

# March 2005



***“The Resurrection will not set us free for the future unless the cross also sets us free from the past”***  
***Former Bishop of Winchester***

## Easter preparation

Within the month of March we celebrate Easter. Here are some thoughts for our reflection and prayer from Rev. Fred Woods.

‘Christmas is more popular than Easter but Christmas makes no sense without Easter. (Why celebrate the birth of a wandering preacher who lived 200 years ago and was executed at 33? We don’t celebrate Jeremiah’s birth or Plato’s).

But equally Easter without Good Friday makes no sense. Which is why many churches try to ‘enter into’ the events of Holy week before celebrating the joy of the resurrection. Triumphalist Christianity which plays down the suffering sells people short.

A former Bishop of Winchester wrote:

**“The Resurrection will not set us free for the future unless the cross also sets us free from the past”**

Let’s encourage people inside and outside the church to see the Easter weekend—which is in danger of being secularized and ‘kicked into touch’ into the realm of private piety—as the central Christian festival. I personally find the following two prayers helpful at this season:

**“Praise be to you, my Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have won for us, for all the pains and insults you have borne for us. Most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother may I see you more clearly, love you more dearly**

**and follow you more nearly, day by day.**

*St. Richard of Chichester*

**“Almighty God whose most dear son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into Glory before he was crucified, mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross may find it none other than the way of life and peace. Through Jesus Christ our Lord”**  
Common Worship

### Town centre Churches Together Easter Celebrations.

On Good Friday there will be a Walk of Witness. It is hoped many Colchester churches will join together for this event. Please gather at St. Nicholas Square at Midday. We will go through the centre of town to the corner of Eld Lane/Lion Walk.

Along the way people will be asked to give out palm crosses, together with a brief note of explanation to shoppers and on-lookers.

Dramatic storytelling will be a feature both at the beginning and at the end of the walk.

There will be music leading the walkers at the beginning, and at the gathering at the end.

### Mercury Theatre 7.30 pm

A dramatic production on the Good Friday theme including drama, songs and prayer.

Suitable for both Christian worshippers and for those who do not know the story. Please bring your friends along to this event. *Free entry*

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## Feedback, answered prayer, diary dates

### Please pray for the **MILITARY ALPHA COURSE** Starting on March 4th 2005

Please pray for this significant event. The first course is being offered to **13 Regiment RCL** at **Roman Barracks**.

Please pray for this exciting opportunity.

Pray for:

- Those organising the event
- Soldiers and families
- Future events
- Move of God within the military families based here in Colchester

### **PRAYER FOR UNIVERSITY**

This year is the 40th birthday of Colchester's university and we want to support the work of Julian Eades DNA Networks, Friends International (FI) and others that work within the University campus. Joan Davies from F.I. is organising a 40 day fast for the university from 3 am Monday 24th January until March 5th at 3 am, ending with a **prayer breakfast in the Chaplaincy in the university** (see box). There has been a terrific response and there's still a few days left if you want to be involved. Joan will supply you with some information to fuel your prayers. If you would like to be involved please contact Joan on 862070 or email her on [cosci@essex.ac.uk](mailto:cosci@essex.ac.uk)

To recognise that for the first time in memory the Easter weekend lands in the middle of term time in Essex, we decided to expand the work of "JAS Clubs" (lunchtime clubs in schools) to offer schools a resource to enable their children to really discover what Easter is about.

So from **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March to Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March** we will be

working in four primary schools and two secondary schools helping the students to "Discover Easter." In primary schools children will be discovering Easter through craft, drama and music. These will either be "discovery sessions" or the pupils themselves preparing for an assembly on Easter. In secondary schools we will be connecting the message of Easter to themes already being focussed on in school work.

Please pray that children will understand not just a chronology of the Easter story, but the real meaning of Easter and why Jesus died and rose again. Please pray that non-Christian staff will find this a helpful way to communicate the message of Easter. Thank God for the head teachers who have recognised that Easter is such an important religious festival and have been prepared to make space in the curriculum to explore it.

Pray for all those in the team working as part of this, that in conversations over craft work, music etc. they can freely share why they have chosen to believe what they believe. Pray for the opportunities to invite children to the "Easter Festival" on Easter Sunday where they will have even more opportunity to discover Easter for themselves. Thank you. Steph Neil

*More and more congregations and Christian ministries in the town are using Colchester prayernet to request prayer support for their work and projects. There have been many opportunities to share about the vision and work of CPn and I am really excited about the coming year. Thank you to everyone who has supported CPn and encouraged us to continue over the last two years. Teresa Lasky*

### SMILE MEGA KIDS CLUB

Date: 4th March 2005  
Venue: Stanway school  
Time: 7-8 pm  
Age group: 5—11 years  
Please see January prayer guide for more information

### **Sunday@7**

**Venue:** All Saints Church, Eight Ash Green

Dates: Sundays in March

Time: 7pm

A series of teaching evenings. Open to all.

Resurrection Hope

March dates:

13<sup>th</sup> Matthew 28:1-10

20<sup>th</sup> Matthew 28:11-15

27<sup>th</sup> Matthew 28:16-20

### **PRAYER BREAKFASTS: Saturday 5th March at ESSEX UNIVERSITY** 8.30- 10 a.m.

For more details contact Dennis Codd.  
Tel: 01206 395792

Please pray for the meeting on the **2nd March** when COSCI officially becomes a branch of Friends International (F.I.)

Also on **2nd March** there will be informal interviews with a couple who are interested in taking over the work of F.I. in Colchester this autumn when Joan Davies retires.



## Mission to Thailand

### Supporting the Tsunami Relief in Thailand.

Peter Cook the minister at St Luke's church Highwoods is visiting Thailand with his wife Ineke for the month of March and would very much value our prayers.

### 'Why are we going to Christ Church Bangkok?

I received an email from a friend, suggesting going out to Thailand with him to offer help. My heart leapt. Like many I guess I had already thought about doing something practical and this seemed like the nudge to do it? However, we soon found out that the main relief agencies were not encouraging ad hoc help – they were stretched enough without untrained people to worry about! My part of the research was with churches (I had the sense of Acts 16 "come over and help") and was put in touch with Christ Church Bangkok. We will be going there to Andrew and his wife Suzanne a break.

Andrew began his ministry at Christ Church last July and 'hit the road running' as is often the case. He and his wife Suzanne were going to take their first break and visit home in Sydney Australia after Christmas – but of course that was cancelled as the Tsunami hit and Christ Church became heavily involved in relief help. They already have a mission planned to the displaced Karen people in North Thailand in April and then they have their Centenary celebrations - so March was the only possible time for them to get a break.

### How is Christ Church involved in Tsunami Relief?

"Christ Church responded at once to assist both the administration of relief programmes, but also spent much one-on-one time with victims of the disaster. These were injured people in hospital, people who had missing immediate family members or friends, people who knew their loved ones had died. We have shared the grief, the horror of the experience, and mourned with the survivors"

Christ Church Bangkok is actively involved in combining resources and talents with numerous English and Thai-speaking churches, businesses and more than seven Christian relief organisations through the Thai Protestant Committee (TPC). TPC meets several times per week at Christ Church under the banner of *"We Love Thailand"*.

We are prioritising villages away from the tourism areas, starting with Baan Nai Rai, Baan Tap La Mu and Baan Koh Nok. Two more villages are to be confirmed by team members on the ground. Key goals, in priority order, include assistance with fishing boat and gear repair and purchase, rebuilding of houses and village centres, and provision of care and counselling. Progress is underway in the 3 initial villages. Temporary housing has been constructed, with sufficient food and water available. Debris is being cleared. In Baan Tap La Mu we have been able to donate Bt. 40,000 to a group of villagers towards squid pot reconstruction. In addition, we provided Bt. 60,000 for boat building tools and materials – four boat builders within the village will

work together to build boats, building one boat per month.

The provision of ongoing care and counselling is so critical. The impact of trauma and suffering cannot be allayed with a new home or a new boat or a new squid pot alone. Care and counselling are important, and wrap like a blanket around everything else. We are sharing God's love for the "whole" person: physical, spiritual, emotional, and social. The Holy Spirit is at work and we are moving forward.

### What will Pete and Ineke be doing?

Pete will be preaching and leading at Sunday worship. We will visit the reconstruction projects in the southern disaster areas and support there as necessary. Back at Bangkok there will be some presence at the relief co-ordination meetings and generally keeping morale up in the busy office. There will no doubt be listening and prayer opportunities and possibly the normal sort of pastoral things that 'come up' (they tend to when vicars go on holiday!). Ineke will be available for administration help in the office, which is at full stretch as well as using her pastoral gifts.

### How Can You Support?

Your prayer will obviously be important. This will be a faith stretching experience not least with the culture changes. **If you wish to receive prayer emails from Thailand then sign up by emailing:**

**[peter\\_cook@ntlworld.com](mailto:peter_cook@ntlworld.com)**

## CPn 2 years old

Colchester PrayerNet is two years old. We started praying on 1st March 2003. Many have joined us since then. God has been good to us and I believe He is pleased when His people unite in prayer. Many wonderful things have happened in the last two years. Of course there are many reasons for this, but we know that our prayers will have played some part in seeing things change for good here!

I know that many in this town have held to this promise 'If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways. Then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land'

I believe many have done this faithfully for years. As we unite in prayer let's ask God to build:

1. **On the past.** The prayers of the saints gone before. Those that loved not their lives unto death in this town Rev 12:11
2. **For the future.** We look to see the next generations prayers established to build on the present and take us into the future
3. **Walls of protection** around our city. Ezekiel 13:4-5, 22:30-31,
4. **A temple**—a dwelling place for God Ephesians 2:22

### We give thanks for:

- Every way in which the church is strong and active in mission, social concern, work with the homeless, mentally ill, the counseling services, those working to support the family, the elderly and the disabled,.
- Outreach to young people. Youth groups, CYO, holiday

- clubs, schools work, Xtra Time, school assemblies, Prayer into Schools, Christian Unions, Youth Alpha etc.
- Church leadership. We want to acknowledge the faithful service of the church leaders. Also thank God for leaders in the Council, hospital and business sector.
- Unity— for opportunities to work together. Pray for strong unity amongst leadership. Pray for humility and openness in all of us for the sake of those we are trying to reach.
- United prayer, for the many years of united prayer in this place. Answered prayer.
- The encouragement we have received from God to continue working together— for the many Church ministries now firmly established. For 'Seeking God's Blessing for Colchester' and planned events like 'On The Move'.
- Salvation. Thank God for all those who have become aware of God in a new way during the last few months. May they have a deepening understanding of who He is.
- Alpha—ongoing in the town. The many that have come to faith through it.
- Mission. For the work with international Students at the University. For the work of F.I. For the Colchester business men working to establish new business less developed countries. Missionaries sent out from congregations in this town.
- Those that work with the soldiers and families at the Garrison. Alpha courses now starting at the Barracks.

### Please pray that:

- God will continue to cause us to be salt and light. To shine

bright and lead people to the Truth.

- We remain faithful in prayer, true to pray the will of God.
- That we are bold in prayer and in action until we see this town transformed
- God will move us on to see His Church revived, prayerful, active in our faith.
- We will see His Kingdom advance through His church in this place.
- As we look we will see only One Church, One Body working together and serving each other faithfully.
- We will not grow weary but will learn to wait on the Lord, renew our strength, knowing that He uses the weak things to confound the wise. Willingly doing things His way.
- That His Kingdom come, His will be done - here as it is in Heaven.
- We see a mighty harvest of souls.
- We will unite in the simple truth of loving Jesus and wanting to reach others with the good news of the Gospel, and not divide over doctrinal differences.
- That God's name will be glorified in Colchester!

**'Almighty Lord, no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid. That foundation is Jesus Christ. We admit that we have not been able to finish building on this foundation in such a way that we may become the dwelling place of God. We have sometimes even been the cause of it's ruin. Even if our work should be lost, save us, Lord and give us a fresh chance to work for unity. Create in us an ardent longing for the unity of your church and enable us to work towards it. Amen'**

## Crime and Drugs Audit

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires Colchester Borough Council, Colchester Police, Colchester Primary Care Trust, Essex County Council, Essex Fire and Rescue Service and other agencies to work together to conduct and publish a crime and drugs audit for Colchester every three years. They are expected to set and publish objectives and targets and monitor progress made. The current strategy and Crime reduction Plan expires on 31st March 2005 and the new strategy will run from April 2005 to March 2008.

It would be wonderful to focus our prayers over the next three year period, to see the tide turn on the results of this last three year audit. Here are some results to fuel our prayers.

### Colchester has:

- the highest detection rate for crime, 34.06 of all crime per 1,000 as opposed to an average of 25.99
- the fourth lowest level for recorded crime, 22 crimes per 1,000 as opposed to an average of 25.

### Decreasing incidents in Colchester:

- Theft of a motor vehicle fell by 3.7% (reflecting a national downward trend)
- Theft from a motor vehicle fell by 26.1%
- Domestic burglary fell by 1.5%

### Increasing in Colchester:

- All crime increased by 6.2% (in line with national increases), at 94.4 per 1000 population it is still lower

than rates for Essex, England and Wales.

- Violence against the person rose 19.4%, this was higher than Essex, the East and England and Wales.
- Sexual offences were up by 12.2%, higher than the increase in Essex, the East, but lower than England and Wales.
- Criminal damage offences increased by 15.7%
- Robbery increased by 21.3%

The wards identified as having highest crimes recorded were: Castle, New town, St Andrews, St Annes, Harbour Highwoods, Shrub end and Berechurch.

The top causes of crime were seen to be:

1. Alcohol
2. Young people with nothing to do
3. Lack of parental control
4. Not enough police presence

### Emerging draft priorities are therefore seen to be:

- To reduce drug and alcohol misuse
- To reduce anti-social behaviour
- To reduce the involvement of children and young people in acts of crime and disorder
- To reduce violent crime including: domestic violence, hate crime—racial and homophobic, sexual offences, violence against the person
- To continue to reduce other crime: burglary, vehicle crime, criminal damage
- To continue to make Colchester an even safer place to live, work, study and visit including achieving a safer town centre, reducing business crime
- To support and promote part-

nerships and multi-agency working including the united Solutions (U.S) problems Solving Process and the development of the action groups

- To deliver the Prolific and other Priority Offenders Strategy 'Tackling prolific offenders reducing crime'

We thank God for :

1. opportunities to engage with issues addressed in this audit
2. The power of prayer!
3. The partnerships formed throughout the town to tackle these problems
4. Projects that reach into the lives of those effected both directly and indirectly by drugs and crime
5. United Solutions—a fresh opportunity for the church to serve it's community
6. God's people in positions of influence
7. Voluntary organisations that give so much of their time and energy for the good of others
8. The good news of the gospel that brings hope to every person and situation

### **Proverbs 24:11-12**

*'Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say "But we knew nothing about this" does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?'*

### **Psalms 82:3-4**

*'Defend the cause of the and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked'*



## More dates, feedback and prayer requests

### Easter Festival

'Please pray for a community Easter Festival that the Kingsland congregations are putting on from 12 till 2.30 Easter Sunday on the King George V playing field between Lexden and Stanway. We are inviting the community to celebrate Easter in a fun family way. It will look like a fete with an arena but the 20 or so stalls will be themed so that we can tell the Easter story. Each stall will have a plaque telling a bit more of the story. The programme will include a quiz that encourages people to read the plaques.

In the arena we will have some musical and dance type activities and a group called Tough Talk, a bunch of power-lifting ex bouncers and gangland guys with a powerful story of redemption and an entertaining presentation with weights. We will also have a storytelling tent, film clips from the Easter story, a cross focus and a prayer tent

The stalls, sideshows and events will be free, though there will be opportunity to purchase food and drinks. We would love this to be a large community event that causes a stir in the area and allows the whole community to celebrate Jesus.

Because Easter doesn't fall in the Spring holiday this year we have taken the opportunity to try to do this, and we have also be able to offer some local primary schools some input to lessons and assemblies, which will also help us advertise the festival. Please pray for good weather and a Jesus glorifying community impact. Thank you'. Neil Loxley

### Feedback from last month:

'I saw a picture of combine harvesters in a huge field, each harvesting as they move. When they got in the way of one another, they simply adjusted in another direction as there was still plenty of harvest field left to harvest. I felt this was a picture for the church leaders as well as congregations. Do not accuse one another of 'sheep stealing', just adjust when you need to, because it is about the Kingdom of God. Have a Kingdom mentality. Be flexible to adjust because there remains huge harvest field. Don't be narrow minded. Be open-minded. Sheep ultimately belong to God, the chief shepherd. The harvest field belongs to him. We are to co-labour with him, not against him. We are a hindrance to his work if we get caught up in petty things like 'sheep stealing'. He works all things together for good. Don't be disappointed when your harvesting turns out differently to what you expected. Be flexible, be led by God's spirit, not your own flesh, not your own understanding. His ways are higher than our ways.'

Amanda

**Thank you to everyone who contacts CPn. Please continue to let us know how God leads you in prayer. By post to: 1, Lodge Court, West Bergholt, CO6 3JL or email Teresa at : [admin@colchesterprayernet.co.uk](mailto:admin@colchesterprayernet.co.uk)**

**The prayer guide is edited by Teresa Lasky. (The contributors views are their own, and do not necessarily express those of the editor).**

**Seeking God's Blessing For Colchester** are offering an opportunity to gather to pray and celebrate Pentecost together.

Date: Sunday 15th May 2005

**Venue:** St Botolphs Church

**Time:** 8 pm

More information soon.  
Everyone welcome!

### My place in God's Harvest Field

SATURDAY 14th MAY

St Johns' church, Ipswich Rd.

Time: 7 p.m.

Meet the FI team informally over a cup of tea/coffee + recent display of recent work + short update of work locally.

7:30pm. Praise and worship followed by guest Speaker Patrick Johnston, WEC Field Director and author of Operation World.

There will then be a time of reflection and prayer.

**We pray for Peter Adams and his team 'THROUGH-FAITH MISSIONS' with their MISSION TO THE TOWN OF BRAINTREE**

31st May - 10th June 2005

(Headed up by Daniel Cozens & Peter Adams)

### TEAM MEMBERS NEEDED

Training Weekend at St. Paul's Baintree 29th/30th April  
Details from: [peter@through-faith-missions.org](mailto:peter@through-faith-missions.org)

Every blessing, Peter