

PRAYER FOCUS

Spring 2014



Information from Member Churches
of the Union of Evangelical Churches
with suggested items for prayer



UNION OF
EVANGELICAL
CHURCHES

sharing God's love and truth where we are

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Brian Wood

Greetings everyone and welcome to our bi-annual Prayer Focus, the second since it was redesigned. Our thanks to all of you who have contributed through providing articles and to the production team.



Last November we embarked on a new style of annual rally which achieved the best numerical attendance for many years. It received very favourable feedback from those who took part in a wide variety of activities including First Aid, Worship Workshops, Bible Puppetry, Sugarcraft, and Children's work. Our thanks and congratulations to the Promotion Committee for a programme diverse enough to suit all tastes delivered to a high standard of quality.

In the context of the role of our Churches within the wider community, I would like to share with you some thoughts on a phrase in Scripture that has been in my mind for some months and resurfaces from time to time, demanding further careful consideration.

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is recorded in all four gospels and is so well known that I don't need to include the narrative here. In chapter 9 verse 13 of Luke's Gospel Jesus responds to His disciples' concerns for the welfare of a large crowd for whom a day had slipped by as they watched Him heal the sick and listened captivated by His teaching, with the invitation, "You give them something to eat."

By now the twelve had observed their master exercising authority over His creation in a variety of situations. He had also sent them around the villages of Galilee in pairs sharing the gospel and they had performed miracles in His name. So why the reluctance to take the initiative and exercise the faith that is the underlying theme of this part of Luke's Gospel?

I wonder if food was for some reason considered by the twelve to be an inappropriate subject for a miracle - too trivial perhaps. Reflect yourself and let me know your thoughts (hebers@btinternet.com).

While my wife Rosemary and I were house-parents in a boys' home (20 of

them) we ran out of bread after Sunday tea. Donny (aged 5) suggested we ask Jesus - somewhat diffident adults agreed and we prayed. Two hours later we were overwhelmed by bread and other harvest gifts from a Church we had never had any contact with previously.

Jesus promised that the Father would give His disciples whatever we ask for in His name (John 15:16). This Prayer Focus provides the information for us to intercede on behalf of each other with that confidence.

CAMBERWELL

Fred Hintze (as told to Howard Gardner)

Church life and activities have continued much the same, and we have much to thank God for.

The young peoples' work continues to flourish. We have five midweek clubs for teenagers, as well as the Sunday School for young people and children. The Sunday School is well attended. Our door to door work continues, and we have regular open-air meetings. I am privileged to continue a 15-year commitment of visiting a local school, conducting assemblies each Thursday.

We continue to uphold other UEC Churches in our prayers. For ourselves, we share with you two points for the life of our fellowship here:

- We continue to have new visitors attend our services. Some stay and some do not. Please pray that we will discern how we may best help them to integrate into our fellowship.
- We are busy preparing for the Children's Holiday Special that we will hold during the Easter holidays. We have been privileged to conduct this outreach for the past 40 years, and generally have 110 children attend every day. This year we need 35 helpers. There are Bible stories, handicrafts, singing and games. Pray with us that the Lord will be present too, and speak to their young hearts and lives.

UEC Training Days 2014

29th March—Evangelism 5th July—Bible Study
4th October—Apologetics

CANNING TOWN

Jonathan Findlay

Praise:

- A number of new families have been attending our services on Sunday;
- A new commitment by some to going deeper with God;
- A new awareness of our God and His grace through the Word;
- A number of new challenges that face us as we look to the future;
- A number of people have become Christians through the coffee morning.

Prayer:

- J4K (Jesus for Kids) meets on a Thursday evening and the kids (18) that come are from outside of the Church. Parents of these kids are coming to the Morning Services;
- Youth Group meets on Tuesday and consists of an enthusiastic group—pray for the leadership of the group and for the young people to settle down;
- Junior Church and Sunday School: pray for teachers and more children;
- Bible Study Groups: pray for more people to attend and for deeper spiritual lives;
- Plans for Easter: we hope to do this outside the Church; April is set apart for a month of evangelistic training and will focus on Easter Sunday;
- Our coffee morning is on the first Saturday morning: pray as we go out and invite people in that good conversations will take place;
- Pray for people to be converted and for the Church members to continue to be committed and open to what God is doing.



CHELMSFORD

Mark Parrott

We continue to give thanks for our 'Contenders' course, supported by friends from Wickford E.C. We are now three quarters of the way through this twelve part series. Each meeting is available on our website (though not all up to date as yet!). All are welcome to come to future sessions.

We continue to reach out to the people of Chelmsford with our weekly street witness, and many seeds have been planted. We wait in anticipation for the 'fruit', trusting that, in His own time, God will bless our efforts. Please continue to pray for this work.

There is slow, but steady growth within the fellowship, which is very encouraging.

The young people have been meeting at the Manse once a month. This is an exciting new venture for us. Please pray that these times may stimulate their faith, and also, that they will discover God's plans for their lives, and their place within the Body of Christ.

Our day of prayer and fasting consisted of lunchtime and evening sessions. We were burdened by the 'imminancy' of our Lord's return, and also for the need for daily prayer from our Church. Please pray that the Lord would give us the desire to meet together and pray fervently for our city and nation.

The Lord has provided wonderfully through a legacy left by a former member. Please pray that we will be given wisdom and discernment on how we use this.

Thank you all for your prayers for Jill. She had a successful stem cell transplant, and is making good progress. Please continue to pray for her full recovery.

'They devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.' Acts 2 v 42

2014 Week of Prayer
16th-23rd March

CORRINGHAM

June White

‘Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.’ Psalm 127 v 1

In July last year work started on the front of the church to make the porch much larger. The work is almost completed with a small amount of work to the driveways and garden bed outstanding. Over the months this has been a talking point with locals as to why the building should be altered; most of these comments are from people who never come to the church. We pray this will not only be a talking point but they will want to know what goes on inside.

While the work was being done we met on a Sunday in the back hall, celebrating harvest in September with a visit from Jean-Louis Kassis from London City Mission and our 99th Church Anniversary in October with Michael Child taking the services.

A weekend of events is being planned for our 100th Anniversary in October this year and details will be provided in due course.

Unfortunately our annual Carol Singing was rained off but a few days later were able to do a leaflet drop regarding the Christmas services. The Family Service and Carol Service were both well attended and it was good to have the extra porch area which was needed for the Carol Service.

On 4th December the church became a distribution centre for Foodbank in the local area. Please pray for those who run the centre each week and to be a witness to those in need.

Christianity and Discipleship Explored courses started in January—we thank God for another opportunity to run these courses and pray for those leading and attending.

Please continue to pray for Jeremy who has ongoing health problems.



The new front entrance to the Church

CRESSING

Dennis Ivey

At the moment building work has slowed down, but as with many churches much more very expensive work is needed to keep our church (built in 1909 at the cost of £500) in good order. The new car park which used to flood at the least amount of rain has stood the test during the recent bad weather (we have now lost our outside baptismal pool!).

We continue to try and think of ways to attract people to our church by outreach and prayer. The Christmas Tree Festival still attracts many visitors but not folk who would then come into the church on a regular basis. Last Christmas saw a good response to the cake decoration courses and those who took part in running this event have been asked to continue this course at a later date. Some within the Church are a part of Cressing Events Volunteers which arranges mid-day lunches for those who are on their own or do not get out very much. These events attract between 40 to 50 people at a time and are much appreciated by those who attend.

We are still involved with two local schools and carry out Work Place Chaplaincy at Freeport, the out-of-town shopping centre in Braintree. We maintain our weekly Bible study and Saturday morning prayer meetings.

Our first Sunday of the month Café Church still attracts new folk for the free breakfast, but often we do not see them till the next month or two later.

Please pray:

- That those who attend Café Church will find a hunger that only God can fill;
- For healing for some of our older faithful members whose health restricts their day-to-day activities;
- For the falling Sunday School numbers;
- For finances to finish the building work.

DAWS HEATH

Chris Banks

We continue to give thanks to the Lord for His goodness towards us as a fellowship and would value your prayers for the following:

- By the time you read this article our sister Kelly Sewell will have been baptised. Please pray for the conversion of her husband Trevor who is not a believer.
- We are thankful to the Lord for several small children who meet at the Sunday School each week and we pray that they all early in life might be brought to know the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Our friend Samuel Fadiya has left us because he moved to London so he could live nearer to where he is studying, and we pray that the Lord might lead and guide him in his future days.
- We long to see people in our village brought to faith in Christ and to that end,

Next UEC Training Day

We are running a series of training days, as in previous years, to equip local Church members and ensure that they have good quality and relevant Bible teaching from experts in their fields, using interactive presentation styles. There is a suggested donation of £6 to cover expenses and refreshments.



Saturday 29th March (9.45am-1.00pm)

Andrew Gordon from the London City Mission serves his home church, West Kilburn Baptist Church, building contacts and sharing the gospel with them. Andrew will be teaching on the subject of practical friendship evangelism.

All training days will take place at Rayleigh Evangelical Church, Eastwood Road, Rayleigh, SS6 7JQ. Free parking is available.

EASTWOOD

Malcolm Richards

Since our report in the previous edition of Prayer Focus, we have continued with God's help to maintain our witness in the community and for some good responses to the activities that have taken place. In our last report we said that the Rainbow Group, parents and helpers had been invited to our Harvest Festival and lunch and we are pleased to report the total present was over 60. We give God our thanks for that but long to see this on a regular basis. With our Christmas Special for them led by Chris and Sue Govus of Back2School Ministries, again over 60 were present. Our next special event is on 23rd March (Mother's Day, but one week early).

For our Kids on Monday club we had a Light Party to combat Halloween on 31st October, but our Christmas Party was postponed to January and became a New Year Party instead.

The Leighfields Ladies group has new ladies coming, and this group will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary this March (we will report on this event in the next Prayer Focus).

The work with the younger ladies, namely the Mums & Tots group and The Ladies' Contact Group, is also well supported, and Pastor Graham takes every opportunity to share the gospel.

We are having ministry from our Ministry Team and Simon Werrett is currently leading a Bible Study on Joshua. Our 'prayer and share' time on some Sunday evenings is well attended and many take part with readings, poems and choices of hymns. We are encouraged to see good support and participation.

We have maintained our published Prayer Line, which includes items for praise and thanksgiving and specific prayer for those of our fellowship that are in need, as well as world and country matters.

Our Harvest gifts were distributed to the London City Mission and also the Local Homeless Action Resource Project. In November the Kids on Monday Club and the Church collected items for Samaritan's Purse Shoebox Appeal.

GREAT WAKERING

Brian Wood

Greetings to our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. We consider it a privilege to be able to share with you in prayer and invite you to give thanks with us for:

- The heritage we enjoy today through the faithfulness of past generations in upholding the cause of the gospel;
- Those who make up our believing community both young and old, and who show through their presence week by week their interest in spiritual things and their commitment to the Lord of the Church;
- The continued provision of financial resources to enable us to work and witness for our Saviour in the village;
- Those who give of themselves, their skills and their time so that we can bring glory to God through our services and activities.

Looking ahead to the future we ask your prayerful support for:

- Our Junior Church on Sunday mornings, that leaders and youngsters alike may through their Bible activities be encouraged in their walk of faith. We need more in the 5-10 age range;
- Our Sunday services (morning and evening) and those who lead them and faithfully proclaim God's word;
- Our Tuesday evening Bible and Prayer evenings, that we may be inspired and challenged through Scripture and be a blessing to others through prayer;
- Our midweek activities for youngsters that such contacts may yield fruit in terms of lasting discipleship;
- Easter and other special occasions when we seek to engage with the local community and share gospel truths.
- Those who at this time through old age or serious illness are even now testing the spiritual roots put down in easier times.



Sunday School visit to Colchester Zoo

LITTLE TOTHAM

Peggy Shelley

Once more a report on the life of our Church at Little Totham.

We have been receiving some good teaching from Glen and his wife Sylvia until the end of last year, when they left us to go and help a Church in Colchester. We will miss them both very much, as they were a great help.

But God is good: on their last day with us, we had another couple visit our church, a retired Minister. He and his wife are staying with us, and they had decided to make Little Totham their home. Please pray for them; their names are Roy and Elizabeth Carter. Roy is a big help with the preaching.

At our November Tea , the Revd Pearson gave his talk on Birds in the Bible, with pictures, which was much appreciated. He is coming back again as he still has some more to do. Our Village Teas are still being blessed with friends who are not members of our Church – some come along from the Dinners that we used to do.

In our previous letter, we asked you to pray for Lester's son, who has cancer. An update on his progress is that he is in St Bartholomew's Hospital in London. The treatment he has been receiving over the past year has allowed his operation to be postponed. His stem cell count at the moment is looking very good. Thank you to all who have prayed for him.

Brenda, David and Anne are still upholding the Church, and now with the help of Roy, it will make life a little bit less hectic for David.

Like many Churches, we are looking forward to the Easter Services, some of which we share with the Church of England at Little Totham, whose friendship we greatly value.

God bless you all for the coming months ahead.



Like the UEC on Facebook - facebook.com/UECUK



Follow the UEC on Twitter - [@UECUK](https://twitter.com/@UECUK)

RAYLEIGH

Chris Banks (Moderator)

Please remember the Church at Rayleigh as they meet together each Sunday morning and for the Ladies Fellowship as they meet on a Friday afternoon. Some specific prayer points are:

- For the Lord to bless the ministry of His Word each week;
- That the Lord would raise up a minister to lead them;
- For other believers to come and join the Church and so help them in their witness;
- That precious souls from the neighbourhood would be saved;
- For Harold Fossey as he continues to recover from his recent illness.



SHOEBURY

Bob Werrett

Since the last edition of Prayer Focus we have had a time of blessing and disaster.

We had two events in the Autumn. In September we put on an exhibition about the church and the history of the UEC, which coincided with a local Traders' Bank Holiday Event; about 60-70 people came through the church. We then

took part in the Traders Christmas Event and about 150 people came for drinks and mince pies. We gave away a bag containing a copy of the NT, a gospel tract and invitations to our Carol Services. We ran out of our 100 bags quite quickly, so just gave invitations with the refreshments. We had an almost full church for our Carols by Candlelight Service, when pupils from the local school joined in our service. This was the up side of the period.

We were sad to have the passing into the Lord's presence of one of our very faithful ladies, Miriam, who had suffered for some months before her home-call. A Thanksgiving Service for her life and witness was held. Then Ruby was taken into hospital and spent Christmas there; she is at home now, supported by care-workers, but is unable to come to church. As our numbers were now quite low, we suspended our Sunday morning service and support other Churches.

Then on Christmas Day, following a short service, we left the building and didn't check that the candles were extinguished and so when we arrived the next Sunday, there was a burnt communion table and damage to some carpet and the whole room was smoke damaged. We are using the middle hall for our services at the moment as we wait for it to be sorted.

We continue to have fellowship with our Methodist friends and joined them in January for a service. They also help us in our monthly visit to Kathryn Court Care Home. We have also maintained our weekly Friday coffee morning. Sadly the events with our friends from Leigh Elim Church did not bring the hoped for increase in numbers, but it gave us an opportunity to make contact with the local community as several thousand leaflets were distributed. Please pray for us in this situation as we look to the Lord for the future of the work in Shoebury. Our text for 2014 is:

'Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.' Romans 12 v 11



Fire damaged communion table

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

Brian Wood (Moderator)

I am writing as Moderator in order to spare the blushes of those who have and are being instrumental in supporting and enabling the changes that have begun and are continuing.

These are encouraging and challenging times. We give thanks to the Lord of the Church who has in a very special way confirmed His commitment to the believing community in Guildford Road over the past year by calling Bill and Nola Hoggard to make themselves and their gifts available in this unique situation in the heart of Southend.

We are also thankful for the careful stewardship of God's people in past years that enabled the church flat to be completely refurbished. In addition stipends have been provided with the help of a three year grant from UEC funds.

These developments are timely because several loyal members have reached the stage where they cannot contribute to the life of the fellowship to the extent they once did.

Derek, our retired minister, faced increasing demands caring for his wife Gwen, who passed into the Lord's presence at the turn of the year. Freda after 40-plus years as Church Secretary has been feeling the strain and has relinquished those duties. Irene continues as Treasurer but would like to step down once a successor is trained. Sadly just before this article was written Beatrice Quack a member and regular attendee for many years succumbed to a sudden and unexpected stroke. We give thanks for them all and others besides who have faithfully served the Lord here over many years.

The attendance at the Sunday morning services numbers around 20, and the composite photo shows us enjoying an after-Church lunch when we celebrated Irene's special birthday milestone.

We are located in a spiritually needy area and invite prayer for the starting of a Mums and Toddlers group in March, the restarting of Midweek Prayer and Bible Study meetings and other possibilities being thought and prayed through as we wait on the Lord for his guiding.



STANWAY

Barbara Ratcliffe

Spring greetings to all UEC Churches from Stanway Evangelical Church. We have much to praise the Lord for over the last year.

During the Christmas season we held the Village Christmas Carol Service early December, then Carol Singing at our local Sainsbury's store (two sessions) when we raised over £300 for two local Christian charities. We hosted the Stanway Primary School Carol Service when the church was full to overflowing, while at the same time good numbers attended our weekend Christmas Festival as well as all the Christmas services.

We also experienced continuing good numbers attending all services and all activities, including the monthly coffee mornings. A new venture "Ladies Breakfast" also proved popular. We are pleased to report continuing involvement at all three local schools, and Pastor Eric is enjoying his role as Chaplain to the Mayor of Colchester from May 2013 to May 2014.

Sadly we report the loss of Jean Fisher a long time member and friend of the fellowship, but we rejoice in welcoming two new members.

We would value your prayer support for the future months in this way:

- For our young people at University;
- The ongoing development of our land (The Dell);
- Our involvement in the Stanway Village Fayre in April;
- Planned Church camping weekend in August;
- Planning for the Children's Holiday Club (October half term);
- Planning of the Church weekend away at Sizewell Hall (November);
- For those in Church leadership;
- For those experiencing poor health and changes in personal circumstances.

As always we assure you all for our interest and prayer support and we greatly appreciate your prayers for us. Thank you. 'First of all then, I urge that supplications, prayer and thanksgiving be made for all peoples.' 1 Timothy 2 v 1

WICKFORD

Keith Britton

Once again, we send greetings from Wickford to all our sister Churches. Only a short report this time round as we have had no major events recently.

However, we praise the Lord that we celebrated another year of witness at our Anniversary in January. Thank you to all the Churches who supported us on this occasion.

Due to an increase in numbers, we have recently changed the time of our Junior Church. It now meets from 9.30am-10.30am. This means that the teachers do not miss out on the morning service. It also means that others in the Church can be involved in this vital work.

On the other hand, we had to cancel the Christianity Explored course that was scheduled to commence in February, due to having no confirmed delegates. This was obviously very disappointing but we trust it will only be a postponement and we will be able to re-schedule one later in the year. We are planning to replace this outreach with another, in the form of a door-to-door delivery of the Good News newspaper. We would value prayer for this.

We continue to visit our local primary school once a month for speaking at their assemblies. We are also opening up discussions regarding speaking at special school events such as Harvest, and the possibility of the school attending our own Harvest Thanksgiving.

Lastly, we very much enjoyed fellowship at the UEC Family Day and look forward to other opportunities to encourage each other during the year ahead.



WITHAM

Will Abbott

Greetings from Witham. As we approach a year in ministry at Valley Church we have much to be thankful for and much to look forward to.

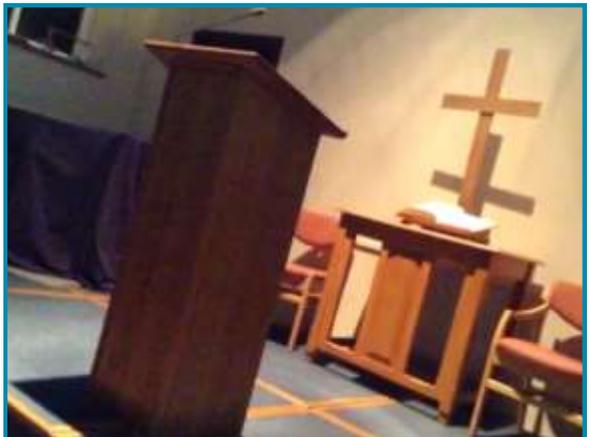
We give thanks for two new members, Gerry and Jill, and for five or so others who have returned to the Valley. We are also grateful for new people at the midweek Ladies Fellowship and also at Valley Tots. Toybox, our all-age worship service, continues on a monthly basis.

Since the last update we have started a new group called FISHFAITH. This is attended weekly by 20 or more young people of secondary school age, who enjoy a varied programme of activities, always including something to eat! We have also started a new midweek, daytime prayer meeting – the aim being, of course, to pray, but also to encourage a wider spread of Church folk to engage in the life of the Church.

We have enjoyed two retreat days since September, focussed on our calling to be disciples. The most recent day involved some thought and prayer towards community engagement, and we are keen to discover how the Lord will lead in this over the coming months.

Last year, a Service of Thanksgiving was held following the passing away of Elsa, one of our members, who is now in a far better place. This was a very moving, but joyful, day, and the family expressed their thanks and appreciation for how the day went. We even sang the second verse of *Thine be the Glory* in French, honouring Elsa's wishes. It certainly raised a smile or two on what was a difficult day at times.

We look forward to seeing how 2014 will unfold, and will join with UEC Churches throughout this year as we pray for one another.



UEC Family Day

Feedback on the 2013 Family Day

On Saturday 30th November we held the first UEC Family Day. For many years the UEC held an Annual Rally, and the Family Day saw the launch of a new and exciting format.

Over 70 people from across the UEC attended and benefited from quality teaching from Revd Robert Winston as well as workshops on a variety of subjects including First Aid, music for worship, sugar craft, puppets in worship, how to handle the media, and a children's programme.

Comments on the day were extremely positive, with everyone who filled in the feedback form saying they would recommend it to a friend, and all workshops meeting or exceeding expectations. There are some suggestions that have been taken on board and will be incorporated next time around.

Lots of useful suggestions were put forward as to what subjects to cover in future training days and family days and these have been incorporated into the training plan for 2014.

We're planning to hold the next UEC Family Day in the summer of 2015 so please pencil 27th June 2015 in your diaries, and please also note the UEC Training Days that are coming up!



Workshops at the Family Day

Week of Prayer 2014

The 2014 UEC Week of Prayer is a great opportunity for you to support the work of the wider UEC Church family. In 21st century Britain we are in a 'spiritual marketplace', competing with mixed messages from around the world. We know that people can only come to God through Jesus' sacrifice.



The week will start with a joint UEC prayer meeting at Rayleigh, with worship led by the music group from Corringham.

Monday 17th March—Rayleigh (8.00pm)

Over the following few days there will be a number of prayer meetings throughout the UEC church family, and you're invited to join in with your local meeting, if possible.

Tuesday 18th March—Corringham (7.15pm) & Southend (7.30pm)

Wednesday 19th March—Camberwell (7.45pm) & Stanway (7.30pm)

Thursday 20th March—Daws Heath (8.00pm)



UNION OF
EVANGELICAL
CHURCHES

Published by the
Union of Evangelical Churches
36 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 7JQ
t: 01268 742293
e: admin@uec-churches.net
m: 07831 101323
w: www.uec-churches.net
© 2014 UEC

sharing God's love and truth where we are

2014 UEC PRAYER MEETINGS

Forthcoming meetings

	Date	Time	Location
UEC Week of Prayer	Monday 17th March	8.00pm	Rayleigh
	Tuesday 18th March	7.15pm	Corringham
		7.30pm	Southend
	Wednesday 19th March	7.45pm	Camberwell
		7.30pm	Stanway
	Thursday 20th March	8.00pm	Daws Heath
	Wednesday 16th April	8.00pm	Chelmsford
	Thursday 15th May	8.00pm	Little Totham
	Tuesday 17th June	7.30pm	Great Wakering
	Wednesday 16th July	7.30pm	Stanway
	Wednesday 17th September	7.45pm	Witham
	Tuesday 14th October	7.15pm	Corringham
	Wednesday 12th November	8.00pm	Wickford
	Thursday 18th December	7.30pm	Cressing



Like us on Facebook - facebook.com/UECUK



Follow us on Twitter - @UECUK



Visit our website - www.uec-churches.net

Published by the
Union of Evangelical Churches
36 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 7JQ
t: 01268 742293
e: admin@uec-churches.net
m: 07831 101323
w: www.uec-churches.net
© 2014 UEC