

Union Church News

March/April 2008

Baptist pastor Steve Chalke appointed UN special advisor

Baptist World Alliance press release 25 February 2008



Steve Chalke, a Baptist pastor from Britain, has been appointed special advisor to the United Nation's Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT).

Chalke, chair of Stop the Traffik, a global coalition of some 1,000 organizations and charities in 60 countries that works to stop the buying and selling of people, will advise the UN on Community Action against Human Trafficking within the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

UN.GIFT was launched in March 2007 by the UNODC and is managed in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration, the International Labor Organization, the UN Children's Fund, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The author of more than 40 books has been a long time campaigner to end poverty through housing, healthcare and educational projects. He has become a major advocate in the anti-trafficking campaign.

"The crime of people trafficking – or, to put it in stark terms, modern slavery – for sex, forced labour and even organ harvesting is one that shames us all," Chalke said during the opening session of the first international anti-human trafficking forum held

in Vienna, Austria, from February 13 to 15. The event, planned by UN.GIFT, drew 1,200 delegates from the 192-member countries of the UN.

Human trafficking is "the world's fastest growing crime," and is "a great evil" that needs to be defeated, Chalke said. Approximately 2.5 million persons, mostly aged 18 to 24, become victims of human trafficking worldwide each year, generating an estimated US\$31 billion.

Chalke, described by Paul Montacute, Director of Baptist World Aid, the relief and development arm of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), as "probably the UK's best known Baptist pastor," was one of the major speakers at the 1988 Baptist World Alliance Youth Conference in Glasgow, Scotland, and at the 1995 BWA World Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Chalke also led a Focus Group at the BWA Centenary World Congress in Birmingham, England in 2005 titled an "Afternoon with Steve Chalke," with focus on "The Church – The Real Health Service and the role of the Church in building the Kingdom of God."

A message from the Editor

Sorry that this issue of Union Church News is published a week late. Unfortunately my computer died and I didn't have time to complete the magazine for 2nd March.

In case you're wondering, after my article on Housegroups in the last issue I did get around to doing something about it and am glad that I made the effort. If you're still unsure, I can highly recommend that you go for it!



Debi

Union Church
High Street
Heathfield
TN21 8LB
Telephone: 01435 867195
www.unionchurch.co.uk

Church Office:
3a Cherwell Road
Heathfield
TN21 8JT
Telephone: 01435 866400
Mobile: 07806 200 780

A message from Mark Law and religious liberty - the long view

Dear friends,

The issue of religious freedom and how the law of the land accommodates minority groups is not a new one on this island.

In 1603 Thomas Helwys wrote a book with the snappy title "A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity" (strangely it did not make the bestseller list). Helwys happened to be a Baptist but Congregationalists were united with their Baptist friends in the belief that every person should be given freedom of conscience in matters of religious belief and worship in an era when expressing this belief was illegal. In a suicidal move, Helwys addressed and dedicated his book to the King, who promptly put him in prison where it is believed that he subsequently died. Helwys was not a relativist who thought that it didn't matter what you believed so long as you were sincere, neither was he an early pioneer of the ecumenical movement. His interpretation of the book of Revelation led him to conclude that the Church of England was the whore of Babylon and, somewhat unwisely, he expressed this opinion to the King, one of whose titles was 'Defender of the (Anglican) Faith'.

Defending the right

I am at pains to point out that I do not agree with Helwys on this and hold my Anglican brothers and sisters in this generation in the warmest affection. But the basic premise behind Helwys' strong invective was that even if he disagreed with the state church (which at that time persecuted dissenters in a totalitarian regime), he would defend their right to believe whatever they wanted to. He just wanted them to extend the same respect and freedom to him. His belief was summed up in these now famous words: "For men's religion to God is between God and themselves. The King shall not answer for it. Let them be heretics, Turks (*Muslims*), Jews or whatsoever, it appertains not to the earthly power to punish them in the least measure."

Helwys was arguing that the law should stay out of matters of religion. In recent weeks Rowan Williams has argued that, in order to avoid alienating Muslims, some aspects of Sharia Law might be used as a second system which Muslims can opt into if they choose. In some senses this is a different debate, but in one sense Williams is arguing that it is important to respect their freedom to practise their Muslim faith. He rightly observes that the rights of women and the religious freedom of Muslims would need to be preserved by maintaining the precedence of English criminal and civil law where the two conflict. Rowan Williams is arguing for a Pluralist State which gives equal weight to the beliefs of all people by allowing their cultural norms and laws to operate where possible within the overarching structure of English Law.

Optimistic

I would defend Rowan Williams' right to say what he likes even though I disagree with him. I would defend anyone's right follow their beliefs even if I think they are wrong. It's not that I want Muslims to be prevented from practising their faith; the problem is that Sharia Law was framed at a time and in a place which was a Muslim Sacral (religious) State and dissent from Muslim dogma and practice was not permitted. Today some Muslims wish to use Sharia Law to establish a totalitarian religious state in which freedom of belief is not permitted. Conversion to Christianity, for example, is still viewed by some interpretations of Sharia Law as meriting death so it is not really compatible with religious freedom. Rowan Williams is not advocating the accommodation of all aspects of Sharia Law and it is dishonest of the popular press to suggest that he is. I think that the problem is that he is over optimistic about the ability of some Muslims to restrict themselves to implementing only those parts of Sharia Law which do not conflict with the religious freedom of all.

So I want to agree with Thomas Helwys that, where possible, law and religion should be kept separate. For example, I am against any kind of blasphemy law whether it claims to be Christian or Muslim. Freedom of speech means that people can say what they want to, even if I do find it offensive. The only laws that are

needed with regard to religion are those that preserve the freedom of all.

After all, I believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ is itself true and powerful enough to change lives, so I don't need the state to defend it. That's why our Church is growing and the gospel is spreading.

So let's be confident in the power of God to turn around not just individual lives, but our community and our nation. Let's tell people clearly what we believe and what we think without apology or compromise. The way to be saved is put our trust in Jesus Christ, to repent and believe, and live Jesus' way: there is no other religion that can offer salvation or saving revelation apart from Christianity (in all its various denominational forms). The right to say this is the hard won freedom we must preserve and practise. Other religions (including atheism) have the right to be wrong and we will defend that right, and love and serve those with whom we disagree, but not at the cost of being clear about what we believe to be true ourselves.

Yours in Jesus name!

Mark

Finance report - February 2008

We are pleased to report a balance of £762 in the General Fund for 2007. In addition, it has been possible to add £1,200 to Reserves.

Thank you so much for your continued regular support.

2008 is another year when potential income is less than anticipated expenditure. May the Lord encourage us to meet this ongoing challenge. Financial commitment is a vital ministry.

Finance for various projects already agreed, i.e. kitchen refurbishment, is held in separate dedicated accounts.

Thank you.

The Lord bless,

Alwyn

Flower Rota



March 2nd	Mrs T Rutherford
March 9th	Mrs S Cronk
March 16th	Mrs F Newman
March 23rd	Easter Day
March 30th	Mrs C Sheppard
April 6th	Mrs M Dodd
April 13th	Sunday Club
April 20th	Mrs C Stallman
April 27th	Mrs M Wells
May 4th	Mrs R Dimsdale

News in brief

Union Church Diaconate

Following the election at the Annual General Meeting, the church deacons for the next year are Elizabeth Banks, Mike Dimsdale, Alwyn Fletcher, Sue Fletcher, David Greengrow, Sue Mumford, Colin Saunders, Elizabeth Tachauer, Christine Thomas and Debi Tompsett. At the AGM Alwyn Fletcher stood down as Treasurer after 27 years in the post and we all wish him and Norah well in their 'retirement'! We thank Christine Thomas for agreeing to take on this demanding role.

Union Book Group

We are currently reading 'Atonement' by Ian McEwan and are reviewing how regularly we meet as some people are unable to meet every time, which is a shame. For details of the next meeting please contact Julie Baxter on 868799.



Donations for Penge

The Penge Mission box will be in the Coffee Lounge entrance lobby for two weeks during May. Davida Price is happy to supply the list of required and acceptable items – please call 862126.



Union Church News on the internet

Don't forget, all editions of the new format Union Church News are available to read on the Activities and Events page of the church website: www.unionchurch.co.uk



Sunday Club and Sunday Special

Sunday Special resumed its usual programme on February 3rd and, for the first time ever, all 40 places at the breakfast tables were filled! By the end of the morning we had a total of 46 children in Sunday Special (and a further 11 children and young people in church or in the crèche). Many of the children accepted our invitation to come in fancy hats (in the spirit of 'Mardi Gras'). Points were given to all the teams for the hats that came and prizes were given for the four which the staff liked best: to Cristelle, Mollie, Catherine and Ali. We discussed 'Pancake Day' and the story of Jesus' temptations in the desert which is remembered during Lent. Once again we agreed to save coins in Smarties tubes as a Lent project, and the children chose this year to give their money to 'CRY'.

Sunday Club enjoyed a variety of quizzes and other unusual sessions during January while the kitchen was being refurbished but we are now back to our normal classes in the junior part of Sunday Club.



Some reorganisation has taken place within the

Architects group. The older young people (mainly sixth form at present) will no longer be part of the Sunday Club but will stay in church on Sunday mornings and will have their own Youth Fellowship (still to be formally named) on alternate Sunday evenings where they will discuss Mark's message from the morning, or perhaps do a brief bible study, and discuss issues concerning them as young adults. The remaining Architects will meet normally in two groups with two leaders, and will go straight from the service to the church office, where they can first enjoy coffee and a snack before dividing into their groups in separate rooms for their discussions. We hope this will prove to be a good arrangement for all concerned: but we really do need more help on a rota basis to lead all these groups. If you feel able to help with any of the age groups (from age 3 up to the teenagers), please speak to me or Mark as soon as possible.

Sue Mumford



Sunday Club and Sunday Special attendance prizes

1 July	Katie	Architect	Book: "Friends Forever" - Mary Taylor CD: "Shout Praises Kids" (Friend of God) FROG (Forever Rely On God) bracelet, pencil, rubber	250 stars 
16 September	Camilla	Architect	CD: "Beautiful News" (Matt Redman)	250 stars 
25 November	Nathan	Sparkler	Children's Picture Bible – Old & New Testament Stories retold Book: "Share God's Love" Two sponge balls and a 'Christian fish'	100 stars
16 December	Jessica	Sparkler	Book: "Treasures of the Snow" - Patricia St John Inspirational rubber slide bracelet Bible verse poster	150 stars
23 December	Summer	Bricklayer	Rainbow Good News Bible 'I love Jesus' pen	50 stars
	Amy	Bricklayer	The Children's Bible in 365 Stories Stationery set in pencil case Poster	50 stars
30 December	Harriet	Starlet		15 stars
	Grace	Starlet	The Beginner's Bible – Timeless Children's Stories	50 stars
13 January	Stephen	Architect		5 stars
20 January	Hannah	Architect		5 stars
27 January	Emily	Crèche		30 Teddy Bears
3 February	Silas	Bricklayer	The Children's Bible in 365 Stories	50 stars
	Liam	Sunday Special		15 stars

Congratulations Liam!

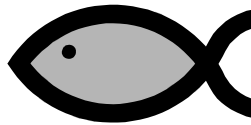
We have just learned that Liam, one of our regular attendees at Sunday Special and the Summer Holiday Club, has won a place at Christ's Hospital School for September 2008. He was one of 900 applicants for 112 places and he came through successfully. This means he will be a boarder in a school which offers lots of sport, numerous opportunities to join clubs of every description and an excellent academic and spiritual education. Congratulations Liam! We hope you will thoroughly enjoy this next chapter in your life.

Sudoku Challenge

	4					2		
7	2	8	9					
	9	1						3
		3			4			
	5		2					
		2		8	1			6
5				2		3		
					8			
			7		6			1

© Copyright 2004 The Word Puzzles

Kids' Bits



Wordsearch

www.KidExplorers.com

Easter: A Time for Rejoicing

N	R	G	D	V	E	T	F	N	H	S	B	E	V	O
O	A	N	V	B	L	O	O	D	T	S	M	V	I	E
I	T	I	S	F	E	M	D	U	A	E	O	I	Q	Z
T	O	K	L	C	P	A	Y	M	E	N	T	L	S	I
C	Z	C	E	S	R	W	T	V	D	E	N	A	P	Y
E	Q	O	G	K	S	O	T	I	B	V	V	L	O	P
R	Q	R	N	D	O	A	W	H	N	I	I	C	G	U
R	D	E	A	M	L	W	C	N	O	G	H	R	T	L
U	S	O	H	T	D	L	Y	R	H	R	S	O	L	J
S	U	B	S	T	I	T	U	T	I	O	N	S	N	K
E	M	P	T	Y	E	Q	N	S	T	F	T	S	J	F
R	L	T	X	V	R	W	T	A	P	Z	I	C	P	N
U	J	E	S	U	S	M	I	U	M	Z	L	C	V	Z
E	C	U	Y	J	L	T	Q	P	C	Y	I	H	E	H
D	L	O	Z	H	T	Y	Z	M	R	A	J	E	I	D

- | | |
|----------|--------------|
| Alive | Angels |
| Beatings | Blood |
| Christ | Cross |
| Crown | Darkness |
| Death | Die |
| Empty | Forgiveness |
| Jesus | King |
| Light | Nails |
| Payment | Resurrection |
| Rock | Sacrifice |
| Soldiers | Substitution |
| Thorns | Tomb |

The resurrection of Jesus Christ

from the Books of Matthew and Mark

Bible crossword for Kids

15

- Across**
- 1 where they laid Jesus after He died (Matt. 27:60)
 - 4 the place where Jesus died (Matt.27:33)
 - 5 Jesus and two thieves were _____ together (Matt.27:38)
 - 8 mother of Jesus
 - 9 The angel said "He is _____ He is not here" (Mark 16:6)
 - 10 They made Jesus wear a scarlet _____ (Matt.27:28)
 - 12 Jesus was betrayed for _____ pieces of silver (Matt.27:3)
 - 14 Jesus was _____ of any crime (Matt.27:4)
 - 15 The 12 companions of Jesus
- DOWN**
- 2 Jesus shed His _____ for our sins
 - 3 Judas Iscariot _____ Jesus (Matt. 27: 4)
 - 5 Roman commander of a hundred men (Matt.27:54)
 - 6 Jesus said " My God, My God why hast thou _____ me" (Matt.27:46)
 - 7 a title of Jesus (it means anointed one) (Matt.27:17)
 - 11 They laid the _____ of Jesus in a tomb (Matt.27:59)
 - 12 Jesus wore a "crown of _____"
 - 13 our Lord and Saviour

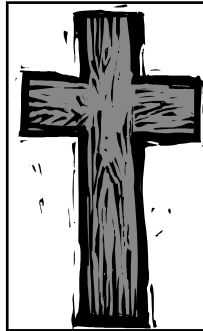
Maundy Thursday



Agape Meal

**20th March
at Union Church
6.30pm**

Come and experience this traditional communion meal and prepare yourself for the Good Friday and Easter celebrations.



Good Friday Walk of Prayer & Witness

**Celebrating seven stations
of the cross**

Commencing in Union Church at
11.00am

Finishing in Co-Op car park
approx. **12.30pm** with refreshments

For those unable to walk,
there will be a Service of
Meditation continuing in
Union Church after the
opening worship together.

**CHURCHES
TOGETHER IN
HEATHFIELD
& District**

A message of thanks to CRY supporters

Ray and Carol Avent have forwarded a letter from David Farndale, Executive Officer of CRY (Care and Relief for the Young) and wish to pass on their thanks to all who have supported CRY through prayer or financial contributions over the past 7 years.

An excerpt of the letter reads:

"Around 2000, Ray invited me to visit him in Heathfield, East Sussex, where he was minister of Union Church, to discuss his and Carol's possible support of CRY, and WOW, what support that has meant! In the 7 years (a good holy number!) that Ray and Carol have been supporting us and fundraising for the charity they have managed to recruit countless helpers, financial supporters, pray partners, organised all sorts of events, taken on speaking engagements, spoken on TV and radio, encouraged partnerships with schools, launched fundraising initiatives and lots, lots more – all of which has added up to an astonishing £100,000 – a record to beat all records!"

We congratulate Ray and Carol on this wonderful achievement.



Pentecost Sunday May 11th

alltogether@pentecost

All the Churches Together in Heathfield & District will be joining together for a united celebration at Heathfield Community College.



Includes the commissioning of the
Heathfield Street Pastors initiative.

**Guest Speaker:
Rev Joel Edwards,
General Director of
Evangelical Alliance.**

**CHURCHES
TOGETHER IN
HEATHFIELD
& District**

Union Church regular events

Monday	10.00am - 2.00pm	Open Door - tea and coffee in the Coffee Lounge
	12.00noon - 1.30pm	Open Door - lunches in the Church Hall
Tuesday	12.00noon (fortnightly - check diary on page 8)	Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club
	6.00pm (term time only)	Beavers in the Church Hall
	7.00pm	Service at Mary Burfield Court
Wednesday	1.30pm - 3.00pm (term time only)	Parent & Toddler Group in the Church Hall
	4.30pm (term time only)	Rainbows in the Church Hall
	5.45pm (term time only)	Brownies in the Church Hall
	7.00pm (term time only)	Guides in the Church Hall
Thursday	10.00am - 4.00pm	Do Pop Inn - teas, coffees and light lunches in the Coffee Lounge
	6.30pm (term time only)	Cubs in the Church Hall
Friday	2.30pm (first Friday of each month)	Women's Fellowship
	7.30pm (term time only)	Scouts in the Church Hall
Saturday	8.30am	Prayer Meeting in the Coffee Lounge
Sunday	7.30pm (alternate fortnights)	YClub730 - for Year 6 and above
	7.30pm (alternate fortnights)	Youth Fellowship - for Sixth Form and above

Book Reviews - John Glover

Totally Forgiving Ourselves

Author: R T Kendall

Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton

ISBN: 978-0340-043649

Here is a book that deals with the much neglected side of forgiveness, forgiving ourselves. It digs deep into dealing with the reasons why we find it so hard to accept what God offers and practical steps to acquiring these blessings for ourselves. It is an invaluable addition to the library of those who seek to minister and those who long for all that God gives. If you have ever struggled to understand grace and how it works, this book would be a good place to start. It's a discovery of how goodness and grace can reach deep down into our lives.

Frida - Chosen to Die, Destined to Live

Author: Frida Gasgumba

Publisher: Sovereign World

ISBN: 978-1-85240-4758



Have you ever wondered if there is any way back for those who have been caught up in traumas? Here is the answer. This is the story of a girl who was an intended victim of the Rwandan genocide in 1994. She was destined to die, as all the other members of her family had died in the brutal killing. But against all odds she survived, crawling out of the grave and living. How do you cope when you have seen your family and all you loved most destroyed before your eyes? How do you go on when everything else has gone? This book is more than a story of recovery: it is a message of hope in all the brokenness of our world. A book of hope for 2008.

Church diary

March	Sunday 2	9.00am	Sunday Special
	Mothering Sunday	10.30am	Rev. Mark Welch
		6.30pm	CTH - Lenten Bible Study
	Tuesday 4	12 noon	Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club
		7.30pm	Deacons' Meeting
Women's World Day of Prayer	Friday 7	10.30am	Service at All Saints' Church, Old Heathfield (no afternoon Women's Fellowship meeting)
	Sunday 9	10.30am	Rev. Mark Welch (Holy communion)
		6.30pm	CTH - Lenten Bible Study
Palm Sunday	Sunday 16	10.30am	Rev. Mark Welch
		6.30pm	CTH - Lenten Bible Study
	Tuesday 18	12 noon	Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club
		7.30pm	Prayer Meeting
Maundy Thursday	Thursday 20	6.30pm	Agape meal and communion
Good Friday	Friday 21	11.00am	CTH Walk of Witness commencing with worship at Union Church
Easter Day	Sunday 23	10.30am	Rev. Mark Welch
		6.30pm	"At home" at the manse
	Sunday 30	10.30am	All Age Service - families welcome
		6.30pm	"Meeting with God through Matthew" - please request a study guide from Mark a fortnight in advance if you wish to get the most out of this evening
April	Tuesday 1	12 noon	Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club
		7.30pm	Deacons' Meeting
	Friday 4	2.30pm	Women's Fellowship
	Sunday 6	9.00am	Sunday Special
		10.30am	Rev. Mark Welch
		6.30pm	Window on the World
	Sunday 13	10.30am	Rev. John Glover (Holy communion)
		3.30pm	Senior Friends' Tea & Service - Rev. John Glover
	Tuesday 15	12 noon	Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club
	7.30pm	Prayer Meeting	
Sunday 20	10.30am	Rev. Mark Welch	
	6.30pm	Holy communion	
Sunday 27	10.30am	Rev. Mark Welch	
	6.30pm	"Meeting with God through Matthew" - please request a study guide from Mark a fortnight in advance if you wish to get the most out of this evening	
Tuesday 29	12 noon	Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club	
May	Friday 2	2.30pm	Women's Fellowship
	Sunday 4	9.00am	Sunday Special
		10.30am	Rev. Mark Welch



Union Church, Heathfield

Minister: Rev. Mark Welch, The Manse, Tilsmore Road, Heathfield TN21 0XU Telephone: 01435 868160, Email: mswelch@tiscali.co.uk

Treasurer: Alwyn Fletcher, Vista, Hailsham Road, Heathfield TN21 8ES Telephone: 01435 864654

Magazine Editor: Debi Tompsett, 48 Bay Tree Close, Heathfield TN21 8YG Telephone: 01435 868981, Email: debi.tompsett1@virgin.net

Publishing Editor: Colin Saunders, Sunningdale, Halley Road, Broad Oak, Heathfield TN21 8TG Telephone: 01435 864194, Email: colinbsaunders@tiscali.co.uk

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Items included subject to suitability and space.