



February 2012

Vision for 2012

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We continue to pray alongside Colchester church leaders as they share with us vision for 2012.

This month we hear from Revd. Jeremy Noles (St. Luke's church, Highwoods) and Revd. Paul Norrington (Christchurch)

St Luke's Church, Highwoods

In 2012 St Luke's will - all being well - become legally separate from our 'mother church' St John's, who planted us on Highwoods nearly 20 years ago now.

This is a decision which both churches have come to feel is the right thing after much thought and prayer - time to cut the apron strings!

So my prayer for St Luke's this year, as we take this step of independence and full responsibility for our own life, is that we will continue to abide in Jesus, the vine, and as we do so to continue to grow and bear much fruit.

My desire is to see the community of Highwoods transformed and to see God's kingdom come in ever greater measure, in tangible ways in the community we serve, as people are saved, healed and set free to live the life in all its fullness that Jesus came to offer them.

In this I pray we will continue to work alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ from other local churches, that as we work together in unity we will know God's blessing on all we do in accordance with his promise in Psalm 133.

And I suppose really that is also my prayer thinking more widely about our town and the Church in our town this year: that we will continue to see ways in which we can work together, across our different streams, styles and emphases.

Bill Hybels famously wrote "the local church is the hope of the world". I think he is right!

In these difficult times the people of our town desperately need hope, so my prayer is that every church will engage creatively in mission to take Jesus, hope of the nations to the people of the community or communities they serve. But I also pray that we will seek to discern ways in which the Church in Colchester can work strategically together where that is what God is leading us to do, and where we can achieve more together than we could separately.

In it all, my desire is to see His kingdom come, His will be done. Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!

Jeremy Noles

Friday 3rd February Christians in Sport Evening.

The quiz evening will be held at the Weston Homes Community Stadium. Entrance is free. Teams should comprise 5/6 people - please contact Liz Bird to register your team or for more information: liz@colchesterchurches.org.uk

Vision for 2012 cont.

Christchurch, Ireton Road

"Headline from the Colchester Evening Gazette:

Surprised by God – Colchester Church Transformed in 2012

To quote a line from the musical My Fair Lady: "wouldn't it be lovely"!

Many Church leaders and lay people from the Anglican churches in and around Colchester recently attended a gathering of 1000 Christians at the Brentwood Centre. From Bishops to church magazine editors, we gathered to imagine what the church might look like in 2025 and to seek fresh ways of being a transforming presence in the large and diverse Diocese which we inhabit. And just to ensure there were no 'solo flyers', many ecumenical leaders and friends were invited to the 'party' too.

As part of the exercise we were to imagine what church might look like in the coming years and how as Christians we might inhabit the world distinctively – not set apart but set within our communities sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

Doesn't the church do this already? The simple answer is yes. The church has been around a very long time and is very much part of the fabric of community life. But this may not mean that the church, the body of Christ lives a distinctive and obvious Christ centred life.

To quote my Diocesan Bishop Rt. Revd Stephen Cottrell, "every Christian has a ministry... every Christian should live a distinctive life. The way we inhabit the world should be different. This does not mean that we are somehow better

than other people. It is manifestly true that there are all sorts of good and generous people who are not yet part of the Christian community. But it does mean that there should be something distinctive and attractive about the way we live our lives. Conversely, if our lives are indistinguishable from anyone else's it is little wonder that people conclude that the Christian faith is our hobby; a fascinating and exhausting pastime, but not the life changing transformation that is evident in the lives we lead Monday to Saturday. "

Over the coming months and indeed years, the Anglican Church in Colchester will be seeking ways of being God's church inhabiting the place into which He has called us with distinctive and obvious Christian lives.

I would urge all churches or every denomination and setting under God to pray that 2012 will see the church, the body of Christ transformed into a living and life changing presence in homes, businesses, on street corners, churches and Christian communities across Colchester.

By inhabiting our town and community distinctively, it must be our hope that people will come to know Jesus as we too seek to know him more.

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. 2: Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's

will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will".

Revd Paul Norrington

Rector of Christ Church Local Ecumenical Partnership

London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LIICC) PrayerWorks seeks to support and network workplace pray-ers, sharing creative ways to pray and the stories of God's intervention, so that we don't lose heart. Instead we are re-envisioned and re-energised to come before the God who answers prayer

Join the Journey

The 'journey' is an opportunity to follow a prayer pathway for 40 days. The perspective we are focussing on at the moment is blessing. Why not join with us in praying for your workplace and colleagues. Throughout the Bible 40 day journeys lead to significant change e.g. Jesus in the wilderness or Elijah travelling to Horeb.

You will receive a short 'prompt to pray' each day to provide focus and encouragement. Knowing that other Christians are also praying provides a sense of companionship on the journey and an opportunity to share experiences.

[Join a 40-day prayer journey](#) to pray for your workplace.

Prayer Breakfast

The next prayer breakfast will be on **Saturday 4th February** at 170, Berechurch Road.

For more details ring Aubrey 864972 or Joan 862070.

The Open Gate

The Open Gate is a new page in the monthly guide giving opportunity for people to share thoughts and prayer burdens in a more detailed way and perhaps at a deeper level. If you would like to contribute to this page contact CPn in the usual way.

Extraordinary Prayer

‘The primary reason we pray is not because of the change that may or may not come as a result of our prayers. Nor do we primarily pray because of the inspiring stories of those who have gone before us. The principal reason we pray is because Jesus taught us to pray. Following Jesus, which is ultimately what Christianity is all about, is a lifelong journey of learning to live as Jesus lives, and that includes learning how to pray even as Jesus prayed. *“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion?” Jesus asked his followers, “Come to me,”* he continued:

“Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll lean to live freely and lightly.” (Matt. 11:28-30 The Message)

When Jesus’ disciples asked him, “Teach us how to pray”, they had recognised that prayer was the open secret of Jesus’ unusual communion with the One he called Father.

Jesus spent an entire night in prayer before he chose the twelve disciples who would become the revolutionary carriers

of his kingdom (Luke 6:12-16). And before he went to the cross Jesus prayed with such astonishing passion that he sweated drops of blood (Luke 22:39-44).

Every extraordinary period of prayer in the life of Jesus preceded a vital and very definite shift in his ministry. These unusual moments of intercession marked the critical turning points of his life and were always in advance of some specific purpose of his Father was leading him toward. Lasting anywhere from a few hours to forty days, such extraordinary prayer seemingly prepared Jesus for what was coming next.

If God is calling us to pray in an extraordinary way at present, then it is most likely because God is preparing us for a very specific purpose. The point is not simply to pack our church full of people or count as many conversions as we can. It is, rather, to pray like Jesus prayed; in steady obedience to God, in honest expectation of authentic and lasting transformation, and with a genuine willingness to do whatever God calls us to do’.

Michelle Tennans **Michelle Tennans—Psalm Drummers**

WORD AND SPIRIT (A prophecy from Smith Wigglesworth—1947) When the new church phase is on the wane, there will be evidenced in the churches something that has not been seen before: a coming together of those with an emphasis on the Word and those with an emphasis on the Spirit.

When the Word and the Spirit come together, there will be the biggest movement of the Holy

Spirit that the nation, and indeed the world, has ever seen. It will mark the beginning of a revival that will eclipse anything that has been witnessed within these shores, even the Wesleyan and the Welsh revivals of former years. The outpouring of God’s Spirit will flow over from the UK to the mainland of Europe, and from there will begin a missionary move to the ends of the earth.

There are several ways you can connect with, experience and have your say about the ministry of CYO to young people over the next couple of months.

The CYO Open Evening on Monday 20th February, 8pm at Kingsland Church, is a great place to meet the team, hear the stories of how our work is changing the lives of students and to explore some of the resources we’re using or developing. This year we want to look at some ideas around work with Primary Schools, so if you are involved as a teacher, visitor or volunteer and would like to see more happening in this sector, do join us for a conversation about what the future might hold.

There will also be a big focus on Chaplaincy, one of the most outstanding opportunities we’ve ever had in schools. As someone who supports CYO we really hope you can be there.

We’re also really excited about the Beloved Women’s day which is on **Saturday 17th March**. Every blessing,

Tim Abbott
Director, CYO

Friends International

Friends International Update.

I thought this story from Taiwan would encourage you.

'A' from Taiwan became a Christian in her last week with us at the University of Essex about 4 years ago. She had been asking LOTS of questions and had been to many Bible studies and church services. She had a real battle when she got back and gave up a boyfriend who was not a Christian. Later she had the joy of leading her brother and mother to the Lord. Her brother has inoperable cancer and her father was devastated. However it appears to the doctors great surprise that her brother has been healed in answer to prayer. Her father attended church for the first time recently. Please pray that her father will also come to the Lord.

Praise for:

- Students that are interested in studying the Bible
- The folk in this town who befriend students
- Encouraging news of past students who have led another member of the family or a friend to the Lord.

Please continue to pray for:

- Chatterbox at the ESC on Lexden road
- The continued difficulty concerning one of the groups that FI has been responsible for
- Sufficient funding for Linda Pepper (our new staff worker). She works 3 days a week and at present is only

funded for one day a week. If anyone feels led to help in this important work please e-mail:

frinco@essex.ac.uk for details

- Michael and Caroline as they have February off as a holiday in celebration of their retirement..
- Continued unity of the team as there will inevitably be changes with the new leadership.

Many thanks. Happy New Year from Joan and the Friends International teams.

Aglow International

Aglow International

Aglow International (formerly Women Aglow) is an interdenominational Christian organisation with over 120 groups for women meeting in Britain each month, and since 2005 a growing number of mens groups.

We have been meeting in Colchester in various venues for over twenty years and for the past year have been meeting at Kingsland Church Lexden.

Aglow is built on prayer and outreach and our aim is to encourage women to fellowship together and also to reach out to non Christian women from all backgrounds and to show them the love of God.

Our monthly meetings consist of coming together in an informal

atmosphere to share together and hear a visiting speaker.

Our next meeting is being held on Saturday 18th February commencing at 2.00pm and ending between 3.30 - 4.00pm with refreshments. We would love to see you and can assure you of a very warm welcome. We do have to make a small charge to cover our expenses.

On Wednesday 7th March we will be meeting at the Oak Tree Coffee House, High Woods between 10.00 - 11.30 and we would be delighted for anyone to join us.

If you would like further information about Aglow International or our meetings then contact Corinne on:- 01787 227898 or email corinnebeales@yahoo.co.uk

CPn Prayer Wall. You can post prayers for our town on the Prayer Wall, which is on our website.

www.colchesterprayernet.co.uk

Facebook There is now a Community Group called Colchester Prayernet. Visit us, share prayers, good news stories, burdens and events.

To contact Teresa Lasky: teresa@colchesterprayernet.co.uk or phone: 01206 242235

The contributors' views are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor.