and both "This Is Our Story" and "The King Has Come" do stand out and I would expect them to be heard a lot at events over the next few years. A genuinely outstanding worship set, Eoghan's best ever in fact.

Reviewed by Tim Holden



This three-disc box collection is self-described as "the definitive Taizé collection".

It's not hard to see why for it contains over two-and-a-half

hours of superbly recorded sounds emanating from that French inter-denominational community. Conspicuously, all of these 50 tunes were composed by Taizé's main song-writer (at least until the mid-'80s), the Parisian, Jacques Berthier, and every one has the copyright date of 1984. Songs are rendered variably in French, Latin or English, and while all lyrics are provided in the sleeve notes (including translations of French and Latin), we're told absolutely nothing about where the songs were recorded, or when, or who any of the excellent choristers are. While a number of these liturgical pieces contain several verses, many others consist of simple chants comprising just one or two lines, repeated over and over again. Most are in fact expressions of adoration to the triune God, and with most tracks being delivered in well-arranged, a cappella, layered vocal format, there's an unhurried sonic beauty attending them which is wonderfully calming and deeply spiritual. As an alternative to more contemporary pop and rock sounds, there's something quite refreshing about tones like these, not least when the three discs here presented are offered at single-album price.

Reviewed by Tom Lennie



This is Ms Latty's fifth solo album - though she's contributed to a heap more with Focusfest, Spring Harvest and the like - and is being promoted by a nine-date cross-UK tour.

All but one of these songs are new - several began as a hum in her head while staying at her sister's home; others were inspired by books she has read, by speakers she has heard at Christian events, or grew out of

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experiences at her local church. Lyrically these songs cover a variety of themes within general Christian experience. Musically, the album continues in familiar Latty vein - consisting of mainly simple song structures, with some chirpy, upbeat Calypso-type ditties - not least the opening title-track, written for the 21st celebrations of the Oasis Trust; one or two soulful pieces and various other gentler inspirational takes. Two tracks were co-written with well known producer Nicky Brown, who also plays a significant part in nearly all other aspects of this venture, from playing keys to producing and mixing the set. Helpfully, in the sleeve notes, Geraldine shares the inspiration behind each tune - and though there's little here that really stands out and leaves a marked impression, there's much to encourage and bless any follower of Geraldine's ministry.

Reviewed by Tom Lennie



Someone should tell American sleeve designers to stop using tourist clichés (union jacks, soldiers in befeater hats, London buses) every time they feature British artists.

This useful compilation of prime cuts from 'Come Now Is The Time', 'Hungry' and 'Holy' is still worth hearing while the previously unreleased Brenton Brown song "Comfort Me" is a gem. If you haven't got the source albums and you want the definitive versions of Vicky Beeching's "Awesome God" (Esther Alexander's vocals till goose bumps), Brian Doerksen's "Come Now Is The Time" and Marc James' "Surrender", this is worth investigating.

Reviewed by Tony Cummings

Jesus is a small group leader

I live in Hanworth and just across the way from my home is Dryden Woods.

It was very tightly packed with pine trees until the council decided because of local pressure to thin out the woods. Then the hurricane came and the woods were decimated. Previously they had withstood terrific winds. The trees around them acted as a buffer. Together they were strong, roots wrapped around each other, but when they were thinned out, they became vulnerable, relying on their own root structure alone to keep them upright and they were blown down.

The Bible clearly teaches that we need to be a strong community to stay strong and effective.

If you ask yourself the questions "what is a small group?" or "why should I be in a small group?" then look no further than the life of Jesus. In his relationships with his followers you see a really good example of a vibrant small group. He chose to spend his time with 12 particular people. He used a small group to effectively develop his followers. It was in this group that they learnt through questioning, talking, sharing their lives, experimenting, and trusting. This is a perfect pattern for us to follow. Small groups are an integral part of the strategy for our church. They are a key way that we live out our values that came out of the picture of church found in Acts chapter 2. We call our values the 5 C's

Community: *discovering more of God and his will for our lives. Authentic relationships, support, sharing belongings talents and gifts.*

The primary role of small groups is to build community, they are a

place where we can be real with each other. They should be a safe place to discover God's continuing will for our lives. They are a place where we support each other and develop friendships.

Communication: *rooted in the Bible, filled with the Spirit in touch with the realities of today. Relevant*

The secondary role of the small group is to deliver effective biblical teaching. This is best done in an environment where we have the opportunity for dialogue, question and debate. It is a place where we can help one another to apply the Bible to our own situations and lives.

Commitment: *servicing 24/7*

Effective teaching is not about intellectual understanding. It is about doing and being what we learn. The small group is a place we can experiment together with our gifts and talents. It is a place where we can encourage growth and development and provide opportunities to put into practice what we are discovering. This is the third vital role of the small group.

Caring: *compassionate, practical help, seeking to help and support others*

If you are part of this church then the small group is where pastoral care and support comes from. There is clear teaching in the bible that we are to be interdependent, not dependant. Each one of us needs to play our own part, each person to look out for the welfare of others.

This is not the responsibility of the leader, or the pastoral team, although there are times when they need to get involved. As a church we have agreed that the first line of pastoral support is to



Steph Littlejohn

come from your small group.

Celebrate: *God's grace, worship, parties social events*

Small groups, when working well tick all the boxes. If you are part of this church and have agreed this set of values then you need to find a small group that you can be a part of.

Amnesty

We recognise that we are all different and have different personalities and needs. Each group has it's own characteristics and priorities. We want our groups to develop in ways that are relevant to its members.

Sometimes we find we are mismatched. We want to get small groups right so that they can be effective powerhouses for following Jesus.

This April we are giving people the opportunity to opt out of the group they are in if there is a mismatch and the opportunity to opt into another.

Many are happy where they are and have a good small group experience that they would not like to lose and they will stay together.

Perhaps you are not in a group yet, now is the time to find a group you can become a part of. There are lots to choose from. We have information about various groups meeting at different times and places. For further information ring me via the church office and I can put you in touch with the leaders for a chat. If there is an opportunity for a group that we are missing, let's talk about that.

Small group was not an optional extra for Jesus, it was essential. If we are truly his followers it is essential for us.

“ Together they were strong ”

relax over coffee and cake at

Refresh

your local coffee shop

open Monday, Wednesday, Friday
8.45am to 1.30pm
at Crown Wood School

Making a Difference

A recent Barnados survey discovered the general public have so many negative thoughts about teenagers and blamed over 60 per cent of crime on them when the true figure is 12 per cent.

Government thinking suggests that more should be provided for young people especially at weekends.

Ultimately as Christians we want to see young people develop their whole self i.e. the mind, body and spirit. To achieve this I believe we need to build up a community of young people and invest time



in them and to provide stepping stones for those who want to seek out their spiritual interests.

I'm pleased to report that our church has a range of activities for young people and some operate once a month and some weekly on Monday's, Thursday's, Friday's, Saturday's and Sunday's. We are currently involved in meeting over 100 young people on a regular basis.

Club Unity meets once a month and started the year with 54 attending and Unity Plus for the older youth with 12. Sunday Unity attendance averages 11. In March both clubs are planning to raise money for Comic Relief and on March 28th we have booked 40 places for a morning at the Oakwood Youth Challenge in

Wokingham. Club Unity will not be meeting in April as it will be Easter although Unity Plus meets as usual. Our youth band practice nights have restarted with about 14 attending. Tuition for guitar / keyboard /singing and woodwind have been made available free of charge. We have also started a youth alpha on Monday nights with six young people.

We were also delighted to hear last month that we have secured a grant of £6,600 to go towards sound and lighting equipment for our young people's work. Some of that equipment will also be available to use at South Hill Road in our Sunday services.

However are we making a difference to young people spending just a few hours with them? Yes is the answer and we have stories to tell about the calming influence Club Unity has on the most

difficult. I am beginning to think that if we have more contact with young people, perhaps on a weekly or fortnightly basis, we can make an even bigger difference to their lives. So linking up what we have to offer as a church and encouraging young people to get involved in a wider range of activities is going to be one of my aims for 2009.

As we continue to grow building up the teams is also a priority. By creating and building up the teams we will have a route for older young people to become involved and possibly become future leaders. Why not check out our website.

Philip Darby Unity Leader

Remix has seen some exciting changes over the past six months. It now touches the lives of over 50 children on a regular basis, at our three different Sunday morning gatherings.

Remix Sunday's give us an opportunity to teach the children about what it means to have Jesus as their friend. We aim to share a message from the bible in a practical and relevant way that links directly with the lives that our children are living today. We also introduce them to the reality of how other children across the world live and how they can be a part of a world wide solution to poverty and injustice.

Remix is not just about Sundays. The children have also had the opportunity to invite their friends to social events run by the Remix team. These have included a games evening at Birch Hill School and a children's entertainer who kept a large group of children captivated for two whole hours!

The latest Remix event was both social and informative. 43 children came to an evening where they did a variety of fun activities and learnt about the work of Tearfund. 32 Remix children and their friends slept over night and raised over £200 as well as writing to Gordon Brown about his governments promises to provide clean water for all children across the world and praying that that will become a reality.

The Remix leader's team has



Classifieds

seen some changes during these last six months, with some leaders moving on to different ministries and new ones joining. As the children's ministry continues to grow we need to be able to react to this by adding new leaders and helpers. We have just started a parent and teenage helper rota at the 10:15 and 11:15 Sunday morning sessions but we are always looking to expand our teaching team. These teams are all vital to the smooth running of this ministry and we are particularly looking for some new team members at our 10.15am service. If you would like to know more or would like to come and visit a session to see what we do please do not hesitate to speak to Ruth Porter on 01344 482162 to arrange this.

Ruth Porter Remix Leader



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

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.

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 Karen Bugg via the church office for more information.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Refreshments Food

is very important in the life of our church! With our new 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.

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.

interviews

Jean Roe

Tell us a bit about yourself

I am a great grandmother, and have served in our church for 48 years in a variety of ways. I love singing and music and enjoy painting and photography, cooking and gardening.

My special joy has been to lead small groups over the past 35 years and continue to do so now.

You lead one of our small groups, which group do you lead?

Our group of ladies meet weekly in the daytime at the church.

What is unique about your small group?

The group grew from two Alpha courses 10 years ago, to nurture new Christians and strengthen the faith of the more mature.

Why would you give up your time and energy to leading the group?

I love the opportunity to share my faith and love of the Bible with old and new friends. To praise God and pray together.

What do the people who come, value and get out of being there?

The ladies value the fellowship and friendship they make over coffee and sharing and caring for each other with much laughter and sometimes tears. Their faith is strengthened as they study the Bible and pray together.

What is your vision for the group?

My vision for the group is for numerical and spiritual growth. To welcome ladies of every age. To spend more time in prayer and to see those prayers answered as we pray for each other, the church and the wider world.



Hannah Kerslake

Tell us a bit about yourself

My name is Hannah Kerslake. I am married to Paul Kerslake and we have three beautiful children, Abi (six), Naomi (five) and Joel (two). I teach piano and singing.

You lead one of our small groups, which group do you lead?

I co-lead the Friday morning ladies small group

What is unique about your small group?

We meet during the day. We are made up of people on all stages of their faith journey. We study contemporary material, and

'real-life' issues. We have small children in our group.

Why would you give up your time and energy to leading the group?

I love being part of this group. The people are wonderful and it feels like a privilege to learn more about God together.

What do the people who come value and get out of being there?

We are a supportive group who enjoy being together. Group members are free to explore the Christian Faith in a comfortable and friendly environment.

What is your vision for the group?

That we will all grow in our personal relationship with God and experience community as we take this journey together.

