

Notices for March 2022

Stockwood Free Church

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10.45am ON SFC PREMISES AND ON FCC

<https://www.freeconferencecall.com/wall/sfcbristol/viewer>

During this month we will finish our series based on Luke's gospel, looking at some of the major themes of Jesus' ministry.

27th Martin Stephens

COVID SECURITY UPDATE

Covid is not going to go away and sooner or later we all need to find ways to live with it. At our recent leaders' meeting, there was unanimous agreement that we need to move on now. The vaccines, especially if you have had all three jabs, have clearly made a miraculous difference to the course of the pandemic. However you measure these things, the latest variant of the virus seems to be significantly less dangerous than its predecessors. We have recently had a lot of church households affected by the virus and the worst reports, in just a few cases, are of ongoing tiredness, as one might expect from a bad head-cold. We are proposing to keep our hand-gel dispensers - sanitising hands regularly is good practice in any case. We are more than happy for people to continue to keep social distance and wear their facemasks if they would like to, but from now on we are going to let people decide what feels right to them. For those who have particular high-risk circumstances, notably Carol Mason for obvious reasons, we will continue to stream our regular online services. Please note that we are NOT saying that we are not wearing masks from now on, as many will continue to choose to do so, merely that we are going to give everyone the discretion to decide for themselves.

NEWER & ONE-OFF ITEMS:

UKRAINE

A couple of weeks ago I suggested three things that we can all do: Watch, Pray, Give. Let me expand on all of these:

Watch – In order to pray effectively we need to understand the real situation which is unbelievably complex. The internet, if used wisely, is a rich source of information and helps to explain the background to the unfolding tragedy that is taking place in Ukraine right now. Also, if you have friends from neighbouring countries, notably Poland, it is good to talk to them about what they know and are hearing on the ground.

Pray – This Wednesday (16th March) we have supplanted our normal monthly prayer meeting with one to pray for Ukraine. Join us on the church premises at **4pm** if you possibly can. For those who feel the call, the day might also include an element of fasting which always provides powerful added fuel for effective prayer.

Give – We agreed in our Sunday service to send initial gifts of £600 each to TEAR Fund (one of the 15 member charities of the Disasters Emergency Committee) and to the Transform Europe Network (who support our partnership with Moldova and have a long history of partnering with churches in the former Soviet Union). If you would like to contribute to this giving please either give money in an envelope marked "**UKRAINE CRISIS**" or via bank transfer with "**UKRAINE**" as a reference. We have now agreed to give this money straight off from church reserves and any further gifts will be sent on top of this.

MOLDOVA

I am still in regular contact with Andrei, our partner in Moldova. During the week I asked him what the atmosphere is currently like in the country. He told me:

You know, the situation is pretty complicated, tense because of the risk of a war, then internal tensions with Russian speakers and Gagauzia. Then it became more expensive because Moldova imported most of its products from Ukraine. Then it became more expensive because Moldova imported most of its products from Ukraine, for example gazolin was 19 lei now 27.

You need to know that Gagauzia is a province within Moldova that is quite pro-Russian and is very close to Burlacu. Also, there are roughly 24 Lei to the pound, but this price increase represents a hike in fuel costs of over 40%! Most folk in Moldova just won't be able to afford to pay these prices for long.

One of the older women in Burlacu is currently housing a family of nine(!) from Ukraine with support from the church there. I am working on how we might be able to support the church more directly.

Some good news, though. You will remember that Andrei's and Eugenia's eldest daughter, Ema, got married recently. Well, their second eldest, Livica, who is only 18, also got engaged this week. (Or was it last week)?!

MENTAL HEALTH

I was at the launch of a new initiative called "Thrive" a few years ago. Because a few of us banged on about it, they are currently laying on some excellent training in South Bristol to help us to support other people. If you are interested at all, drop me a line and I will tell you what is on offer and point you in the right direction. This training is completely free, so don't look a gift horse in the mouth!

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Let's all pray for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine this week.

A CHALLENGE TO US ALL

We live in very difficult days. I [Lance] hardly need to say this. However, our response to what is happening in our own families, our communities, our nation and our world frequently shines a very bright light on (and even tests) the nature of our personal faith. Paul in writing his very final letter, to his young protege Timothy, says:

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."
2 Timothy 1:7 (New Living Translation)

I encourage you to meditate upon what this verse might mean to you personally. It is challenging!

LANCE'S LABOURS

I am putting some thought into our Easter events. Don't we just need to celebrate this most significant time of the Christian calendar properly for the first time in three years?!

WHERE IS LANCE?

Yet again, no great surprise here ... Lance & Carol are still around all month.

REGULAR WEEKLY/MONTHLY ITEMS:

SERVICE LINK

You have the option of downloading the video (mp4), audio (mp3) and online (mp4). The online version which was capture from live includes the presentation. ***Remember that you can still tune in to the service each week either at the time or later on, even if you have no computer access***

Sunday 20th March

Video

<https://fccdl.in/sv1jbtJGHR>

Audio

Dial: 033 00 88 1945

Access Code: 353390#

Service Ref No: 799#

HOME GROUPS

Mondays: Each week at 7.45pm on Zoom (contact Howard Penney)

Thursdays: Each week at 7.45pm – 83 Stockwood Road

Thursdays: Each week at 7.45pm – meetings are continuing on Zoom during March

TODDLERS

Every Wednesday & Friday from 9.30-11.30am.

They could still do with a bit more help on either day – if you think you could spare some time, please speak to Hilary or Yvonne

WEDNESDAY FELLOWSHIP

Each week from 2.30-4pm

MONTHLY PRAYER LIST – MARCH

Fellowship:

Ryan Collins, Christine Clothier, Alan & Christine Cowley, Bernard & Christine Crabbe, Barbara Dore

Neighbourhood:

Hollway Road & shops, Hollway Close, Selden Road, Harden Road, Eaton Close, Bluebell Gardens, Haberfield House, Waycroft Academy, Medical Centre, Dentist, Materman Road, Goslett Road, Woolley Road, Battson Road

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

CHURCH SPRING CLEAN

Saturday 30th April – more details to follow.

CHURCH OUTING

We are off to Weymouth (of course) on Saturday 16th July. Steve Birch and his coach are booked!