

THE NET

The Newspaper of i-church
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An online Christian community based in the Diocese of Oxford, part of the Church of England.

Disappointed

In the last couple of weeks I've faced quite a disappointment in my life. I took on a voluntary role in October, and after a few difficulties getting started, I was really getting to grips with it. I had plans and visions in my head of how things would work out, what I would do, how good it would be. However, circumstances have now made the role impossible to do and I will have to resign.

My response was fairly typical I imagine: Why? It's not fair. I had so many plans! I didn't choose this. And so on. However, having taken a few days to calm down I am beginning to see possibilities offered by the end of my hopes in this particular direction. Maybe God has ideas that I wasn't aware of before.

In the month of May we celebrate the Ascension of Jesus and also Pentecost. The disciples had suffered a much greater disappointment than mine. All their dreams about Jesus being the Messiah seemed dashed on Good Friday. They had had such high hopes but now those would never come about through no fault of their own. They could be forgiven for thinking life was not fair.

From Easter Sunday onwards things began to change and this meant the disciples opening their



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Next Issue will be published on Friday June 1st

eyes (literally at times) to new possibilities, to God's ideas and not just their own. Just think what that allowed them to experience: time spent with the risen Lord, seeing him taken into heaven, the amazing experience of receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and then the roller coaster ride of spreading the Gospel and turning the world upside down!

In i-church our focus is very much on vision. There are plans and dreams being discussed and each of us has our wishes for the way forward. It's inevitable that some of our personal ideas will not be incorporated in the changes that come about and the natural reaction may well be as mine was—it's not fair etc. I'm sure God has great plans for i-church and I pray that we can each open our eyes to the possibilities he offers us. They're sure to be better than our plans!

Ailsa

Pastor's Letter

Russell Dewhurst



No-one living in the UK at the moment can escape the fact that it's spring, indeed, for some of the past few days it has already felt like midsummer. We are enjoying a bit of a heatwave. One of the traditions of spring, in this part of the world at least, is the "spring clean". This is the time of year when traditional people clean their houses to a "deep" level, cleaning all the nooks and crannies that perhaps only get properly cleaned once a year. I think the heat at the moment is probably likely to lead to leisurely outdoor suppers and Pimms on the lawn, rather than much spring cleaning.

But here in i-church, spring cleaning is very much the order of the day. There are some important ways in which we are about to sweep up some electronic cobwebs. We will very soon be moving i-church to a new server, which should be faster and much more reliable. In the next couple of months we will also be upgrading some of the forums systems and other aspects of i-church's technology: this won't make much of a difference to members' experience of i-church, but it will mean we stay secure and up-to-date as an internet community.



Much more significant a change will be the revamped public website, the "outside" of i-church. More than a spring-clean, this will be rather like re-painting of the outside of our house... with a new conservatory and garage extension into the bargain. Mark Gibbens is beginning a discussion in our forums about the new website, and our schedule is that the new website should go live in six weeks time!

Inside there will be a little re-arranging of the furniture which always comes with a good spring clean, and some new furniture too.



Much of this has arisen out of the i-church Vision work. First to appear will be the covenant, or declaration, which i-church members will be asked to make, concerning what gifts we can each offer i-church. I have been reading Rowan Williams' fantastic new book "Tokens of Trust", in which he speaks about Christian communities being places where we can help unlock one another's gifts. So I hope the covenant/declaration/commitment-- or whatever it ends up being called-- will be a way of facilitating that unlocking. More aspects of the vision work will be go live over the next weeks and months.

So, it's going to be a busy time. I don't know how long a really good spring clean in an ordinary-sized house is reckoned to take-- maybe a weekend-- but our "spring cleaning" will probably take most of the next two or three months. And, just as the purpose of having a house isn't to clean it, the purpose of i-church is not upgrades, features, and enhancements. Everything we are doing in the techie department is to serve the main purpose of i-church: to be a Christian community which can exist online, which can pray and worship together, which can learn more of God's ways, and in which members can befriend and support one another.

In the same way, serving the community is the aim of the Council, and this month we welcome the newly-elected members of the Council to serving in that leadership role. Leadership is also a servant ministry, and a demanding one: do pray for the Council. May all we do be aimed at supporting our central purpose and vision, and help us to become the community that God wants us to be.

i-church Council

Election fever hit i-church during April with members deciding who should represent us all on our Council for the next three years. At first the hustings were slow off the mark, and there was concern that maybe there would be no need for an election after all. But a spate of late nominations swelled the candidate list to seven, and as Paula remarked “we have a horse race!” (appropriate I’d say, Paula hails from Kentucky, home of the famous Kentucky Derby race).

We vote using the “single transferable vote” system, which is designed to produce results more representative of member wishes than a simple “first past the post” vote, such as we use in the UK for our national elections. This does cause voters to have to think - you now have to rank the candidates in your preferred order. It’s complex to administer, but luckily we can use computers to do all the shuffling of the votes as preferences either get discarded or elected.

Finally, on May 1st the results were announced. Ailsa Wright, Jennifer D and Susanna C were elected to serve until April 2010, and Jayne Tite was elected to serve until April 2009.

Our Council May 2007

Ex officio members (left to right)



Russell Dewhurst (Web Pastor), Joe Parrish, Helen W (Assistant Pastors) and Phil Wright (Treasurer)

Elected Members (serving until April 2009)

(left to right) Paula Franke, Tim H,

And recently elected . . . Jayne Tite, (far right)



and . . .

(serving until April 2010)

(left to right) Ailsa Wright, Jennifer D, Susanna C



Our Council is a good representation of our members around the world: we have 6 UK members, 2 US members, 1 from South Korea and 1 from New Zealand.

In April next year we will elect three more Council members which will bring us up to our final complement of 9 elected members, with one third retiring each year, plus *ex officio* members.

Special thanks go to our retiring Council members, John Scholefield and Peter Watkins, for all their work and support in the past year. We wish them well in their “retirement”.

A number of members missed the boat this year and were unable to participate - you need to have signed the membership roll in order to stand for Council or vote in our elections. Do make sure you are eligible next year!

In the last issue of The NET I described some ways that we can all help raise funds by re-cycling some of our old mobile phones and printer toner cartridges. In this issue I can announce the opening of the i-church shop, where you can purchase i-church branded goods online. All the profits from each sale come to i-church, so this is a great way to show your support.

The web address is www2.printshop.co.uk/i-church.html and when you go there you will see a familiar looking screen (see picture, left).

Initially there is a small range of items available: T-shirts, skinny T-shirts, baseball caps, long sleeved shirts, mouse-mat and mugs. Hopefully, we'll be able to expand the range of items available to shoppers.

There are a number of different i-church

themed designs to choose from, and you can control where the images are printed, so you can make your purchase suit your own particular style. Part of the fun in this kind of shopping is the designing of the item you want to buy.

So, how can you order something? Once you have brought up the website, follow this quick guide.

1. Click on any of the items in "Design a ..."
2. In the "Products" box on the left side of the screen, click on the arrow in the "All Products" box. A list of the available items appear.
3. Choose what you want, e.g gifts. Here you will see what is available.
4. Click on the item you want , e.g the apron.
5. Then choose the size and colour. You will see the price here.
6. Choose the image you want to have printed on your chosen item by clicking on the "Image" tab, then click on the image you want, then click on "Add Image". Your image is then added onto your chosen item.
7. If you want to try other images, in the top left hand corner of the image is a dustbin, click on that and the image is removed. There are also other buttons in the other three corners. Clicking on the top right will rotate the image, bottom right will increase or decrease the size of the image, and bottom left will realign the image.
8. When you have chosen your item and image, add it to your basket.

And don't forget to checkout and pay! Happy Shopping!

Ps & Qs

Puzzles and Quandries on the Way Richard Haggis

“Leave us not comfortless ...”

Those words from the traditional Collect for the Sunday after Ascension invite us to contemplate a number of mysteries about what happened to Jesus, and to the disciples, after the resurrection. The Gospels (and Acts) all give at least slightly different accounts, as you would expect from recollections maintained over a generation or two quite possibly many miles apart. Some Christians find this sort of internal dissent distressing, but for others it is like a mark of authenticity - if four witnesses in a court of law gave identical accounts of a crime, we would rightly smell a rat. Unlike many court cases, there was ample opportunity for the first Christians to sew the story up, but they either didn't want to, or weren't able to agree. My hunch is that they saw them as complementary.

It's worth looking briefly at the differences. Most modern scholars are agreed - on the basis of manuscript evidence (i.e. the oldest surviving texts we have) that Mark's Gospel really ends at 16:8 "and they were afraid". It is argued that later scribes - working in the context of churches which knew other stories - felt this wasn't good enough, and so have added their own concluding verses. You can see that Mark 16:6-11 leans on John 20:11-18, and 16:12-13 on Luke's Emmaus Road story. Unfortunately, it also goes a little barmy with the stuff about snakes and poisons (v. 18). Needless to say, there have been some Christian sects who have taken this verse all too literally.

Matthew takes the opportunity to deny that the disciples had stolen Jesus's body - accusing the soldiers and the chief priests of bribery and fraud. There are two resurrection appearances - one to the women on the way from the empty tomb, the other to the eleven at an unspecified mountain in Galilee (mountains are often places of revelation - the Transfiguration, for instance). He tells them he will be with them always, and that's that. In its own way, it is almost as abrupt as Mark's, with the added problem that Jesus having appeared, he is now not disappeared, but left hanging around.



John's ending, like Mark's, is complex. There is a very natural ending at 20:31, after the appearances to Mary Magdalen, the Ten, and Thomas. The purpose of chapter 21 - probably from the same tradition as the main part of the Gospel, but a little later, seems to be twofold - to rehabilitate Peter, who is a minor character in this Gospel; and to explain that Jesus never said that the Beloved Disciple would die. Like Matthew, both endings leave us with Jesus still on earth, but in John the final words are a comment on Jesus's significance, rather than a dramatic scene. The whole Gospel is just that, so it is fitting to end on that note.

It is to Luke and Acts that we must go for the classic account of Jesus's Ascension. Although there are differences in the story in each book, it seems reasonable to accept the same author wrote them both, and attribute the glitches to his change of mind, or more time to mull things over in Part 2. Luke is - in his own words - the only evangelist to lay claim to any method in putting his works together (Luke 1:1-4), and it is the method of a historian. He has taken the evidence available to him, and produced his great work. His account keeps the action in Jerusalem, lacking the Mark Appendix and Matthew instruction to go to Galilee. Luke and Acts differ in that Acts speaks of Jesus being with the disciples for forty days - a special Biblical number. In Luke he "parts from

them” at Bethany, and in Acts “he was lifted up before their very eyes and a cloud took him from their sight”. It’s a fuller picture, fitting a longer period of composition, and quite deliberately preparing us for what is to come - Pentecost. It’s the reason for those words “leave us not comfortless”, because Christ has departed and the Holy Spirit hasn’t arrived yet. It doesn’t show a lot of confidence in God the Father!

Why should there be these differences, and what is the purpose of the Ascension? For Mark, Matthew and John, the risen body of Christ wasn’t a problem - they had probably all heard Paul’s idea about the Church as Christ’s body in the world, and they wrote their works for congregations which were living proof of that. When Mark finished with the words “and they were afraid”, the assembled congregation could look around and know that there was nothing to fear. Perhaps Luke felt the need to tidy up his story - “to dispose of the body”, as it were, and made a particular story the focus for a final departure of the Risen Christ, in preparation for the arrival of the unbodily Spirit? Maybe the Ascension clears the stage for the beginning of the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as the presence of Christ in the world?

One notable thing is that the disciples stay together. By this, I don’t just mean the Eleven, but also the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb and the risen Jesus, but many others - over 500, S. Paul says. There’s a new element too - Jesus’s family. They have been conspicuous by their absence in the Synoptic accounts, although John puts Jesus’s mother at the foot of the cross, but Acts (1:14) clearly tells us that now they have joined the disciples. Now that he is no longer with them, they can finally have enough perspective to see who and what he was. It is as if resources are pooled, all those who knew and cared for Jesus, who had heard his message, have gathered together, and collectively they receive the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which acknowledges that, much though they have already seen, they need God’s own light in tongues of flame to comprehend it, and to speak the Good News to all nations.



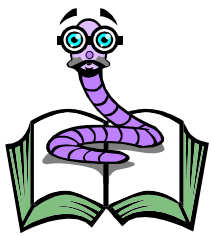
The Gospels were written many years after these things. Jesus left us the Holy Spirit, and the Church, and he left “us not comfortless”.

Publicity

One of the key strands of the i-church vision is that we reach out to the external world and provide resources and information to people who are not part of the “church scene” . In fact i-church has a role as an “emerging church” - which means that we are looking to attract new members who are currently un-churched—alongside all our other members.

How do we get noticed? How do people find out about us? What do we have by way of publicity material? Where do we get it from? These are all questions that a new Publicity Group is being set up to tackle - and to provide the answers!

We are looking for budding artists who might help design publicity material. Also, anyone who has experience in Public Relations or Advertising or Printing would be very welcome. New Council member Jayne Tite is going to lead the group and is looking to recruit a small team to work together on this important aspect of our work. If you would like to join either PM Assistant Pastor Helen W or Jayne and get signed up.



Book Reviews

Seeking God, The Way of St. Benedict. By Esther De Waal.

reviewed by Jennifer D

PG27's book club have recently finished reading Seeking God, By Esther de Waal.

Esther de Waal is an Anglican lay woman, married with children and grandchildren. She lives on the Welsh Borders where she grew up. Her interest in Benedictine monasticism came as a result of living for several years in Canterbury. She has written several books on the Rule of St. Benedict. She has a Ph.D. from Cambridge and was given an honorary doctorate from St. John's University for her contribution to Benedictine studies and for her ecumenical work.

The book's main theme is about St. Benedict's Rule, its principles, about finding God in the daily, ordinary routine of life, applying the Rule in a practical way to our day to day living. Although De Waal is an Anglican the book has no bias in tenet, she writes from her own experience of living life being guided by the Rule. She is logical, down to earth and reflective in explaining the Rule in relation to people living modern ordinary lives in the hustle and bustle of the big wide world we live in. She shows us that we don't have to live in a monastery to be guided by the Rule. As we all know busy, hectic lives can keep us away from God, but De Waal shows us that it is within the rush and madness of daily life that God finds us. She also describes how the Rule can help Christians today with their spiritual growth.

St Benedict's Rule is a detailed guide, which also gives "support, inspiration, challenge, comfort", for monastic living. Many Benedictine monks and nuns lead lives within the Rule's guide today. St. Benedict's approach to communal living and his compassion and humanity to his fellow human beings are written with wisdom, with practical advice and guidance with a good measure of common sense. Every now and then I had to remind myself that his Rule was written in the 6th Century and not in more recent times, as it does have a contemporary feel to it, showing it can still provide guidance today.



Benedictine spirituality has a way of balancing and integrating body and soul, the material with the spiritual. This is at the root of St Benedict's Rule in that monastic life is made up of work, prayer, and study, and "these being held in balance, and being done to the glory of God."

De Waal explains how the Rule can be applied by lay people in a meaningful way. The chapters are divided into ten subject areas, St. Benedict, The Invitation, Listening, Stability, Change, Balance, Material Things, People, Authority, and Praying. Each chapter ends with a page or two of thoughts and prayers, which gives the book a meditative and contemplative quality.

De Waal concisely explains the wisdom and insight of the Rule. The spirituality and guidance is insightful but is not preachy and "holier than thou". Her interpretation of Benedict's humility, and balance was very well presented.

"Seeking God" is a thoughtful and yet a practical consideration of the spirituality within St. Benedict's Rule. Although this book is matter-of-factly written it does require a period of reflection and I would recommend a couple of reads to help get the most from it. I had to read each chapter a couple of times to really be able to take in its meaning and message, and will return to read the book again.

"Seeking God" helped me to better understand The Rule of St. Benedict. It also showed me its relevance and wisdom in today's modern circumstances that we now live in. The book has something for everyone who is looking for a closer relationship with Christ.

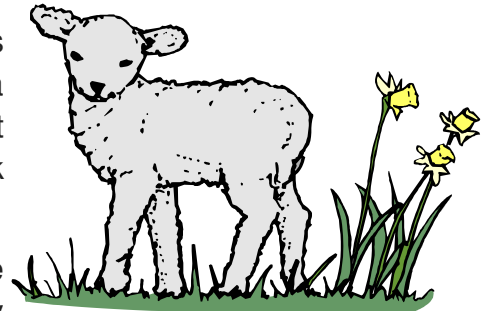
"While we are Seeking God He is also seeking us."

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD - Rabbi Harold S Kushner

reviewed by Jayne Tite

Rabbi Kushner is Rabbi Laureate of Temple Israel in Nantick, Massachusetts. Married for some 48 years, he has been a Rabbi for 44 of those years. Among other books he has written was the best selling 'When bad things happen to God's people'.

How many books can there be on one Psalm, I wonder? Is this one any different? Well it is written by a Jewish Rabbi yet brings a very Christian understanding. Now meditation is not my forte, yet in this book we are given ample opportunity to pause and think about what has been written in the context of this Psalm.



Harold Kushner brings home to us the deep wonders of peace and healing this Psalm has generated through the ages. Its ability to comfort the grieving and to calm the fearful. The ability to assure us that no matter what happens to us God is always there for us.

Few people in the western world cannot recall some of this Psalm; many know it completely, by heart, possibly more than, these days, can recite the Lord's Prayer. So wherever you are on your journey this may well be the book to move you on.

The Lord is My Shepherd - Harold S Kushner. Hodder & Stoughton, London 2003. ISBN 0 340 86228 9 - £8-99

CD Review

"The Skies Have Eyes" . Rich Millett.

reviewed by Paula Franke

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands, Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing." (Psalm 100:1-2)

I've had the privilege of reviewing Christian music for many years, but Rich Millett's "The Skies Have Eyes" caught my attention right off the bat at the start of the first track. From there out it was smiles and tears but every song was wondrous and uplifting. Rich Millett, of Atlanta, Georgia, definitely makes a joyful noise that the Lord would be proud of!

I had the singular opportunity to talk with Rich on the phone Thursday night. I could have written the review without talking with him personally, but his music styles compelled me to speak to him one-on-one, because his style is a bit different from what most people are comfortable with when it comes to Christian music. And Thursday evening on the telephone was a singularly uplifting experience for me. He called me on his cell phone while caught up in Atlanta, Georgia, traffic on his way to church.

Rich's CD showed up in my mailbox on April 4. I put it in my player that evening and was spell-bound. I shared the website with members of i-church that same evening and they started

analyzing the music roots but all connected with the lyrics themselves.

And without telling him what I myself, my husband (a musician himself) or i-church members who visited the website, found in music roots, they were all there and more....

Beatles, Moody Blues, Pink Floyd, Elton John and Celtic music....

Rich also mention Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys, another influence that was just tenuous enough that I almost recognized, and then Coldplay, which was brought to my attention by one of my fellow i-church members.

Can this loud joyful noise really be Christian????? YES!!!

This is a CD that will definitely connect with the "children of the 60s", and will also connect with the youngest one now. But it will also connect with anyone looking for the light.

"Preaching to the Choir" brings us up short....it's safe to be there in church, feel righteous, and believe we've done all that's required to "be saved" but it's not. This song should make the self-righteous feel uncomfortable and do something other than go out in public to strangers demanding "are you saved?????" or believe that because you show up in church on Sunday that's enough. Rather, be like Christ and let your actions speaks words, rather than "get into people's faces".

Rich Millett does a wonderful song on the first track "The Lord is Alive". . .(perfect for Easter)

In any event, Rich Millett's "The Skies Have Eyes" made me smile, and sometimes brought tears to my eyes. Personally, I loved every one of Rich's songs, but I'll go off on a limb here....Besides "The Lord is Alive" and "Preaching to the Choir", I particularly liked "The Quickening" (a very Christ-like response to the very difficult abortion decision)... "Man Upstairs" (the choir is really REALLY good!), "Heads Up" and "Dose of the Ghost".

"The Quickening", what can I say... such a difficult situation for any mother who is not happily awaiting the event... God hold her and love her and the child...

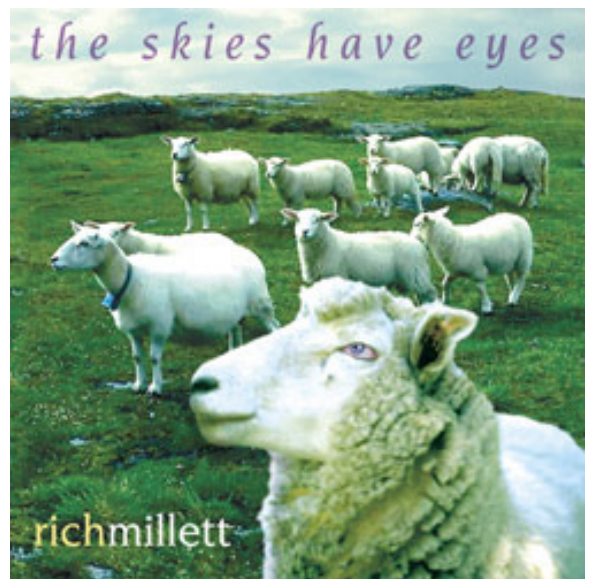
"Man Upstairs"...Gospel music in modern terms with a wonderful church choir backing up singing!!!!

But everything else on the CD is every bit worthy of a listen and the cost of the CD (and the cost is a bargain!)

It's not hard rock, but it's the late 60s early 70s.

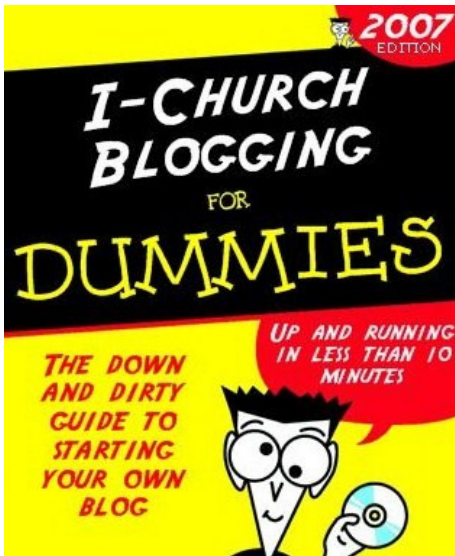
I was, and I'm not easily, amazed...but I am now... "The Skies have Eyes", yes! the sheep are green! The lyrics sing true to the heart and the soul.

Visit The Skies Have Eyes <http://skieshaveeyes.com> to hear some of the songs and get ordering information. The CD can also be purchased via www.amazon.com. Worth every dollar.



"To those who understand music, they know that music does not come from the mouth. The only reason that it comes out there is that it has to get out from somewhere. Anyway, music is sung by your heart and your soul, and it is felt by all those who really understand and love it."

Homeless man



A Guide to i-church Blogging

Paul Walker

So you've heard about blogs and blogging? You're curious, want to know more – maybe even have a go yourself? Read on... this simple guide will give you the basics and get you started in blogging.

The first question you'll want to know is this : what actually *is* a blog?

The word 'blog' is a shortened version of 'web log' , which could be a clue to tell you that a blog is a log, or journal, that exists purely on the Internet. Lots of people use blogs for exactly that purpose – as a kind of online diary, to talk about their work, their family, their

pet goldfish or any number of other things.

So, the first thing to think about is what exactly you want to do with your blog? Are you the sort of person who wants to tell the world about your everyday life? Or perhaps you feel you have something important and interesting to say – something that the world needs to hear about...

There's no doubt that you *do* need to have a certain confidence to maintain a blog. A bit of egomania doesn't do any harm either! After all, people will be reading your thoughts – that's the whole point. If you're a shrinking violet who thinks that nobody could possibly want to read anything that you'd write, then blogging probably isn't for you.

However, most people live far more interesting lives, and have far more interesting thoughts to share, than they give themselves credit for. Some incredibly popular blogs are little more than personal journals! The fact is that people are fascinated by real-life stories – and blogs are popular and widespread precisely because people just love to read about people's real life struggles, joys and sorrows. From a Christian perspective, we have an amazing story to share, and many of us have travelled a very interesting path as we have followed Jesus. You'd be amazed how many people around the internet would enjoy reading about it! My current blog, which only started less than six months ago, has attracted more than 2500 unique visitors from almost 70 countries – and that's with no marketing or anything ...people find it simply through the internet grapevine!

Let's say that you've got this far and are thinking 'Hmmm. Maybe I'll give it a shot'. How do you actually get started? Well, the good news is that you can do it very easily and at absolutely no cost. Obviously, there are blog platforms that you have to pay for, you can host it on a server and all that sort of thing – but, for a humble personal blog, it really isn't necessary.

The two most well-known free blog platforms are Blogger and Wordpress. Each of these offer a free, hosted solution – which means that someone else takes care of all the issues of hosting your blog, doing all the technical stuff and so on. The slight downside is that you will end up with adverts somewhere on your blog – but that's a relatively small price to pay for what you get.

Other possible places to start a free blog are Xanga (www.xanga.com); Live Journal (www.livejournal.com); Tumblr (www.tumblr.com) Each offers a slightly different feature set and 'feel'. Again, be free to experiment and try different ones to find one you like!

OK. So, let's see how easy it is. Blogger is at www.blogger.com and the hosted version of Wordpress is found at www.wordpress.com. There's a non-hosted version of Wordpress that you can download (for free) and host yourself. Ignore that for now, I'm just mentioning it because it can confuse newbies.

We'll take a look at Wordpress, simply because Wordpress is used for the front end of i-church, so you'll see roughly what it looks like. Blogger is probably just as good, some would say better – if you get into blogging then feel free to try both to see which suits you. If you go to www.wordpress.com. You'll see a link for starting a new blog – hit it, fill in a user name and email address. You'll be sent the usual spam-busting email to validate the new account. This will provide a link that you click to go back onto Wordpress, where your account will be 'live' and your brand spanking new blog will be right there waiting for you!

Hey! I just started a fresh Wordpress blog in less than a minute!

Obviously, at this stage, all you'll have is a very basic blog with a 'hello world' message sitting there. Now the work begins! For this you'll need to login as 'site admin' – there's a link for that purpose on your blog. Use your log in name and the password the Wordpress supplied (don't worry, you can change this in the Admin area).



This will take you to what initially probably looks a confusing page. Across the top you've got a whole load of options, each of which takes you to a series of other options. It's well worth taking some time to explore here. It's actually not as confusing as it looks. For example, the 'Write' tab, simply takes you to a place that looks quite similar to the posting window in the i-Church forums. Here you add blog posts, using a 'what you see is what you get' editor. The 'Presentation' tab goes to a page where you can change the 'look' of your blog with a single click. Go ahead and play around until you get something you like.

Of course, there are a whole range of other options that you can use to customise your blog, arrange categories, add links, import pictures and whole load of other stuff. But, you can pick up those things at your own pace, as you get a bit more confident. The beauty of setups like Wordpress and Blogger is that you can quite easily start a blog, or several blogs, and experiment away until you get something you like. It's very common for people to start a blog, find that they don't like it, and just start another! There must be zillions of abandoned blogs still floating around on the Web!

The key thing with blogging is to 'have a go'. You can even set it up so that you're blog stays 'private' – visible only to yourself – until you feel confident about going public.

So, what are you waiting for? Get out there and grab yourself a piece of the blog action. And if you want any help send me a PM and I'll try and give a hand...

One day a man went to visit a church. He arrived early, parked his car, and got out. Another car pulled up near him, and the driver told him, "I always park there. You are in my place!"

The visitor went inside for Sunday school, found an empty seat, and sat down. A young lady from the church approached him and stated, "That's my seat! You took my place!"

The visitor was somewhat distressed by this rude welcome, but said nothing.

After the service the visitor went into the sanctuary and sat down. Another member walked up to him and said "That's where I always sit. You took my place!"

The visitor was even more troubled by this treatment, but said nothing.

Later, as the congregation was praying for Christ to dwell among them, the visitor stood, and his appearance began to change. Horrible scars became visible on his hands and on his sandaled feet. Someone from the congregation noticed him and shouted out, "What happened to you?"

The visitor replied, "I took your place"

Recipe by Jayne

CORNISH PASTIE - Kiwi style Jayne Tite

Not exactly as we had them in Cornwall during the war, but close. The lard is important as it gives flavour to the pastry.

Crust recipe.

14 oz lard
5 1/3 Cups flour
2 teaspoons salt
1 cup ice water (with ice cubes in)



Mix flour and salt. Cut lard into large cubes and then 'cut' into flour with a pastry blender until mix resembles coarse meal. Add 13 Tablespoons of ice water, sprinkled over top (really truly ice water). Toss the flour until it forms a dough, then gather dough into a ball. If it crumbles, add more water a teaspoon at a time, until dough holds together. Divide into 8 balls of equal size, cover with wax paper or plastic and chill at least 1 hour. (Do not knead dough.)

Filling Recipe

2 lb lean chuck steak, cut into 1/4" cubes (avoid fat and membrane) or lean minced, (ground), beef
3 - 4 fist sized potatoes (an adult's fist), peeled and diced.
4 medium sized carrots, thinly sliced.
1 medium sized swede/turnip, diced. (If no swede / turnip add more potato)
1 1/2 cups finely diced onion
1 Tablespoon salt
1 teaspoon pepper
beef stock cube or powder. (1 cube or 1 teaspoon powder to each pastie.)

(I usually boil the diced steak for about 30 minutes to start the cooking process, and add it to the mix still quite wet)

Mix all filing ingredients together and divide roughly into 1/8ths

Roll out balls of dough on floured cloth with floured rolling pin into an approximate 9" circle (cut to shape if necessary)

Put heaped portion of filling on one side of circle, sprinkle on stock, and 1 dessertspoon full of water. Moisten circle's edge with milk or water to facilitate sealing and flip other side of circle over filling, pressing edges together. Moisten the 1/2 circle join and fold crust carefully back on itself. press the edge all the way around with a fork . Brush top with beaten egg or milk. Slide pastie onto a greased and floured baking sheet. Repeat for all 8 pasties

Pre-heat oven to 400F

Bake 45 minutes, remove from oven, stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Fully cooked pasties can be frozen for up to several months... Cool first and double bag in freezer bags.

They are great eaten cold with a salad, or just by themselves.

It's a lot of work, but well worth it.

Poem

Jill Bunyan

Sitting quietly
prayerfully
wistfully.
remembering
regretting
hoping.
No words
just tears.
Broken hopes
shattered dreams
Wrong decisions
consequences
pain.
Light shines
eating the darkness.
Sitting quietly
prayerfully
wistfully
remembering
hoping
dreaming
listening.....



Stamp appeal

The Power Station, London, is headed by Ian and Jill Bunyan, who are also i-church members. They would love to hear from anyone who would consider passing on any old unwanted stamps, or who would consider making a financial donation. They are working to collect £6730 to build a church Andhra Pradesh, Southern India.

In the past, money has been raised to buy Bibles in the local language. The charity feeds, clothes and provides medical aid for the very poor people of the area. It also looks after a growing number of homeless children.

This is an opportunity to use something you would probably simply throw away, to really impact the lives of people.

Ian and Jill would love to hear from you, if you can help. They can be contacted on thepowerstation@gmail.com.

For further information on the ministry, go to <http://www.thepowerstation.org>.

Further information about this appeal can be found in The NET Issue #6.

How to join i-church

Not everyone who reads The NET is a member of i-church, and if that applies to you, please read on . . . It is great to find you reading our newspaper. Hopefully reading these pages will whet your appetite to find out more about us.

If you go to our main website, www.i-church.org you will find lots of information about i-church, what we do, when we do it etc and if this sounds like the kind of church you would like to belong to, please do ask to join.



We have members in the UK, Europe, The United States, Caribbean, South America, Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. We are very much a world wide broad church, and there is usually someone around, somewhere in the world 24 hrs a day.

Whilst we are formally part of the Church of England, we have members of many denominations and varied churchmanship. It is our diversity which makes i-church such an interesting place to be. And you can be a member of both i-church AND a more conventional bricks and mortar church at the same time.


Forum Tip

Phil Wright

Talking to other members it is clear that we approach the i-church forums in different ways. I am a big fan of the View New Posts option which appears nears the top right of the web page. This gives me all the posts that have appeared since my last visit to the forums, irrespective of the forum they appear in. That suits me very nicely, since I am interested in a wide range of subjects and I'd hate to miss out on something new. And should a new forum or topic be created, I will see it straight away.

Others see the world quite differently. Ailsa, for example, is much more logical and looks at the forums that interest her one by one. Of course, when you view the forums this way you still get an indication of the items you have not yet read -  those little orange pips or squares to the left of the topic title are saying "new post". Did you realise that you can click on the "pip" and be taken to the new post? That's not the only way of getting to the new posts - on the right hand side is a column "Last Action"; for each topic it says when the last action was, Last post by and a name. If you click on Last post by you also get straight to the last post (obvious really). Personally, I prefer the pips! 

So what's the difference between looking forum by forum or just at the new posts alone? Neither way is better than the other, it's just two different ways of looking at the postings in the forums. A disadvantage of my method is that you only see the new posts since your last visit and so don't get a reminder of some of the older posts that might still be of interest. Also, if you don't read the posts on this visit, the next time you come into i-church they won't appear in view new posts, and you may never read them. And sometimes there are no new posts to read, so you get an error. Don't worry if that happens, all it means is that there is nothing new for you to read. What I do then is to click on "Get active posts for : today" which you find right at the bottom of the topic lists.

A disadvantage of the forum by forum approach is that you might have to wade through a lot of levels to find anything to grab your interest. Of course, there's nothing to stop you combining both methods, gaining the best of both worlds. Toodle  pip!

Previous Forum Tips

You may have missed some issues of The NET and so be unaware of what has been covered before as forum tips. Below is a list of what our techies have shared in the past 7 issues. If you have any question about the technical side of i-church that you would like help with just send a PM to Phil and the answer will arrive in the next issue. For back issues of The NET go to our external website at <http://www.i-church.org/cms/category/the-net-newspaper/>.

Issue 1 Avoiding inadvertent smiley faces; finding your recent posts.

Issue 2 A guide to various buttons on posts.

Issue 3 A guide to using the gallery.

Issue 4 Using board settings to save bandwidth.

Issue 5 How to have two separate windows open at once.

Issue 6 Putting links to other web pages into posts without having to type the whole link in as text.

Issue 7 Quoting in posts.

Issue 8 Multiple quotations



Scrooge writes

Well, we now have a new Council, which means that the newly elected members will be doing their best to catch up on what's been happening in Council before bombarding us all with questions and good ideas for the future.

Already, one of the new Council members has asked why the monthly finance reports aren't published in one of the forums—good question, the only possible answer being “we didn't think to”. Are our members interested in the boring finances - well, you probably are, so from this month onwards I'll post the report for all members to read. (Don't go rushing off to find it yet, I haven't received the bank statement for April yet - look towards the end of next week).

Of course it means I'll have to actually write something that makes sense; I can't just throw a pile of numbers at you and hope you can make sense of it all. Which kind of brings me to the point: I am one of those people for whom numbers tell a story, but I have to recognise that for the majority they are, well, just numbers. What do they mean? In plain English, please. So, here's an offer you can't refuse - if there is anything about the state of i-church finances that you don't understand, or just don't know, then drop me a line: email of a PM is fine. I'll do my best to de-mystify our finances for you, and if I don't know the answer I'll have to go do some homework and figure it out (pun intended, sorry!).

If you happen to be one of those people afflicted with a love of numbers, we do have a small finance sub-committee who ponder deep and meaningful questions about fund raising, grant applications and such like. If you think that might be fun, go and visit your doctor and if s/he says you are incurably afflicted you can join us for some number therapy. Again, just drop me a line.

Worship in i-church

The current times are shown on the right. There is always the opportunity to offer extra worship times. These need not be daily but could be weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

There are a wide range of worship styles on offer so there should be something that appeals to almost everyone. There are still opportunities for new Leaders to come forward—this is not as daunting as it may sound and a number of people have started a new ministry in worship through i-church. This really is a place where every member ministry is encouraged and flourishes.

In addition to the advertised times, there are special services on occasion. During Holy Week there have been special services arranged for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday in addition to the normal times of worship which will have appropriate content for the season. Meditations have also been posted for those who wish to use the material alone.

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 | 20:00 & 21:00 |
| As advertised | 11:00 |
| <u>Open House - Tuesdays</u> | |
| Study | 19:00 |
| Chat | 19:30 |
| Worship | 20:00 |

NB - These are GMT times. Daylight saving, or Summer time changes have affected many countries in March. You can now get services in your local time on the member Home Page. Check it out.