

Pass no judgement, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. *Luke 6, v37*



October 2011

The Recorder

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An edited version of this magazine is available on the Church Website.

(Personal details are NOT included)

Church website: <http://www.trinity-urc.org.uk>

Trinity - A Family Church

Worshipping together - Caring for one another - Sharing with others

October Greetings.

Well, September is nearly over (if you are reading this hot off the press!), our children are already looking forward to half term and our older students have gone (back) to college. Church life seems to have got back to normal with a vengeance! I've certainly had more meetings on church business in the past two weeks than in the previous two months. While it is great to have time off, the re-entry into the 'churchosphere' in September can be sudden and testing. Anyway, I do hope all of you have had a restful and rejuvenating holiday period and are now enjoying the buzz of church life.

One of the many meetings I went to was the September Synod. At synod Revd Elizabeth Welch presented the latest report from the Deployment Working Party (a group where I represent the Chiltern Area on your behalf). For over a year our synod has been working a way to define a synod-wide deployment practice for stipendiary ministers. This has two key aims: to ensure

1. each church in our synod gets a 'fair share' of ministry; and
2. the synod deployment remains within its target (set by the National Church using the agreed strategy for allocating ministers to Synods - 50% for membership, 33 % for number of churches and 17% for population).

Our synod (Thames North) is one of the 'over deployed' synods; which means we have more ministers than the National Church says we are entitled to – which of course means that there are other synods who do not have as many ministers as they are entitled to!

In analysing the present situation a number of interesting facts emerged. Thames North Synod has 6274 members in 140 churches and will have scoping for 44 full time equivalent (FTE) stipendiary ministers at the end of 2012. If a straight division of ministers into churches and members is taken, this gives ratios of about:

- 45 members per church;
- 3.2 churches per full time Minister; and
- 143 members per minister.

On this basis, the implication is that a local church having 40% or more of a Minister's time is very fortunate compared with the majority of churches!

The Deployment Working Party has prepared an interim report (the final draft will be presented to the November synod) which provides a strategy with three key strands:

1. **Ways of using limited ministerial resources.** This includes development of groups and teams, and the use of Local Church Leaders (lay elders appointed to provide leadership to a congregation under the guidance of a stipendiary minister).
2. **Ways of ensuring fairness across and within synods.** This includes ensuring every church has oversight from a minister, developing Area strategies to meet their deployment target and avoiding 'over deployment' in the synod.
3. **Going for growth.** Which has a focus on growing congregations to 'generate' more entitlement (and ability to pay) for more ministry.

It is this last point that I want to leave with you. How do we 'go for growth'? Not an easy question to answer, but a very fruitful one if we do. Growth will bring newness and excitement into church life, it increases our capacity to do God's work and it increases the amount of stipendiary ministry we and the synod get. A true virtuous circle. At this harvest time it is clear that growth (in produce etc) is very natural with God's grace. We need to see if we can make church growth as natural ... with God's grace of course!

Yours in Christ,


Alan Y

Minister : Rev Dr Gwen Collins
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Church Secretary : Mrs Sue Saunders,
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October Services

Sunday Morning Worship at 10:30am - led by the minister unless otherwise stated.

Oct. 2nd		Holy Communion, led by Revd Alan Kirkcaldy
	4.00pm	Prayer circle
Oct. 9th		Morning worship, led by Revd Kate Pryde
Oct. 16th		Parade Service and all age worship, led by Guiding Units.
Oct. 23rd		Morning worship
	4.00pm	Praise Service, theme: God's power.
 Oct. 30th		Morning worship
	4.00pm	Holy Communion

Rotas for October

Not included in this version

What's on in October



10th October 8pm Review, planning & chat

WOMEN'S MEETING

Tuesday 4th Oct
 Tuesday 11h Oct
 Tuesday 18th Oct
 Tuesday 25th Oct

Quiz
 Bucks (2) People
 To be arranged (The Harvest Festival at Priory Road School is on Thursday 20th this year)
 Beetle Bring & Buy



All meetings start at 2.30 in the Lower Schoolroom unless otherwise stated

Diary Dates

October 2nd Prayer Circle for Healing 4pm
 8th Churches Together in Bucks Vision Day
 23rd Gwen returns from PNG
 23rd Praise Service 4pm
 25th Elders Meeting
 29th 5th Brigade
 30th Communion Service 4pm

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Remember to put your clocks **BACK** one hour when you go to bed on Saturday 29th October!

Not included in this version

Amnesty International – cluster bomb campaign update

In August, Amnesty International asked for help to make Royal Bank of Scotland end its investment in companies that produce cluster bombs. Here is a summary of their September update:



You did us proud. Over 1,000 of you donated to an ad campaign to shame RBS into action, while thousands more gave and took action to support our postal appeal.

So I'm delighted to share the news that last week RBS changed their policy and agreed to cease investments in companies involved in the production of cluster munitions. Thanks to you. At first RBS flat out denied our allegations. But in the end, it seems the threat of our ad campaign was just the pressure they needed to change their minds.

They have now committed to drawing up a new policy and have frozen their dealings with companies involved in the manufacture of cluster bombs while they do so. They're also going to work with the UK Government and other banks to draw up a code of conduct.

Find out what RBS said and how we're going to hold them to account

Next up? A bulletproof arms trade treaty.

So now that RBS have done as we asked, we'll be focusing on our next, even bigger campaign goal: securing a robust global arms trade treaty in 2012.

One person dies every minute from armed violence and millions more have their lives and livelihoods ripped apart. But right now, we have a once-in-a-generation chance to reduce this suffering with a new international treaty to regulate the arms trade. A strong treaty would help end the flow of weapons to human rights abusers. Take action now. We've been working towards this since 2003, but with negotiations in their final stages we'll be ramping up our activity over the coming months.

*First up, we need Foreign Secretary William Hague to stand up at the UN General Assembly this month and make it clear the UK is committed to a robust treaty, and won't allow other states to water it down. **As our cluster bombs campaign has shown, when we work together we can achieve amazing things.***

ZIMBABWE

She is my strength

For Perpetua and baby Ashley, eleven months old, life has not been easy since Perpetua found she was HIV positive when her husband died. The counselling she has received from Mashambanzou, an organisation helping those infected and affected by HIV, has helped her come to terms with the loss of her partner and breadwinner.

Perpetua noticed she was losing weight and was encouraged to go to the local hospital be tested by Mashambanzou volunteers in her community of Highfield, Harare. A regular food parcel of basic goods from Mashambanzou now means she is putting on weight and her general health has improved. The parcel included soya beans, porridge, oil, mealie flour and sometimes cabbage. The more nutritious diet also made the drugs she has to take fully effective.

Nearly 14% of the population live with HIV but often HIV-related illnesses prevent them from growing the food they need or holding down a job that would allow them to buy better food and medicines. Zimbabwe has the highest rate of HIV orphans in the world, with one in four children having lost one or both parents to AIDS.

Ashley's energy is growing and she likes to be exploring everything. That takes all the energy Perpetua has. "I want to see her grow up, she is my strength," she says.

With support from Mashambanzou, in terms of food parcels, counselling and regular clinic time there is every hope that she will fulfil that dream and see Ashley grow into a woman herself.

A prayer from Zimbabwe (slightly adapted and based on Luke 20:38)

Lord God,

You are a God not of the dead but of the living.

We give thanks that you send your only Son to give us life.

In the midst of wealth we are crushed by poverty, and while we are offered Christ-life in all its fullness, we are surrounded by disease, death and destruction.

We are tempted to despair, and yet keep hoping, knowing that you care.

At times we weep silent tears, and cry out with deep emotion.

We come to you, our only hope and refuge.

Thank you for the gift of laughter, even when the going is tough.

With you, O Lord, we may be troubled but not destroyed.

Christian Aid

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh floods cause severe food shortages, warns Christian Aid

Heavy monsoon rains in the Satkhira and Khulna districts in southwest Bangladesh have forced 700,000 people to flee their homes following the worst flooding to hit the area in eight years.

'Food is required now for people already displaced.' said Robin Greenwood, Head of Christian Aid's Asia and Middle East Division, who has been visiting affected areas in Bangladesh. 'With heavy rain expected until the end of the week, severe flooding will continue to destroy more crops, perpetuating people's suffering.'

People have fled their homes and have moved into schools and cyclone shelters. In the worst affected areas people have lost everything and have no way of making a living as fish and shrimp farms have been destroyed and they have no seeds to replant.

'Not only have they lost the current rice harvest but the seeds for the winter months have also been lost; there is now a huge concern for major food shortages lasting well into 2012 that could lead to hunger for the poorest and rising food prices.' said Robin Greenwood

The whole of Bangladesh faces a shortage in vegetables as the Khulna district, which is one of the worst affected areas is also one of the main vegetable growing regions of Bangladesh and seeds stored in nurseries there have been destroyed.

With funding from DFID Christian Aid has been working with other agencies to reach the most vulnerable.

URC PRAYER HANDBOOK 2012

'COMMON PRAYER'

I am now taking orders for next year's URC Prayer Handbook, Common Prayer.

The book begins in January and takes you through the complete year with weekly Bible readings and prayers based on the Church Lectionary readings. It is priced at £5.00 and many people find this book a useful aid to their devotions.

If you would like to have a copy please see me after Sunday worship or phone: 01494 528041 or email: marian@trinity-urc.org.uk.

I have a selection of samples of Bible reading aids from previous years.

If you're interested in seeing them please speak to me as I can often order them at a reduced price.

MM

WHOSE HANDS?

A basketball in my hands is worth about £10.

A basketball in Michael Jordan's hands is worth about £15 million.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

A baseball in my hands is worth about £4.

A baseball in Mark McGuire's hands is worth £10 million.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

A tennis racket in my hands might get the ball over the net.

A tennis racket in Pete Sampras' hands is a Wimbledon Championship.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

A rod in my hands might keep away a growling dog.

A rod in Moses' hands will part the mighty sea.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

A sling shot in my hands is a kid's toy.

A sling shot in David's hand is a mighty weapon.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

Two fish and five loaves of bread in my hands is a couple of fish sandwiches.

Two fish and five loaves of bread in Jesus' hands will feed thousands.

It depends on whose hands they're in.

Nails in my hands might produce a birdhouse.

Nails in Jesus Christ's hands brought forgiveness and salvation to the world.

It depends on whose hands they're in.

The hands that hold things make a big difference.

Can we learn to put our concerns, our worries, our fears, our hopes, our dreams, our relationships in God's strong hands?

After all - ***it all depends on whose hands they're in.***



This month's CWM report is perhaps a bit like a "busman's holiday". This is an edited version of an article on the CWM web-site

Return to the land of the unexpected

More than two decades since UK ministers Bernie and Gwen Collins packed up missionary life in Papua New Guinea to head home and resettle on British soil, they are preparing a return visit.

The former missionaries carved out a happy life for themselves in the country's Highland communities between 1974 and 1990, ministering in the church, bonding with the local people and raising their three young children as part of a 16-year CWM placement with the United Church in Papua New Guinea.

Since their return to England, family and ministerial responsibilities have meant they haven't yet had a chance to go back to the country they once called home - until now.

For seven weeks, the United Reformed Church ministers have been invited to reunite with old friends and colleagues at the UCPNG for a special visit during which they will teach and speak at church retreats and workshops, share in the local ministry and catch up on the development of the region.

After more than 20 years away, it'll be an emotional experience to finally go back, says Gwen.

"This visit will be like tying up loose ends for us in a way. We haven't met up with the highlanders for many years. We have exchanged letters and have often been invited to go back but until now we just haven't had the chance."

She adds: "We were very warmly received as a family when we lived there. We were very much a part of the life of the church and our children were born and grew up there. They went to school with the local children and made friends. We all spoke PNG Pidgin, the local dialect. It will be an emotional trip meeting up with people we once knew and seeing how they have changed."

It was after much prayer and reflection that the trip to Papua New Guinea began to take shape.

Bernie, who is Minister of Ickenham Reformed Church in West London and also Ecumenical Officer of Churches Together in North Thames, had a sabbatical period coming up which he offered to spend with the United Church in Papua New Guinea.

He says: "We felt that we were being called to offer our services to Papua New Guinea again, so we prayed about it and talked it through. As things progressed we realised it was the right thing to do."

WE BELIEVED THAT IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA, WE WERE WHERE GOD WANTED US

He adds: "While we are there will be reconnecting with the people in the Highlands, where we once lived to see what they are doing in their ministry there."

Making connections

"During the trip I will also be looking out to see how churches are relating to each other. There are various denominations across the country - the UCPNG has a Methodist background too - and it will be interesting to hear where there are ecumenical links and how these can be developed," says Bernie.

Gwen, who is Minister of Trinity URC High Wycombe, helped develop the regional literacy programme for the region at a time when many adults had not ever been schooled and couldn't read. She also administered Bible translation programmes and supported women's development projects while studying for her own ministerial training at the local Rarongo Theological College.

[cont on p9]

Development

At the time, there were many social issues surrounding people in the communities. Having only made contact with the outside world just 14 years before the missionary couple arrived, Papua New Guinea's Highland region was still very basic in many respects - from schooling and communications to healthcare.

During their placement, Gwen and Bernie were heavily involved in church initiatives to provide community healthcare across the region using funds from the government.

Bernie says: "By the time we left the United Church in the Highlands there were 25,000 people in 250 congregations. They have extended much further than that now and we'll see by just how much when we go back."

Gwen adds: "The region was quite basic when we arrived in terms of healthcare and communications links. Mail took a long time to arrive and we would only phone home perhaps once a year at Christmas, if that. It will be interesting to see whether communications have changed in the mountain regions."

"While we are there we will do a lot of listening and a lot of learning," she says. "The highlands people are very appreciative of contact if it's the right kind. I am hoping that revisiting the country will be a re-expression to the people there that not only do we care and have strong bonds with them but that they as a community in that part of the world have not been forgotten. It's about solidarity."

"I found it very hard to leave last time. We enjoyed our time there, even though there were some hard times, because we believed that we were where God wanted us."

. . . and our own "personal" report from our Minister . . .

Dear all,

Well, here we are in Mendi! Each of us at times has found ourselves looking around and not quite being able to believe that we actually are here. We have enjoyed the challenge of two weeks full time in the Bernie Collins Bible College. Bernie teaching two courses, sacraments and book-keeping, and me teaching Genesis. This is the first year of a new programme so we have had to construct the course material and write the assessment tasks as well as teach.

Bernie has put articles on his CTNT website www.ctnt.org.uk and will be putting more, so you might like to check it now and then.

The ministers and families who are Region Staff, and so are based here, are all people we know well. It really is a joy to be back amongst them. We've been invited to several homes for evening meals, as well as a feast put on by Mendi Town Congregation last Sunday. It's heart-warming to see how thoroughly delighted people are that we have come back to see them. We are constantly being regaled with stories of things we did when we lived here – most of which we cannot recall or have only vague memories of.

The central part of the United Church grounds are beautifully tended, with glorious flower beds and neatly trimmed hedges. The town is immediately recognisable because the basic layout and many buildings are as they were, but the feel of it is very different from the past. I can't quite put my finger on what it is – maybe the main thing is the buildings generally look in need of some TLC.

One big thing that is different is how many Southern Highlanders now are highly educated and in senior positions. Another massive difference is mobile phones. The Church has developed in all sorts of ways and is growing. Resources are scarce, but there are well organised routes now for submitting particular projects to funding agencies and that has really helped in some areas of the work. It is so good to be able to see all of this for ourselves and listen to all that old and new friends want to tell us.

Better leave it there for now.

Love to all,

Gwen & Bernie

Report from Synod meeting – Saturday 17 September 2011

Introduction from the Moderator

Synod needs to work in a more “joined-up” way and spend more time at the Synod meetings on mission and encouragement than administration and legal matters, although these still need to be dealt with.

Worship

Worship accompanied each major agenda item, using the verses from the hymn “God is working his purpose out” and linking Bible readings from Acts with this and making them relevant to the agenda.

LMMR/MASA (Local Ministry & Mission Review/Minister Accompanied Self-Appraisal)

Update on the steering group’s progress to make this combined approach better for churches and ministers, replacing the previous procedures. More detail at 5 November Synod.

Local church leadership

Proposal to help support local churches. Selection, training, ways of working, etc. are all part of the proposal.

Deployment review (i.e. allocating our quota of stipendiary ministers to churches)

A Synod-wide working party with representation from each Area has been looking at how our quota of stipendiary ministers for the Synod can be fairly deployed. The current average proportion is 1 minister to 3.2 churches. Churches have been consulted through questionnaires. More detail to come at November Synod.

General Assembly 2012 – “For Christ’s Sake”

Michael Jagessar, one of two Moderators-Elect of General Assembly, gave an inspiring and encouraging overview. The theme is God’s people being transformed by the Gospel, making a difference for Christ’s sake. It will be in Scarborough. A user-friendly booklet introducing the theme will be available for churches by April 2012.

Children at Synod

Simon Rudiger, the Youth & Children Development Officer, talked about some of the activities over the last year. There was no Children’s Synod today but they hope to have this again in future.

SURACC – Slough United Reformed Asian Christian Church

This congregation was formally closed with immediate effect by Synod. A motion was proposed by Chiltern Area Committee as a result of a long period of conflict within the congregation (which had been meeting at Kingsway Slough) with irreconcilable differences between two factions, despite significant input and negotiation by Area Committee and Synod officers. Additionally, the church had not been operating in accordance with United Reformed Church governance.

However, both separate groups under the respective leadership of Pastor Asif Jamshaid and former church secretary Anil Mehboob were encouraged to form independent fellowships. Asif’s group is worshipping in Langley, and Anil’s group is now worshipping with the Kingsway congregation in Slough.

More than Gold – 2012 Olympics

A booklet of available resources and ideas was made available. Churches were encouraged to do something to mark and support the Olympics, whether having a Fairtrade event (Traidcraft are one of the sponsors of “More than Gold”), having a big-screen viewing night, accommodating athletes’ families, providing water at Olympic events, etc. It was noted that homeless and human trafficking increase during major international events like the Olympics.

ZI campaign

The Moderator provided an update. The campaign will be launched in March 2012.

Interfaith matters

Several encouraging stories were given.

If you want more information on any of these agenda items please let me know.

Kate Y, Synod Rep



Happy Birthday



This month we would like to wish

Nina S (2nd)

Nigel K (10th)

Matthew S (19th)

Abigail L (23rd)

Margaret L (26th)

Nancy H (30th)

a Very Happy Birthday
with love from all at Trinity

Church Signs

Adam blamed Eve.

Eve blamed the snake.

The snake didn't have a leg to stand on.

*There are some questions that can't be
answered by Google*

*The next edition of the Recorder will be published on 30th October.
Closing date for contributions is Friday 21st October*

Recorder Editor : e-mail : editor@trinity-urc.org.uk

Church web site: <http://www.trinity-urc.org.uk>

prayer page

May the Spirit bring justice and peace
to all living things, and all earth's people
as we wait in hope
for the feast of the eternal homecoming,
and offer our sacrifice of praise:

Christ has died,
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

*Taken from "What does the Lord require?" compiled by
Francis Brienen*

Assurance of God's grace

God's love is costly, generous, and trustworthy,
deeper than our expectations, higher than our hopes.
Accept in your heart the promise of new life,
and proclaim with your lips
the inexhaustible goodness of God:
*Holy, Holy, Holy,
Love's empowering might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory,
We give you glory, God most high!*

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2011

*Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.*

*I arise today
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
Through belief in the threeness,
Through confession of the oneness,
Of the Creator of Creation.*

AMEN.

From the prayer of St Patrick

A prayer for peace in our communities

Gracious God,
We pray for peace in our communities this day.
We commit to you all who work for peace and an end to tensions,
And those who work to uphold law and justice.
We pray for an end to fear,
For comfort and support to those who suffer.
For calm in our streets and cities,
That people may go about their lives in safety and peace.
In your mercy, hear our prayers,
now and always. **Amen**

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Dear Jesus, I come
to you today
longing for your
presence.
I desire to love you
as You love me.
May nothing ever
separate me from
You.

Anon