

The NET

The Newspaper of i-church
www.i-church.org

Issue #1

July 2006

An online Christian community
based in the Diocese of Oxford,
part of the Church of England.

New Members in June

Please extend a warm welcome to all our new i-church members for June.

Community Members

Paul Sibley	PG27
Michael Searle	PG20
David Lines	PG27
Paul Cowie	PG27
Debbie Stringer	PG27
Mary Jo	PG21
Albert Moraal	PG27
Lucy_F	PG27

Individual Members

David See
Stewart Thompson
Max Roit zu Hoya
Nick G
Jim Johnson
Michael Dean
Opeoluwa Adebayo
Che Webster
Barry Allen
Aime Pingi
Peter Baldwin
Ron Gupton
Jae R
Robert Rouge
Darrell Blandford
Robert Joseph Cox
Christopher Lee
Barrie Wood

Welcome to the new i-church Newspaper

It's happened! St Peter has finally cast his net and caught i-church. Well rather we have used his net and the Cross to name our new paper. We were into June before we really got under way, and half the month had gone and we were still working on details, typical deadline denial, but our editor had things under control and before we knew it a layout appeared and material started to flood in.

So it is with real happiness and joy that I welcome all our new readers, errr, that means all of you. Welcome to the first edition of The NET.

Why the name? Well it combines our call to be fishers of men, and the fact that i-church is a net based Church. Who are the staff? That you can find elsewhere; my job is to say "draw up yer wee chair, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest". Talking of digesting there will be a recipe in each issue as well us up to date news from i-church, items from the tech front, jokes and various articles to whet yer appetite for more.

You too can be a contributor, in fact some already are. We won't twist arms, but all are welcome to offer material; unlike the printed word we are not confined for space. In fact the more you do the less we on the staff will have to do, and if you want to stop our fingers typing rubbish like this you can, go for it.

So as I type this the editorial team are frantically trying to put our baby to bed, I just hope it doesn't give them sleepless nights.

Jayne

The NET Issue #2 will hit the streets on August 1st. The deadline for copy is July 24th, send a PM to any of the team or email editor@i-church.org.

NETwork - Meet the team that will be bringing you the i-church NET News each month.

Paula Franke, (below far left) our Editor in Chief, lives in Tollesboro, Kentucky USA and is (among many other things) a journalist for the Lewis County Herald.

Paula is assisted by (below, left to right) Paul Sibley, from Huntingdon, UK who will be our Technical Editor, Jayne Tite from Gore, New Zealand who is our Pacific Correspondent and Phil Wright from Crofton in West Yorkshire UK who will act as Production Editor.



Your photo could be here!
If you would like to join the team writing for The NET, email editor@i-church.org

Each month one of our Pastor team will write the equivalent of the "Vicar's Letter". This month, Russell our Web Pastor is doing the honours . . .



Pastor's Letter

I recently led a seminar at a local theological college about i-church, and had to explain, from scratch, exactly what we are all about. I talked about the forums and the chat rooms, but I was very conscious that I wasn't really giving a full picture of what it's really *like* to be a member of i-church. I talked about i-church being a community, but what kind of a community are we?

Well, one model of a church community is that of a bus. The priest is the driver, and the church members are the passengers. The driver (priest) decides where to go, and does all the business of driving the bus, while the passengers (congregation) sit passively in the back. There are lots of drawbacks to this model of church, but a very significant one is that everything relies on one person. When the driver isn't around, the bus doesn't move. And when the driver is around, he has his hands full driving, so nothing much else can happen. So, most churches have tried to move away from this model, and i-church is no exception.

.So if we are not a bus, what are we?

I think i-church is becoming a community that's rather more like an orchestra. The job of the Web Pastor is not to do everything, but to be the conductor, who tries to bring everyone's gifts together into a beautiful and tuneful whole. At the front of an orchestra are the strings, from violins across to the double basses. Behind them the woodwind, and the brass, sitting in groups according to their instrument. At the back, the kettle drums and the harpist are doing their thing. The conductor's job is to bring together these varied and gifted groups of people to make something glorious. In i-church, we have pastoral groups of slightly different flavours (violins to double basses?) and their leaders; we have a Council, a welcome team, forum hosts, worship leaders, a technical team, newspaper and website editors, and many more besides... with the Board of Trustees at the back sounding the beat! And we have a great chorus of members who are here to pray and to find fellowship: every member equally valued and important to the whole.

i-church is a place which is growing and really beginning find its identity. This is only happening because we're now working more and more in this orchestra model. Rather than being made to sit as passive passengers, those who want to are encouraged to participate. If a group of people steps forward with a new idea ("we want to play the bagpipes!"), their gifts enrich the whole. (After all, what repertoire is complete without a bagpipe concerto?). This new newspaper is just one example of that: a group of gifted people step forward with a great idea, and another melodic line is added to our harmonic whole.

Conducting an orchestra can often be rather more challenging than driving a bus. But I am convinced that it is the right model for i-church to follow. God is growing us into something which is beyond any one person's plan or idea. i-church is a very exciting place to be at the moment, and I feel sure it will continue to be so. Who knows what new music our community will compose? Who knows what instruments new members will bring?

May God grant us the grace to make beautiful music, all to his glory!

The Revd Russell Dewhurst
Web Pastor of i-church

Pilgrimage to Compostela

Ailsa Wright

About a year ago I saw an article about i-church in a Christian newspaper and decided to apply to join – I'm really not sure why. Around the same time I decided to join a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela organised by the Children's Society. Once again I have no idea what possessed me to do such a thing. I was overweight, unfit and was not even sure where I fit in this whole faith story at that time. However, God was ahead of me and he knew what was going on.

As a result of sharing my worries about going on this walk I received lots of encouragement from members of i-church. They prayed for me, cajoled me, encouraged me and loved me as I prepared. In the process I became an active member in i-church, leading worship and the occasional Bible study. I applied for and was accepted as a leader of Pastoral Group PG27. I even ended up coordinating the annual report. I was encouraged to do a counselling course by friends there – something I would not have had confidence to do otherwise.

The purpose of the pilgrimage was to raise money for the Children's Society. I am especially interested in their work with children who have run away from home and was happy to raise money. I decided to avoid sponsorship and instead raise money from the printing I do for people, particularly wedding couples who often ask me to do their service sheets as I am wedding coordinator in my local church. I was quite happy with this but God had other ideas! At Christmas our eldest son offered to sponsor me as he said that anyone mad enough to do this walk deserved to be sponsored. Then people on i-church asked how they could sponsor me too so I set up a website. As that was the way things seemed to be going I wrote an article for my B&M church magazine and got about 40 sponsors there. I decided to ask my family as well and then also told my students at my classes (I am a Kumon instructor) what I was doing. This gave me a chance to

tell people about the Children's Society and about my faith. I had mentioned my walk to my counselling class and they have asked to sponsor me too. As a result of all this I shall raise over £2000 – much more than I anticipated.



The walk itself was extremely hard. We were doing about 15-17 miles a day in mountainous regions and the temperatures were up to 30 degrees. Sometimes we were in the shade of trees but other times we were totally open to the sun. I had not realised just how exhausting such heat can be. When we walked on tarmac our feet were burning. By the end of the first day I had 6 blisters and by the end of the second I had 10. Even some of the seasoned walkers were

getting blisters.

When I looked at my feet at the end of the second day I was sure I would not be able to walk again on that trek. I had limped the last 3km and had large water filled blisters on my little toes, under the balls of my feet and under one heel. I certainly know what it feels like to walk on water as I could feel the water under my heel with every step! So many people had sponsored me that I just couldn't give up. Also, our daughter Zoë was with me and I didn't want to leave her alone. The nurse patched up my feet, I abandoned my boots for hiking sandals and I enlisted prayer support from i-church. On we went!

By the fourth day my big blister was looking infected and full of pus. I caused great amusement in the queue for the nurse as she popped it and noxious liquid spurted all over! I found that I had to walk through the pain each time we set off but after 15 minutes or so it settled down each time. The trouble was that stopping made my feet hurt again but we had to stop to drink and rest. On our fifth walking day there was the option of walking an extra 5km to save missing a short section of the route out. Zoë and I decided to do it. That meant we did 32½ miles in two days. When we reached

our hotel we were shattered but pleased we had done it.

In some ways I would say that I didn't pray during this trek; certainly in a formal structured way I didn't. However, when I was preparing God gave me the song based on Psalm 121: I lift my eyes up to the mountains. Where does my help come from? My help comes from you, maker of heaven, creator of the earth. I sang the song in my head as I walked and that helped me to keep a steady pace especially on the tough climbs. Each day I got a different song, often from the worship we had had as a group that morning. So many songs are based on Scripture so I was praying God's words back to him in a way.

Our worship was very meaningful each day. Sometimes we just had morning prayer together, usually outside somewhere. On three occasions we used churches for a communion service. Twice we sang the Peruvian Gloria and I was instantly back with my Cursillo family as that is often part of Cursillo services. The acoustics in these churches are fantastic and the 35 of us made plenty of sound. It was fascinating to see a woman C of E priest celebrate in a Catholic church and have the sacrament received from her by the local people and other pilgrims. It made unity seem tantalisingly close for the body of Christ, something we experience in i-church too.

As we walked the route we followed yellow arrows painted by others. Twice we only found the way by following arrows made of stones on the path. Once it was the number of footprints that helped us to find the right route. Zoë and I walked as a pair often but other times we were with others from our group. We were joined on occasion by people from other groups. If people on bikes or faster walkers passed us they would say 'Buen Camino' – good road. There was a brilliant sense of camaraderie. The local population would also greet us with 'Buen Camino'. We greeted them with 'Hola' or 'Buenos dias'.

On the last night at dinner there were some awards given out. I received the best female blister award and it was generally agreed that I deserved it. I think the final count of my blisters was 16 with the biggest being 2 inches by 1 inch.

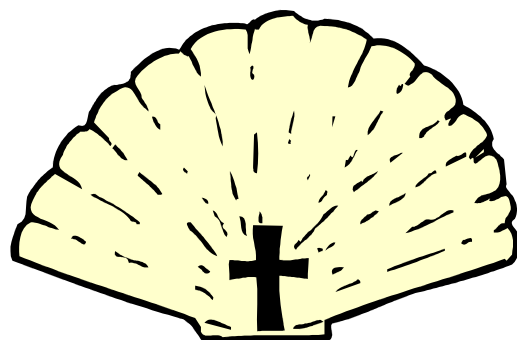
What have I learnt from all this? The most important thing is that the journey is more important than the destination. The journey of preparation has been hard but good. The walk itself was very painful at times but it had its funny moments and its triumphs. Getting to Santiago finally did not really match up with the journey itself. I am pleased in a way that it was hard to do. I feel close to those many people who have walked the route over the years. Many of them will have done it in sandals and bandages like me. As Paul says in Romans: 'We rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.'

I have learnt again that God is in charge and we can trust him no matter what. He can write straight with our crooked lines. He can take the worst that life can throw at us and bring good from it. I have also learnt, through i-church mostly but on the pilgrimage too, that friendship is a sacrament. Never underestimate the power of friendship. I hope I can be as good a friend to others as they have been to me. Jesus has truly been present in all that I have been given by so many this year, not least in the days of pilgrimage.

Here is the pilgrim's prayer we used each day:

Gracious God, you are the journey and the journey's end.
Open our eyes to your presence,
Open our minds to your peace,
Open our lives to your power.
Guide us on this pilgrimage,
And on our pilgrimage through life,
That we may walk in the way of peace
And find our freedom in your service
As we follow Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen



Forum News

A new group has been formed to lead the technical development of i-church. A separate closed forum, "The Engine Room", has been set up to allow this group to thrash out the technology behind i-church and to take some of the burden off our Web Pastor, Russell. If you are of a technical bent, and would like to join the group, please contact Russell by PM.

Tech Tip #1

When posting in the forums or live chat you may want to make a list of ideas, like this . . .

- a) first point
- b) second point
- c) third point

and so on. The trouble is that your b) will be translated into a smiley face 😊.

There is a simple way to avoid this; instead of a), b), c) put a dot before the letter or number

- .a. first point
- .b. second point
- .c. third point

No more inadvertent smiley faces!

Recipe

Pasta, Seafood and Eggs:
Snappy Cheese Bake

From the Houston Junior League Cookbook

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cans (4 ounces each) green chilli peppers
- 1lb mellow Cheddar cheese, grated
- 6 eggs
- 1-1/2 cups Bisquick (American product)
- 1 quart milk

TO PREPARE:

Butter a large shallow baking dish. Split and seed green chillies; spread flat in bottom of dish. Cover green chillies with cheese. In large bowl, beat eggs, and add Bisquick and milk. Beat well. Pour egg mixture over peppers and cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Great with steaks or as a brunch or supper dish.

SERVES: 8

NB Bisquick is available in the UK as Betty Crocker® All Purpose Baking Mix—ASDA, Tesco and Waitrose all stock it.

Humour—with a moral

Laughter is the best medicine they say. We will look out for jokes with a moral behind them; if you have a good example let us know! This joke comes courtesy of Jayne Tite, who runs a small farm in Gore, New Zealand.

A poor farmer has a sow he wishes to have mated. So he decides to take her off to the local boarman. Now the boarman says " I have three boars, a 5 Pounds boar, a 10 Pounds boar and a 15 Pounds boar".

"Well" said the farmer, knowing that he couldn't afford much, "I will have a try with the 5 Pounds boar".

When he was leaving he said, "How will I know if she pregnant?".

The boarman said, "In the morning, if she is nesting she is, if she is feeding she isn't".

So next morning he went out and the sow was feeding happily. "Oh dear" thought the farmer and loaded the sow into the pickup. When he go the boarman he said, "We'd better have a try with your 10 Pound boar today!"

The following morning she was still just feeding, so he loaded the sow into the pickup and headed off the see the boars! And rather dejectedly he said, " Well I'd better try your best boar" and he paid the 15 pounds and waited. The following morning he couldn't bear to look.

So he asked his wife to look in the pig sty. "Is she feeding?" he asked.

"No" said his wife.

"Is she nesting then?"

"No" his wife replied,

"So what is she doing?"

"Well" said his wife, "She is sitting in the back of the pickup!"

Moral:

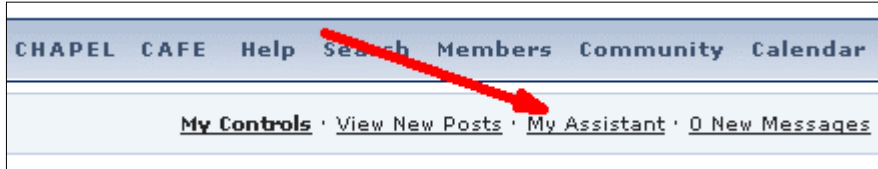
Sometimes we grudgingly feed seekers with bits from our hoard of faith, reluctant to give too much in case we run short ourselves, yet it is not what we give, but who God calls that makes them stick around for more.

Forum Tip

Where Did I Put That Post?

Are you like me, and forget where you made that 'post' just a couple of hours ago? 'My Assistant' is your friend.

Click on the 'My Assistant' link at the top of the page:



A small pop-up image will appear in the middle of your screen. There are a few useful links on it:



The bottom link will take you to a page showing your last ten posts. While you're looking at the pop-up, why not explore some of the other links and tabs on there.

The 'New Posts' tab is very useful, and shows a list of new posts since your last visit to the forums.

Humour

There are three engineers in a car; an electrical engineer, a chemical engineer and a Microsoft engineer. Suddenly the car engine shuts off, leaving the three engineers stranded by the side of the road.

All three engineers look at each other wondering what could be wrong.

The electrical engineer suggests stripping down the electronics in the car in an attempt to trace where the fault might be.

The chemical engineer, not knowing much about cars, suggests that maybe the fuel is becoming emulsified and getting blocked somewhere.

Then the Microsoft engineer, not knowing much about anything, comes up with a suggestion. "Why don't we close all the windows, get out, get back in, open the windows again and maybe it will work?"

"A Barrel of Fun" J. John & Mark Stibbe, © 2003 Monarch Books

Church Photographs

Send us your pictures of your B&M church so we can see where you worship. This is St Mary's Woodkirk, in West Yorkshire, home to Debbie Stringer, Phil & Ailsa Wright.



News Flash

The Episcopal Church has just elected a woman as its Presiding Bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori. The gallery of Deputies in Columbus, Ohio, erupted in glee when they learned it [I was there!].

Many questions remain about the further ordination of bishops who have declared themselves as gay, but the general consensus finally reached was that these elections would be put in abeyance for the time being in recognition of the potential strain it would put on the Anglican Communion as a whole. This final agreement was brokered with the help of the current and PB-elect acting together.

Joe Parrish

Tales from the Farmyard

Counting sheep

Well I opened the bedroom curtains this morning to find myself staring into the faces of a whole flock of sheep. In total there were over 160 of them, so Danny, my three year old Bittsa, had his early morning walk on a lead. <g> The eldest, Hercs couldn't have cared less, ignoring them totally. Even the cats seemed unfazed by this sudden invasion, doing what they normally do, that is scooting back indoors to the warmth of a fire. (Only it was too mild to need one today, so they were dead outta luck.)

Actually I had offered the garden for grazing way back in early winter, when it looked as if grazing would be short this year. But last week I renewed the offer, and also I managed to talk Jeff, my landlord, into letting one of the neighbours graze his sheep in one of our big paddocks, which we really didn't need for the yearling calves, and then, conned him into agreeing for a couple of the smaller ones, both with good grass, to be used for the sheep. One, I suggested to the neighbour, could be used for ewes with young lambs, so now I have 5 littlies frisking about just outside the garden.

Thus it was that I was surrounded by Bleating Berthas this morning. I quickly put an electric fence around the flower beds, (protecting all me daffs, bluebells, polyanthas, etc.,) which they proceed to treat as if it wasn't there, to the point of just trampling it into the ground at one section. So started the rushing here and there, trying to gently but firmly, well as time passed maybe not quite so gently, restore some kind of order. But it wasn't just the garden, which I didn't mind, in general, but the little perishers seemed to be able to get everywhere; it seemed there wasn't a fence that was proof against them. Time passed rapidly, escorting sheep first from one paddock, then another, interspersed with rescuing flower beds, feeding Wee Eff, and trying to do all the other things that the passing hours call for. At 5 o'clock I gave up and retired from the battle ground to lick me battered pride and to get ready for work.

Danny gave up a lot earlier. I left him outside on his long lead, and when the sheep didn't seem to be concerned about him, despite a few sudden rushes, jumps and barks, he gave up and went to sleep in the sun while they just grazed around him.

The sheep were a lot more concerned about a wee bleating calf, which, for some reason, they gave a wide birth to, while Wee Eff just kept on asking them to come and play. Gee there just is no fun in some species. <g> I might put Wee Eff in with the lambs tomorrow, but will ask the owner first. Thinks - might just see Eff feeding from a ewe and me ending up feeding five lambs. No way, Hosea.

One thing, though, if I can't sleep tonight all I have to do is open the curtains and count sheep.

Goodnight 😊

© Jayne Tite 2001



i-church Giving

i-church was founded in 2004 using a grant provided by Cutting Edge. The grant was for three years and should take i-church through most of 2007. i-church was formally incorporated as a limited company in July 2005. In order to continue past 2007, we must become self-financing.

Please consider giving to i-church in the same way as you would to a conventional bricks and mortar church. Just like any other church we have to pay towards our vicar (in this case we pay for 50% of Russell's time, the other half is covered by St Frideswide), Insurance and all the costs associated with hosting a website and webchat services.

Please pray and think carefully about how you might help; a regular or one off contribution would be much appreciated, and secure a long future for i-church. <http://www.i-church.org/roll/giving.php>

Each issue we will focus in turn on one of the Pastoral Groups. We are starting with a look at the newest group, PG27.

PG27 Focus

PG27 has recently been formed with Ailsa Wright as PG Leader. Ailsa has published the following ethos statement to describe her group.

- We expect, welcome and respond to our regular personal contact with the PG leader.
- We develop and regularly review a personal Rule of Life with our group leader, which includes a commitment to i-church worship
- We hold one another in prayer
- We interact with one another and learn together by asking questions, contributing to group forum discussions, exchanging PMs or emails
- We get to know one another better and foster a community atmosphere promoting stronger ties within the group by attending informal social sessions scheduled in the PG's private Live Chat room which allow us to have an opportunity for discussions "in real time"
- We recognise that at some times our commitment to the group will be easier to fulfil than at others and we support, accept and respect one another at all times

Worship in i-church

In May 36 people ventured into Chapel at one time or another to take part in i-church worship, clocking up 270 separate sessions between them. The most popular regular worship slot was the icw2000 worship (i.e running at 20:00 GMT) which attracted 23 different people and 96 separate visits. This was closely followed by the icw0800 session with 18 visitors and 89 separate visits respectively.

The icw0200 session which converts to evening time in the USA attracted 12 people who clocked up 52 visits between them. Finally the lunch time (in the UK) worship icw1100 attracted the least people (10) with 31 sessions.

The icw1100 worship has now been designated a DIY session—there is no Leader but whoever attends holds an extemporare prayer session to suit their particular needs. All the other sessions have designated Leaders who provide a range of liturgy for attendees.

July Calendar

Birthdays

David Cloake	1st
John Willett	6th
Jay D K	12th
Jennifer D	12th
Beresford Moyle	31st

Deadline for TheNET24th July

It's a small world

They say "it's a small world" and i-church is not immune.

For example we have discovered that Russell who went to seminary with someone who is now ministering/teaching in the small village where Mikael Hansson, one of our newer Swedish members lives and they all know each other.



Nick Battaglia and Paula Franke used to live about 10 miles apart before Paula moved to Kentucky, and they even worked at the same university but didn't "meet" each other until i-church.

Have you noticed how small the world is? If so, send your story to one of the NET team.

Service Times

Keep this guide by your computer to help you remember when all the service times are. There is space for you to write in the local equivalent times:

<u>Worship</u>	GMT
Mon to Sat	08:00
Sunday	09:00
Daily DIY	11:00
Daily	20:00
Mon to Fri	02:00

Open House—Tuesdays

Study	19:00
Chat	19:30
Worship	20:00

You can now get services in your local time on the member Home Page. Check it out.