



insight

the magazine of Easthampstead Baptist Church

July/August 2009

Summer

Contents

Chris Porter Column	2
Church News.....	3
What's going on this summer?. 4	
Reviews.....	6-7
Classifieds.....	6
Willow Creek	8
Service Plans	i
Monthly Diaries.....	ii-iii
Prayer Points.....	iv

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**Easthampstead
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Insight

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The course of summer

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 eighth edition of *Insight* and covers what will be happening at EBC this summer.

It seems that every year the start of Wimbledon heralds the beginning of summer. I was reading with interest recently about the new roof that has been built to cover Centre Court at Wimbledon if it rains. Millions of pounds have been spent on the roof and the climate control systems and floodlights required for when the roof is closed. How ironic then that the year the new roof is ready for the entire first week of the tournament the weather was glorious! Typical of the English weather – in previous years without the roof there always seems to be rain and then the first year the new roof is ready the sun shines continuously!

Summer is a curious time for churches. People are off on holiday, attendance seems to dip a bit and very often the number of things going on in the church are cut back over the summer period ready for a big re launch in September. At EBC this summer we are reducing our number of Sunday services during the school holidays but there are still plenty of other things going on. In this edition of *Insight* we are concentrating on our summer plans and what different people are doing this summer. There is a lot going on!

In June I was able to take four weeks study leave. Contrary to some perceptions this was not an extra four week holiday for me! I was able to spend some time out from regular church duties to concentrate on some things that I hope will really benefit our



Chris Porter

church and which I wouldn't have had time to complete without the study leave. I was able to write a number of courses which will benefit people across the church. These include a 'Discovering EBC Course' for newcomers to the church, a 'Discovering Baptism Course' for those wanting to know more about baptism and a 'Discovering Membership Course' for those wanting to know more about what it means to partner with us in Church Membership. I was also able to spend quality time thinking and praying about some new teaching series for the autumn and into the beginning of 2010. The highlight of the study leave was going to Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago for a conference. Many of you will have heard me speak before about the profound impact this church has had on my life and how a Willow Creek conference in 1994 was when God first spoke to me about becoming a church leader. It is always an incredible experience to visit Willow Creek and this conference was exceptional. Some great speakers, musical worship led by Hillsongs from Australia and great teaching seminars on planning services and preaching and teaching. I made pages of notes and came back full of ideas and inspiration for the future. Rob Lea and Phil Kerslake were able to come with me to the conference and you can see their thoughts about what they experienced on page eight.

Over the last few months we have been looking at the possibilities for our building and site at South Hill Road. Allen Associates architects have helped us by conducting a feasibility study and we are now thinking and praying through their findings. For a full report please see page three.

All that remains is for me to wish you all a wonderful summer whatever you may be doing and I look forward to seeing you at some or all of the different activities and services we are running through this summer period.

Chris Porter

Church News

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

We conducted our '222' giving campaign

In May we launched this campaign aimed at encouraging each of us who are members or regular attenders at the church to consider either increasing our giving or starting to give regularly if we don't already do that. If each of us who call EBC our church home increased our giving by an average of £2.22 per week it would enable us to take the next steps in our hopes and dreams. On June 28th we announced that over 40 people increased their giving in this way which is fantastic and means that our giving will have increased by around £7,500 per year – many thanks to all who responded.

Our Remix children had a karting social

On Saturday 20th June our Remix children held a karting social in our church buildings at South Hill Road. As well as the karting there were bouncy castles and craft activities. Nearly 60 children attended the social which went really well.

Our Unity youth group went to the Ultimate Event

After a very early start, the journey up to Alton Towers was great but after sitting in a traffic jam for an hour just outside Alton, everyone was ready to stretch their legs and have some

fun. There are lots of new rides up there, everybody had a great time on these. If it had been a warmer day we are sure everyone would have gone on the water rides but the rollercoasters kept us entertained. A favourite part though was the aquarium, now we know what a cod looks like! The music festival was great. Some excellent music and as always it went down well with everyone. The journey home was uneventful and quiet! After such a long day, and 10 hours in a minibus everyone went straight to sleep when they got back to church.

We agreed a role description for an older persons worker

We have worked together to agree a role description for what we hope will be our next part time staff member. The Older Persons Worker will lead our activities and events for older people including our lunch clubs and Songs of Praise services. This person will also lead us into some exciting new things for older people including a 'holiday at home' club. Our work amongst older people continues to grow and expand and we are hoping to appoint someone to lead this work in the autumn – watch this space!

We completed our Headliners series

In June we spent two weeks looking at some of the things making the news headlines and what God might have to say about them. We looked at 'Integrity, Trust and MPs Expenses' and 'How the Mighty Have Fallen.' The series went really well and reminded all of us again how relevant God

is for life today and how much he has to say about the issues that we are confronted with. The 11.15am services at these events included a question and answer time which was a new experiment for us. The discussions went well and is something we hope to repeat in the future.

Our feasibility study on extending the building was completed

At our Church Meeting on May 14th Ralph Allen from Allen Associates architects came to present the findings from a feasibility study they have been running for us on the possibilities for extending the building. Ralph and his team had prepared a number of options. As a meeting we heard that the most viable option would be to build a two storey extension on the back of the building to create two new meeting rooms and a children's and youth work room. Our current kitchen, lobby and room one would then be converted into a 'hub' area where people could meet and refreshments could be served and the kitchen would be moved.

Since Ralph's presentation we have been praying and asking God to show us whether this is the way forward that he would want us to go. More information including the plans and options is available from Chris Porter or Steph Littlejohn.

We held our outdoor Joint Celebration

We had a great time at our Joint Celebration on 26th June. We met at Crown Wood Primary School and enjoyed all the inflatables – bouncy castles, mega slide and giant table football. The barbeque was great and in the service we celebrated all that God has been doing in the life of our church. We also heard a great story from Helen Richens of how God has been at work in her life and how the church has helped. There is much to celebrate!





What's going on this Summer?

All across the church there are loads of things going on this summer. We thought we would get a flavour of some of the things that are happening.

New Wine

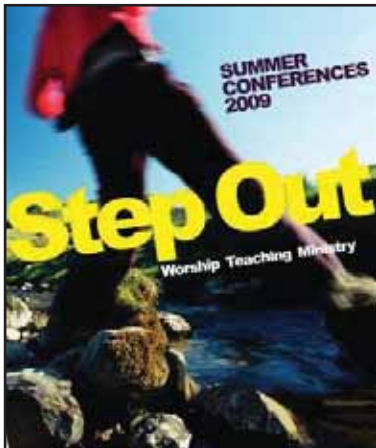
Within a day or two of the schools breaking up over 60 people from EBC are heading off to the New Wine Christian festival. We have taken a group from the church to New Wine for more than five years and this year is our largest ever group.

New Wine takes place at the Bath and West Showground in Shepton Mallet, Somerset and over 12,000 people gather together for a week of great worship, teaching, children's work and prayer ministry. Many of those who go camp on the showground in church groups, others stay in local B&Bs or rented cottages. We have always had a great time and enjoy spending time together with communal barbecues, football games and late night wine and cheese!

The children's and youth work is outstanding with live bands, craft activities, sports games and gunge tanks! Those who have been in the past to New Wine always find the experience stimulating and exciting. God works in people's lives and many have stories of the things God has done in them through their week at New Wine. If you are missing it this year, perhaps you could plan to join our group in 2010 – you won't be disappointed! For more information about New Wine go to www.new-wine.org.

Soul Survivor

Following on from New Wine the site at the Bath and West Showground is taken over by young people for the Soul Survivor Christian festival. Soul Survivor is an annual five day event where thousands gather to worship God, learn more about him and pray together. There are lots of different venues to hang out in including



chilled out cafes and heavy night spots. There are plenty of bands playing gigs and skate and sports venues. This year a group from our Unity youth work are heading off to Soul Survivor in the middle of August. They will have an amazing time camping together and heading off to the different events and activities. Check out www.soulsurvivor.com to find out lots more about it.

Summer Services

From Sunday 26th July until the end of August we are running joint Sunday morning services. Instead of our usual pattern of three different Sunday morning services we will be running one joint service at 10.15am at our church building at South Hill Road. The summer provides us with a great opportunity to be together as one church family for these services. Each week different speakers and worship leaders will pick special themes and run services that are suitable for all ages. These joint services provide us with a great opportunity to be together and to meet those we might not normally



see on a Sunday morning. Please note too that there will be no evening services during August except on Sunday 16th August when our Songs of Praise service will run at 4pm.

Fun Days

We are planning two of our community fun days this summer. The first is on Saturday 4th July at Fox Hill Primary School and the second on Saturday 12th September at Crown Wood Primary School. These fun days are completely free and include giant inflatables, bouncy castles, obstacle courses, animals, face painting and a barbeque. They run from 2.00pm until 4.30pm and are a great opportunity for you to invite your friends.

Our Building Project

Over the summer we will be continuing to think and pray about our building. Over the last few months we have been looking at the possibilities for extending the building to provide more room and better facilities for our many different events and activities. Some of our existing events are at capacity and it would be great to have more room to be able to fit more people in. We are also very aware that we would like to extend and expand the work we do to help and support our local community and those in need. We commissioned Allen Associates architects to undertake a feasibility study for us on the possibilities for extending the building. We now have the results of that study and have been praying through

and discussing what God might be calling us to do. The feasibility study lays out what might be possible with the building. Because of the restrictions of the site including the location of the trees and the slope we are limited as to what can be done.

Allen Associates have put together a number of options that include building a two storey extension across the back of the garden, fitting a lift, extending out from the back of the main hall and relocating the kitchen. To do all of this work would cost just over one million pounds. As we have been praying and reflecting on these proposals our current sense is that this might be too big a project for us to pursue at this time and that it might distract us from some of the other things that God is calling us to do. At our Church Meeting in June we fed back our comments and feelings about the project and the Church Leadership Team will be taking that feedback and preparing some possible ways ahead for us in time for our July meeting.

Over the summer we will be continuing to seek what God wants us to do regarding this project so please do carry on praying.

Thursday Fellowship Outing

On Thursday 2nd July our Thursday Fellowship group will be going on their annual outing to Wisley Gardens. It will be a great time and many people will be going and enjoying the trip and we hope the sunshine!

Placement Student

For two weeks in July we have a placement student with us. Brian Stocker who is currently studying to be a minister at Regents Park College in Oxford will be observing what we do and participating in various part of the life of the church. If you see Brian around please do make him welcome.

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

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 of 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.

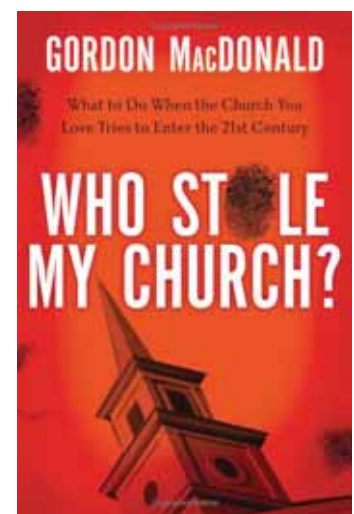
Remix Children's Helper/Leader (2-11 year olds) There is never a dull moment in our children's work! Would you like to help out this dynamic area of our church life? You need to like children and have lots of energy and enthusiasm! Contact Ruth Porter on 01344 482162 or email her at rej.porter@googlemail.com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

reviews



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Looking for some inspirational reading or music for the summer. How about trying one or more of these...



Who Stole My Church – Gordon MacDonald

MacDonald charts new territory in church growth books by turning what could have been a long list of dos and don'ts into a highly readable, even novelistic, approach to the subject. With himself as narrator, MacDonald creates a cast of church members in their 50s, 60s and 70s who meet each week to discuss where their church has been, is now and should go in the future. All I know is that someone stole my church and I'd like to get it back, says one. MacDonald delves into the feelings of the older generation as they watch new leadership take over, see changes in music and use of technology, and begin to wonder how they will fit in. He challenges their understanding of what the church is, then looks at the early church and the modern church and the many cultural influences that transform Christian spirituality. MacDonald is

especially strong when he includes young people's perspectives or brings research to bear on how people view and act on change. This is a challenging, innovative approach to a delicate subject. It's sure to benefit church leaders and members of all ages who dream of a reinvented church.

In this fictional story, pastor and author Gordon MacDonald uses topical examples and all-too-familiar characters to reassure readers that it is possible to embrace change, and to demonstrate how that change can actually be a positive influence in their church. The church, he says, has always been in a state of change; it has been changing for the last two thousand years. It is time to embrace that change and use it further the Kingdom of God

This is very easy book to read but leaves the reader with plenty of things to think about and reflect upon. It comes highly recommended.

Reviewed by Chris Porter



Hillsong United – Across the Earth: Tear Down the Walls

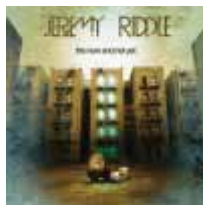
In 2009, Hillsong United return with their 10th album – featuring 10 brand new live praise & worship songs including such anthems as the title track 'Tear Down the Walls' & 'You Hold Me Now'. So what would a church with no walls look like? It looks like justice... not ignoring poverty or hunger... or the person next to me on the subway. Where faith translates to praise, and all our inadequacies kneel down at the feet of the King.... Where my wants...my needs... my aims and my ambitions bow to His. Worship that is simple, plain, effective, fair, honest, righteous, moral and authentic... Worship that calls a cross the earth, leaving redemption in its wake. This is our latest project from Hillsong United... What God is doing in us, is our story... but what you choose to do with it.. is yours. This is our heart's cry, our soul's

hope, and our certainty.

The Australian aggregation have come to be synonymous in the world of worship music with passion, determination and a generic, guitar-driven rock worship. That said, 'Tear Down The Walls' is a good album. It harnesses the songwriting capabilities of a large number of young and not-so-young musicians from within the Hillsong youth ministry, which lends a certain variety to the music featured. The familiar energy of United is evident in the early and late sections of the worship set, with Reuben Morgan and Scott Ligertwood's anthemic "Freedom Is Here" getting the ball rolling, and Joel Davies and Braden Lang's passionate rock track "Yours Forever" bringing things to a screeching but scripted halt. In the mid-section, the mood is gentled down with more reflective contributions, such as Brooke Ligertwood's "Soon" and Sam Knock's "Arms Open Wide". It is good to see a minimum of recycled material here.

Admittedly, both "Desert Song" and "Your Name High" have already been released on the 'This Is Our God' album, but after 'The iHeart Revolution' was released as a live album featuring a huge swathe of pre-released material, United fans will be glad to have something slightly different here. Top track from the album? Brooke's vocals alone have to make "Soon" pick of the bunch, but it is a tough call.

Reviewed by Ian Thomson



Jeremy Riddle – The Now and the Not Yet

The Now and Not Yet, Jeremy Riddle's eagerly anticipated second release, is a reflection of how God is moving in the life of this artist and worship leader. Riddle's celebrated 2007 album Full Attention introduced the world to this new voice, and included the #1 hit "Sweetly Broken". Now Riddle has crafted a follow-up

that is equally rich in its organic synthesis of powerful lyrics and driving rhythms.

Having set the modern worship scene alight with his 2007 debut album 'Full Attention' can Jeremy, the worship leader at Vineyard's famed Anaheim church, come up with the goods a second time? Well I have to say yes! This album gains musical strength from Riddle previously playing in a mainstream band plus spiritual strength after spending six years as a youth pastor and worship leader. 'The Now And Not Yet' has a different feel than its predecessor with deeper reflection on knowing Jesus and being one church. That said the musical arrangements are still crisp, his lyrics are crafted with unique poetic twists that are clear symbols of faith but feel free from the shackles of Christianese. The vocals are polished and range from guttural to delicate as the need arises. Whilst his style is undeniably his own, followers of U2, INXS, Jeremy Camp and Matt Redman will immediately find comfortable similarities blended into the mix. The album covers different emotions so your favourite tracks on a happy day will differ to those on a more reflective day. That said my favourite on any day is the last track "I Am Redeemer" which is immediately special. Listen to it three times then read the words as you listen to it again. It will just break your heart. "Prayer For The Church" sits on a gentle music bed as it inspires unity and getting on with the work left for us: we all know what it means. "Christ Is Risen" begins with U2 musical phrases telling us to "Quickly now, go tell the world that Christ the Lord, he has risen". The high vocals, building chords, stinging guitar solos and marching drums create a dynamic call to modern day Christians. Every song has a relevant theme and musically there is not a weak track in earshot.

Reviewed by Steve Husband

Willow Creek

In June Chris Porter, Phil Kerslake and Rob Lea travelled to Chicago to attend a conference run by Willow Creek Community Church. This church has around 20,000 members and is an amazing place. The church started over 30 years ago with a handful of young people and over the years has grown significantly and attracted many people who wouldn't call themselves Christians or go to church. Many from our church have been to conferences organised by Willow Creek in the UK. The conference that Chris, Phil and Rob attended was called the Arts Conference and covered everything from preaching to creating video presentations. The conference went on for 3 days and included worship led by Hillsongs from Australia. Here are Phil and Rob's reflections on a great few days.



So I was asked to write about my trip to Chicago. I could go on about the food, or the vast size of the state, or the biiiiigggg buildings, or the fact that my room had the biggest TV..... but then God is far bigger than all of that so I'll keep the focus on him!

I'd seen pictures of Willow Creek before but nothing quite prepares you for how big it actually is. They have a bus to pick up people from the far corners of the car park! Our church could quite easily fit in their lobby!

But again, this is totally missing the point! Their facilities are spectacular but you have to remember that they have come to this point over 30 years of hard and dedicated work that still very much continues.

What struck me most was their servant heart. Ok, they're a big church (over 20,000 members) but so many people took time out of their day to come and serve us, and serve us with such genuine joy and enthusiasm! Greeters, café staff, stewards....the list is endless.

It's easy to be negative about a big church. "It's hard to connect with God", "It's hard to build community and people get lost". But actually the opposite seems to be true! When the band kicked off it was hard not to quickly find yourself totally immersed in worship and feel God's presence. Not because it was loud and polished but because you could really see God working through all

the musicians. As for community, they have so many different groups meeting throughout the week that there really is something for everyone.

I guess for me, Chuck was the standout. He took us on a tour of Willow and throughout gave his testimony of how he was a non-Christian before he came. He kept saying "You don't need this building to do what we do". Everything they do has been started by someone with a vision and a passion. From the car repair ministry to the single mom's ministry, the bookshop and the kids work (that started in a corridor).

How often, all too often, do we suppress what we know God is calling us to do because "we don't have such and such" or "I could do it 'if'". These are just excuses and we need to step out in faith and trust that God will provide and that with him anything is possible. That's the main message I took home.

Oh, the seminars were great too and if you hear me saying 'wow' lots, there's a reason for it!

Phil Kerslake

Is it possible to describe an experience that is beyond the capability of the reporter to describe?

Or adequately convey an overwhelming of the senses; sight, sound and emotions? Explain learning that stretches the learner beyond their comfort zone, or worship that connects the

worshiper so closely to God?

Well, that's what happened during the visit to the Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago this June, when Chris, Phil and I attended the 'Arts Conference 09'.

The land, on which the buildings are sited, is stunningly beautiful. The buildings are like nothing you have ever seen before; a 'state of the art' 7500 seat auditorium, a book shop that Borders would be proud of, a restaurant that serves excellent food, an area for children's work that is at least treble the size of our whole church, and a huge 'community area/hub' where people can sit and study their bibles, pray together, or just enjoy being together. Plus a water-fall in the centre of the building!

And the worship was stunning! Can you imagine thousands of people singing Chris Tomlin's 'Happy Day' at the top of their voices, or a 'Hillsong' concert that was packed with 7500 people? Teaching sessions and break out groups that forced you to think of new and exciting possibilities.

This visit has re-energised, challenged, and motivated me to strive to reach new levels for God, and I would have gladly paid twice as much for the privilege of being there.

How can I adequately and sufficiently describe an experience like that? I don't think that I can, so won't even try!

Rob Lea