

# NEWS LETTER

## Heath Street Baptist Church Hampstead



Minister: Ewan King

A Ceremony of Carols  
Benjamin Britten, Maxwell Davies, Phibbs  
Wednesday 19th December 2018  
Doors open 6:30pm

Heath  
Street  
Baptist  
Church



New London Children's Choir  
And well-loved congregational carols

Directed by Ronald Corp

Clain Dafydd - harp

Alexander Wells - piano

Tickets £10 on the door

For free concessionary tickets email [ewan\\_king@mac.com](mailto:ewan_king@mac.com)

[newlondonchildrenschoir.org.uk](http://newlondonchildrenschoir.org.uk)

[heathstreet.org](http://heathstreet.org)

New London Children's Choir Winner of the **Grammy Award** for Best Opera Recording

**Evening Standard** "...all of whom showed considerable flair" **Independent** "Terrific", **Financial Times** "Excellent"

All proceeds go to the Panzi Foundation, DR Congo



## **Letter from the Church Secretary**

**Hi all,**

Our new Bible Study has been going very well. We are following a program called Community Bible Study, which provides a framework for us to explore books of scripture in a caring environment where all contributions are welcomed. Currently we are meeting once a month on a Wednesday evening, but this could change so please email [stanleywilfridmertens@gmail.com](mailto:stanleywilfridmertens@gmail.com) with your evening of choice!

The first bible study saw us getting into a very deep discussion indeed. Despite the fact that we were “only” doing an introductory session the program, we quickly found ourselves confronting some of the most difficult and fundamental issues in the Abrahamic faiths. The questions we posed ranged from Why did God harden Pharaoh’s heart?, to How can you tell if God is speaking? Together we pondered righteousness, success, the relevance of Jewish law to us modern Christians, and the benefits (or lack thereof) of fasting.

In the second session we laid the groundwork for our coming reading of 1 Thessalonians by looking into the historical context of that early Christian community. Along the way we had some interesting discussions about the nature of Truth, the place of doctrine in our lives, the crisis of community in our society, and whether or not we should have wine and nibbles at bible study. The only firm conclusion we reached regarded the latter issue, and you’ll hopefully be gratified to hear that it was warmly affirmative!

Please join us for future bible studies to wallow in the mysteries of scripture (and have wine and nibbles) with your fellow believers. Just email Wilf at [stanleywilfridmerttens@gmail.com](mailto:stanleywilfridmerttens@gmail.com) to get the materials and invite yourself along!

Hope to see you there,  
Wilf

**P.S.** On the same evening as our inaugural bible study, an American poet whose work has given me great pleasure over the years died after a long battle with cancer. His name was Tony Hoagland. One of my favourites of his, fittingly enough, is called *Bible Study*. Here's an excerpt:

I was on the road for so long by myself,  
I took to reading motel Bibles just for company.  
Lying on the chintz bedspread before going to sleep,  
still feeling the motion of the car inside my body,  
I thought some wrongness in my self had made me that alone.

And God said, *You are worth more to me  
than one hundred sparrows.*  
And when I read that, I wept.  
And God said, *Whom have I blessed more than I have blessed  
you?*

And I looked at the mini bar  
and the bad abstract hotel art on the wall  
and the dark TV set watching like a deacon.

And God said, *Survive. And carry my perfume among the perishing.*

## **Treasurer's notes**

Money, money, money: I visited lots of churches over the summer and autumn, mainly to look at the architecture but there is a common theme in large and small churches – a reminder of how much it costs to run the church and therefore a plea for a donation. It reminded me that perhaps not everyone who worships at Heath Street or comes to events here knows that we have to be entirely self-sufficient. Each Baptist church is on its own in maintaining and running the building and the manse, paying the Minister and other church helpers and keeping all our community-based services running as well as Sunday worship. A quick calculation tells me that this year it costs £307 a DAY to keep us going (£2,150 per week) even before we add in improvements to the building or bigger planned maintenance.

We can earn some money from letting our space, but I can assure you that everything you contribute through the Sunday offering, the vestibule contributions box or (my favourite) a standing order to our bank) is needed, treasured and responsibly used. To start a standing order, ask me for the bank account details (on a Sunday or via [gaynor@eandghumphreys.plus.com](mailto:gaynor@eandghumphreys.plus.com)). We also claim every scrap of Gift Aid we are entitled to, so if you are a regular giver and a UK tax-payer and you haven't yet got a Church three-digit PIN to write on an offering envelope instead of all your contact details, let me know.

## **Eco-Church**

We have had an eco-audit done by environmentalist Donnachadh McCarthy. We have a really interesting and useful report from him about how we could make the church more environmentally responsible. He will come back in a year's time to look at our progress and make further suggestions. The

report is a very practical mixture of simple, short-term changes and bigger projects which we could consider as an investment both in improving how we run the building and making our environmental footprint smaller. The Deacons have reviewed this report and will share it with our Church meeting on 25 November when we hope that we can start to plan a programme for change. Do come and take part – lots of ideas for changes at home too! If you would like an email copy of the report, email me at the address above.

### **A tiny bit of recycling**

As Christmas is coming and you might receive some Christmas cards, this is a time to remind you of one of the areas of fundraising we do for someone else. I collect up any used postage stamps you care to give me. All stamps are of interest (boring British ones included) and odds and ends of foreign coins, which I then send off for sorting and selling to raise money for Baptist Home Mission. Please cut stamps out with at least half an inch around them – and push them into the contributions box in the vestibule or give them to me on a Sunday. And remember, stamps aren't only for Christmas – they are welcome all year round.

With love and best wishes, Gaynor

### **Film Review**

**(Warning: contains spoilers and difficult subject matter)**

‘A life without despair is a life without hope.’ The Reverend Ernst Toller believes some men are called by God because of their ‘loneliness; their all-consuming knowledge of the emptiness of things.’ At odds with this sense of his vocation, he finds himself taking care of the historical First Reformed church in Snowbridge New York, also known as ‘the souvenir shop.’ With its tiny congregation, it is sustained by Abundant Life, a charismatic megachurch.

He is surprised one Sunday when a worshipper asks him for help. Mary is twenty weeks pregnant and deeply concerned about her activist husband Michael. A passionate environmentalist, Michael has just been released from prison. Mary asks Toller to speak with him.

Michael is utterly consumed by thoughts of imminent environmental collapse, the end of human life on earth and the suffering that will have to be endured before it all comes to a close. He feels unable to bring a child into this world, knowing what he does. Michael evidently respects Toller because he knows Toller's story. Toller draws on his pain at the death of his son, who was killed in Iraq, and the loss of his wife, who held him responsible; he presses Michael to consider his child's life apart from his own despair, and not as something for him to sanction. How Michael receives this counsel is not clear. They agree to meet again.

In the interim Mary again contacts Toller, this time with the disturbing discovery of a suicide vest among Michael's possessions. He won't go to the police, but takes the vest and hopes that he can still get through to Michael. When he arrives for their meeting, he finds Michael beyond help. He carries out the funeral instructions in Michael's suicide note faithfully and continues to support Mary.

The film shows us Ernst Toller in unflinching detail. Scenes from his public life and ministry are interspersed with graphic depictions of his failing health, which he's ignoring, and his drinking, which 'doesn't help.' The scenes in which Toller narrates his own story are largely focussed on his diary, in which he sets out to treat himself without mercy for a year, before destroying it. They form a clear and powerful statement of the film's key themes, but the beauty of the writing ensures that they don't detract from the more subtle forms of storytelling: the compelling central performance by Ethan Hawke, a rich set of minor characters, the setting.

We see how Michael's death brings Toller into conflict with the Abundant Life administration, which is currently busying itself

with preparations for the re-consecration of First Reformed, two hundred and fifty years after its foundation. The celebration just happens to be bankrolled by seedy businessman Ed Balq, whose company has a track record of despoiling nature and blocking legislation designed to protect it. We see a different side to the personable Reverend Joel Jeffers when Toller challenges him about the church's lack of leadership on environmental issues, and his own church's ties with Balq's company. He turns his back on Toller, and tells him to start living in the real world. As Toller gets ready for the re-consecration, he puts on Michael's suicide vest.

There can be no easy resolution of the issues raised in the film, but Mary's surprising appearance at the conclusion typifies the creative tension between hope and despair, which is at the heart of First Reformed, and which, in Toller's words 'is life itself.'

**November 18th – 24th**

18th 'summer and winter,'  
19th Thaddeus King  
20th Frida King  
21st 'day and night,'  
22nd Jeremy Fletcher  
23rd Judith Peak  
24th 'shall not cease.'

**Daniel 7.9-10, 13,14**

**November 25th – December 1st**

25th Anselm King  
26th Susan Le Quesne  
27th Evelyn Baker  
28th Robin Thorne  
29th Andrea MacEachan  
30th Gaynor Humphreys  
(Dec) 1st For AM

**Psalm 93**



**December 2nd – 8th**

18th Christina Cairns  
19th Laura Somers  
20th Edward Humphreys  
21st Birgit Leuppert  
22nd Gaynor Humphreys  
23rd Beauty Kunene  
24th Theresa Thom

**Jeremiah 33.14-16**

**December 9th – 15th**

9th Rebecca McLeod  
10th Tom and Susan Brandt  
11th Eleanor Patterson  
12th David Neil  
13th Beryl Dowsett  
14th Neil McLeod  
15th Jane Johnson

**Zephaniah 3.14-20**

**December 16th – 22nd**

16th Beauty Kunene  
17th Jen Finamore  
18th John Baker  
19th Leo Patterson  
20th Mysie Johnson  
21st Wilf Merttens  
22nd Joachim King

**Malachi 3.1-4**

**December 23rd – 29th**

23rd Annie Fang  
24th Hildegard Williams

**Micah 5.2-5a**

**(Christmas Day)**

25th Lydia Baker  
26th Nesa Thorne  
27th Isabel Somers

**Isaiah 52.7-10**

28th Nomsa Ndebele  
29th For HM

**December 30th – 31st**  
30th Heini King  
31st Josh Somers

**Jeremiah 31.7-14**

## **WEEKLY ACTIVITIES**

Sundays	11am-12 noon 7.30-9.30pm	Divine Worship (including Sunday Club for children) Contact Club
Mondays	7pm 8pm	Swing Patrol (Swing dancing) Swing Patrol: intermediate class (level 1.5)
Tuesdays	10-11am 1-2pm	Oldtime Nursery Lunchtime recital
2nd Tuesdays	7:30-9:30pm	Sacred Harp hymn singing
Wednesdays	4.30pm	Storymakers Club
Thursdays	10.30am 7.30-9pm	Oldtime Nursery Heath Street Choir
Saturday		Coffee Morning (alternate Saturdays – see website for details)



THE FURNACE MOIST WITH DEW

WAS THE IMAGE AND THE FIGURE

OF A WONDER PAST NATURE;

FOR IT DID NOT BURN THOSE IT HAD RECEIVED;

EVEN AS THE FIRE OF THE GODHEAD

DID NOT CONSUME THE VIRGIN'S WOMB

INTO WHICH IT HAS DESCENDED.

THEREFORE IN PRAISE LET US SING:

LET ALL CREATION BLESS THE LORD,

AND HIGHLY EXALT HIM TO ALL THE AGES.



Church Officers:      Gaynor Humphreys (Treasurer)  
                             Wilf Merttens (Church Secretary)  
                             Annie Fang (Deacon)

---

To contact Ewan King  
please email: ewan\_king@mac.com

Copy for the next newsletter should reach Ewan King  
(ewan\_king@mac.com)  
Not later than Monday 17th December

*For requests regarding church membership,  
Baptism, or opportunities for Christian ministry in the church  
please contact the minister.  
For questions regarding space use and room hire  
please contact the minister.*

\*\*\* \*\*

**Heath Street Baptist Church**  
84 Heath Street, Hampstead, London NW3 1DN  
020 7431 0511  
www.heathstreet.org