



April 2003

The Recorder

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Trinity - A Family Church

Worshipping together - Caring for one another - Sharing with others

'Preparing for Peace'

Rev. Michael Shrubsole

Minister of Trinity United Reformed Church

Watching the build up, and massive display, of the resources for war in Iraq, I pondered the use of those resources, and the amazing damage they inflict. As I read that 500,000 Iraqis could die in such a war, I ask, 'If armies can draw together such resources and manpower in carefully planned and executed precision, why can't nations and people draw together such a force for the implementation of humanitarian relief?'

If wars seem so inevitable, why are we not also putting as much publicity and effort into helping those affected? As we look at the meagre resources that are going into repairing Afghanistan, I wonder if the misery of war there has outweighed the possible benefits?

I do not belittle the efforts of the relief agencies that work under extreme physical difficulties and with limited resources, for without them the suffering would be even greater. As individuals, as organisations, as churches, and as nations we should be putting more effort into offering human relief than we do in preparing for war. Sadly the two opposing financial statistics currently make for a ludicrous comparison.

The world needs to find a "third way" between war and inaction. The world's people are desperate for an alternative to war. Yes, we must disarm Saddam Hussein. Yes, we want to see him removed from power. But, we need a better solution than war to accomplish our goals. The people of Iraq have already suffered greatly, and we must not inflict even more suffering upon them.

American church leaders are offering a six-point that proposes an effective response to the threat of Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction, but avoids the terrible dangers and suffering of war. We should not believe that wars that could have terrible, bitter, and divisive consequences, ever offer the world the best way to achieve lasting peace. You can find a brief list of the six-point plan elsewhere in this magazine.

As Easter approaches, Christians everywhere are reminded that we should have the same attitude as our Lord Jesus Christ, who: 'made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant ... he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.' (Philippians 2:5-11) Loving sacrifice is the only course of action I can promote and encourage in the face of human suffering.

I urge you to pray for the principled leadership and real friendship that will be necessary to resolve this international crisis. Ultimately of course, only a fundamental change in international relationships, and a massive shift in funding and staffing away from military forces towards humanitarian programmes will prevent similar wars from happening over and over again.

"More than guided missiles, all the world needs guided men." - Poet Helen Steiner Rice

Mike

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Rev Michael Shrubsole,

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April Services & Rotas

Morning Worship at 10.30 am

Children of all ages meet for part of morning worship using the SALT material from Scripture Union. Adult worship usually follows the texts of the Revised Common Lectionary.

6th April - Morning Worship with Communion. John 12:20-33, Jeremiah 31:31-34,
Hebrews 5:5-10

13th April - Palm Sunday. All-age Worship Celebration. Mark 14:1-15, Isaiah 50:4-9,
Philippians 2:5-11

20th April - Easter Sunday Worship with Junior Church and All-age Communion.
John 20:1-18, Isaiah 25:6-9, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

27th April - Morning Worship. John 20:19-31, Acts 4:32-35, 1 John 1:1-2:2

Evening Worship at 6.30pm

As an experiment we are exploring the use of different communion liturgies over the next few months. Orders of Service are being used from a variety of sources. Some are old and some are new. What will different words and practices bring to our experience of sharing together in communion? Come and find out.

13th April - Communion. This month we look at the latest Church of England communion module from Common Worship

Also see page 13 for details of Holy Week services

Rotas for April

Not included in this version

What's on in April



Monday 14th April : Speaker - Mike Shrubsole
Hostess - Louise Shrubsole (8pm)

Monday 28th April : Recipe Evening - Bring along your
favourite recipe
Hostess - Ellen Murray (8pm)

WOMEN'S MEETING

Tuesday 1st April April Fools Day. Bring & Buy
Tuesday 8th April "Stories of Jesus"
Tuesday 15th April Rev Mike Shrubsole - Easter Communion Service
Tuesday 22nd April No meeting
Tuesday 29th April Mary Mitchell - Central Aid (brought forward from last month)



All meetings start at 2.30 in the Lower Schoolroom

Young Peoples Group

April 13th - Egg evening at Trinity
April 27th - Swimming at Amersham



Scrabble

Limited opportunity to expose your lexicography skills this month. Just one session -
April 4th at 2pm

The Older Young People's Group

- for those of us too old for the Young People's Group!!

30th April Bring a plate evening - venue to be confirmed.



Easter Monday - 21st April

There will be an easy paced church walk of 3 miles starting from Cadmore End Church (grid ref 785925) at 10.30am. The walk touches Fingest and goes through some lovely Chiltern countryside. Let's hope for good sunny weather. Further details from Olive S

Due to the personal nature of this item, it is not reproduced in this version.

I Live Alone

Stay by my side, O Lord.
For I'm alone.
I need your presence with me
Night and day, to share my home,
To guide me on my way.

Keep me safe from danger;
Fill my heart with joy.
Give me your peace, your gift
To share with those whose hearts
Are troubled or despair.

And even when the shadow
Of the Cross falls on my path
I see your Easter sunlight
Through the dark.

I live alone, dear Lord,
But I am sure
Your gaze is ever on me
As on an only child.
Abide in me, dear Lord,
That I may live in you.

*(The above prayer is from the Benedictine Abbey,
Kylemore, Ireland)*



Christian Aid Week

Do you need help with slimming or fitness? Then why not volunteer to collect for Christian Aid this year. I can guarantee plenty of walking up and down steps, bending and stretching to get to the letterboxes, and you can improve your eyesight by looking for doorbells and knockers. Yes Christian Aid week is looming and I would welcome your help. So, if you have any time at all to spare during the week 11th – 17th May please, please let me know.

ML

Who was Jesus??

There were 3 good arguments that Jesus was Black

1. He called everyone "brother"
2. He liked Gospel
3. He couldn't get a fair trial

Commitment for Life

Working with Christian Aid and the World Development Movement to enable local churches to play their full part in tackling poverty.

Environment, poverty and sustainable development

No 6 in the series from Commitment for Life and World Church programmes of the United Reformed Church. The environment, the damage we do to it, and poverty are inextricably linked. The poacher hunts rhinos because poverty presents him with the need for money to buy his son the shoes he needs to attend school. The farmer may fell a tree because he has no other choice of fuel to cook their food. Poverty leads to taking of short-term measures. The church has traditionally been concerned with poverty. We can't look at the lives of the poorest people in poor countries without looking at the well-being of the environment. Water, sanitation, energy, health, and agriculture all depend on a healthy environment and these are linked to sustainable development. In August 2002 the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) took place in Johannesburg, attended by world leaders - a global gathering to consider the welfare of future generations. It drew attention to the importance of environmental issues and their links to development for millions of people. Today we know that the planet is at a crucial cross-roads with the choices made today critical for the air, the weather patterns, for the forests, oceans, rivers, wildlife and all life-support systems upon which current and future generations depend. It is also about us, our lifestyles and consumption.

Visit www.churchesearthsummit.org.uk

We are all shareholders in this enterprise.

What state is our environment in?

UNEP prepared an authoritative assessment of the state of the environment in readiness for the Summit, called GEO-3 (Global Environment Outlook –3. To see the Report go to: www.grida.no/geo/press.htm) . It seeks a balanced assessment, not too negative yet not glossing over the acute challenges facing us all. GEO-3 concludes that one of the key driving forces has been the growing gap between the rich and poor parts of the globe. Currently, one-fifth of the world's population enjoys high, some would say excessive, levels of affluence. It accounts for nearly 90 per cent of total personal consumption globally. In comparison, around 4 billion people are surviving on less than US\$ 1 to \$ 2 a day. Some things are getting worse. Eg: sewage pollution of the seas "has precipitated a health crisis of massive proportions", says the report. Declining environmental quality poses a rising health risk. Some things are getting better. Eg: There has been considerable international effort to repair the ozone layer by reducing the production and consumption of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). But yet there has been a steady decline in the environment quality, especially across large parts of the developing world.

Global Warming – the big issue

Behind nearly all the assessments and forecasts outlined in the report lies the spectre of global warming and its potential to wreak havoc on weather patterns and livelihoods over the coming decades. Sea levels are rising and various islands in the Pacific have been predicted to disappear within years – the same islands which our forebears took the gospel to. CWM booklet on Global Warming (June 2002) shares with us the fears of the people of the Pacific as they face the consequences. The facts speak loudly, but the stories for CWM partners of living with rising sea levels speak even louder. Tuvalu has experienced coastal erosion, droughts and, in the last decade, an unusually high level of tropical cyclones. The Tuvalu church is working hard to highlight the issue locally and internationally. The Kiribati Protestant Church has a project building sea walls and raising awareness locally. Kiribati has had to move roads inland where the shore has been eaten away. *"We won't be able to live here much longer because the sea will rise. We need to halt global warming so our Pacific children will have a future."* Rev Teeruro lueti of the Kiribati Protestant Church.

Unpredictable weather.

We are all becoming more aware of unpredictable weather patterns, but for poor farmers this can mean disaster for their crops and give them less and less food security (that is, the security that they can feed their family with what they produce). Add to that, the increasingly numbers of natural hazards such as cyclones, fierce storms, floods, and droughts. Those who have the least capacity to deal with

climate change are likely to be most affected. The poor, the sick and the disadvantaged, both within societies and in different countries and regions, are particularly vulnerable. The poor have no insurance, and no state-provided safety net when crops fail and hunger bites. In Zimbabwe and across Southern Africa drought has brought famine. Scientists predict that El Nino could become a permanent condition by the year 2050 unless the warming is slowed or reversed.

Need for a rethink

Today 47 countries around the world have signed up to the Millennium Development Goals, which embrace the view that development and poverty reduction should not only help raise incomes, but improve education, health and the environment. We need a fundamental rethink in the way the world goes about its business, about leaving everything to the market. We need long term commitments to sustainable development. We need changes to the existing rules which govern international trade, which as they current stand undermine the protection developing countries can give to their farmers and their poor people.

We need to rethink this as an issue of justice

“The party’s over. Although developing countries in the South suffer the most severe consequences of environment degradation, most of the damage is done in the Northern developed world. Things have got to change.” writes Sue Wheat, freelance journalist specialising in development and environmental issues, writing in ‘Development’ Issue 18, 2002. World leaders now recognise that Governments alone cannot make the necessary changes. There needs to be a partnership between nations, organisation, businesses and individuals. Increasingly, the importance of faith communities – including Christian churches – is seen as essential to the process.

What can we do?

Although the tasks are massive, there is much we can do through our own actions and by demanding change from our government.

- Look at our own lifestyle and our patterns of consumption, our attitude to recycling and all wasteful practices.
- Become better informed on global environmental issues so we can argue the case for change articulately and with conviction. Tell others through the church magazine. For some of the outcomes of the WSSD Summit, visit www.churcheseearthsummit.org.uk or www.earthsummit2002.org - the official site.
- Look again at the Bible and what God says about our stewardship of the earth and its resources. Make this part of your being a Christian. Help others to see it that way.
- Conduct an environmental check-up of your church’s life and mission – get a copy of Eco-Congregation www.encams.org/ecocongregation
- Promote Fairtrade in your church and local community. Sustainability is at the heart of fairtrade.
- Register a member of your church to receive environmental information (eg. Agenda 21) from your local Council, and keep everyone informed.
- Link up with a Christian Environment agency such as Eco-Congregation, Christian Ecology Link www.christian-ecology.org.uk or John Ray Initiative www.jri.org.uk.
- Join or set up a local group of Christians to discuss the issues, take practical actions, or both.

Be transformed! Living sustainably in God’s world is an essential part of discipleship. Lives, lifestyles and whole communities can be impacted if we fulfil our calling as stewards of God’s earth.

Synod

Synod Snippets March 2003

The March meeting of The Thames North Synod was held at St Andrew's United Reformed Church in Ealing, and Mike and I attended as your representatives. Our first impression on entering the church was WOW!

This Church has undergone the transformation that we are still dreaming about, and if you have an opportunity to see it for yourself, I'm sure you would be as impressed as we were. It can be done! From a building very similar to ours they now have a welcoming light entrance lobby, with lift as well as stairs. This provides a modern link between a very attractive sanctuary, with comfortable chairs and the ability to alter the size of rooms by means of a flexible partition, and the rest of the buildings. These include a user friendly hall, kitchen facilities and smaller rooms to serve the local community. We saw the plans, and photographs of work in progress. We spoke with church members and learned that they have a congregation similar in size to ours. They too faced a difficult period, but finally in 2001, after 12 years, their Vision became a reality. I pray that God is working His purpose out for us too.

And so, on to the meeting. Opening worship was led by the Synod Moderator Roberta Rominger. Her theme was "Open to giving and receiving help", and I quote from her report, the basis for her reflection. "Elijah had just arrived in Zarephath, where he spotted a poor widow gathering sticks to prepare the last meal for herself and her son before they lay down to die. I thought, "That sounds like a lot of meetings I go to around the Church!" And I realised that just as it only took two open individuals, Elijah and that widow, to turn things around in Zarephath, so the openness of God's people in Thames North Synod may allow God to accomplish great things here." (for Thames North Synod... read Trinity URC!) (My amendment, not the Moderator's)

The meeting then continued with routine business matters. Reports, reviews, resolutions, proposals, nominations, and appointments, and appeals.

The Rev'd Chris Brice, as guest speaker, introduced a lively debate on issues around war and peace. This was followed by the closing act of worship with appropriate readings for visions of a world at peace. Isaiah 2:2-5 Revelations 22:1-2

Finally, we sang, with feeling, the hymn: "For the healing of the nations. Lord we pray with one accord"

D.M.

Prayer Circle for Healing

Now that the Acorn Healing Trust course on Healing has come to an end we resume our regular Church Prayer Circle for Healing.

Sunday 6th April at 6.30 in the Sanctuary

Regular and any new members of the Prayer Circle are invited. (M.S.)

Praying for our Future

**Sunday Prayer Meetings
5.00-6.00pm
in the Church Sanctuary
This month: 27th April only
(Normally on 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays)**

At these meetings we gather to pray about our lack of clarity concerning the future of our church buildings, and seek God's guidance so that we may discern his kingdom way for us. You are all encouraged to attend. Our Church Meeting has indicated that this ought to be an important time of praying and seeking after God for us all. (M.S.)

Chiltern/St Albans District Day
DARE YOU GO
BEYOND THE THRESHOLD?

Threshold: the place or point of entering; the limit of consciousness; the point at which a stimulus begins to bring a response; the minimum intensity or pressure of sound wave which the normal hearer can just detect; the sill of a building's doorway; the outset. (Webster's Dictionary.)

Saturday 10th May
11.00 – 4.30

at Adeyfield Free Church, Leverstock Road, Hemel Hempstead.

Morning Session:

Including a talk by Rex Walford, immediate past Chairman of the Guild of Drama Adjudicators, past President of Geographical Association, Fellow of Wolfson College, Member of Board of Anglia Television.

Afternoon Session:

Including a celebrity panel question time to include: our Moderator, Revd Roberta Rominger, a local MP, a senior Church of England spokesman, Wendy Craig and Tim Brooke-Taylor have been invited to join the panel.

Register your interest direct with President of District, Mr David Eldridge on 01494 431432. Or sign the attendance list on the church noticeboard. (M.S.)

Church Weekend – June 2003

Friday evening 13th to Sunday afternoon 15th
Parmoor Centre, Lane End

Our second residential church weekend, following on from the successful time we had together at High Leigh two years ago.

'Art and Creativity in the life of the Church'

WORSHIP – FELLOWSHIP – BIBLE STUDY – ARTS AND CRAFTS – CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES – VIDEOS – TIME TO BE QUIET – COUNTRY WALKS – GOOD FOOD – FUN AND GAMES – AND MORE ...

Something for everyone, young and old, family groups specially welcome. Single, double and family rooms available.

Details available soon.

Do make sure you have this weekend in your diaries.

Church Bible Study/Home Groups

Open All Hours

Groups will restart:

Monday 28th April, 10.00-12.00am at 21 Westover Road

Wednesday 8th May, 8.00-10.00pm at the Manse.

The new, major Synod resource, the 'Open All Hours' pack has now arrived and the groups will begin to look over the next few weeks at some of the material, ideas and activities in the book. Are we an 'open' church, and in what ways can we become more open? (And this has hardly anything to do with doors on buildings!) If you would like to study the 'Open All Hours' pack you are welcome to attend either of these groups. You are encouraged to contact Mike for further information if you would like to express a new 'first time' interest in coming along. (M.S.)

The Hub

News from the HUB at Union Baptist Church

Two years into the HUB the news is great. 15 existing church organisations such as the Day Centre, Open Door, Hope Street, Scouts and Guides and Table Tennis have moved into the building. But a major part of the vision was that the building should serve the community.

Now 2 years on more than 30 external organisations have used the HUB, the majority on a regular basis. Caring, counselling, and therapy figure large – for mental health, drink and drug abuse, relationships and learning disabilities. Training is also a main focus – for advisory services, for family support and in combating domestic violence. Other regular activities are as varied as flower arrangement, music examinations, community rehabilitation programmes and weight watching. These groups feel that the HUB has become for them a second home in which they know they are welcome, very much a partnership with the church.

“We feel part of the place.”

It is not a matter of ‘getting’ the HUB on the map, more like it has ‘gotten’ there.

The cost of the rebuilding was £1,105,800. The first appeal for funds raised £300,000 and in order to complete the work the church had to borrow £533,000. Over the past 2½ years the church has paid off £186,000 leaving £367,000 still to find over the next five years. A magnificent effort by a congregation who had sufficient belief in the value of the project that they were willing to pledge to fund the whole scheme with very little reliance on grants. (M.S.)

The Voice

Do not you hear, 'mid the world's confusion,
The cold gaze of its uncaring walls,
Its heart metallic, its senses deadened,
The voice of a Lover that softly calls.

Come forth from the dark to the light, be cherished,
And deck yourself in the robes of a bride.
A turtle dove beckons and flowers await you,
Come to My garden and stand by My side.

For I have wooed you with pain and suffering,
With faith betrayed and with truth ignored,
With the nails of a cross and with flagellation
I offer Myself to be your Lord.

No kingly couch will be brought to our union,
Of cruel thorns is the crown I wear,
But I offer a love beyond comprehension
For those who are ready My yoke to bear.

I have no jewels or riches to gift you,
A carpenter's home was mine on earth.
Yet My hands hold the stars in their vast creation
And I watched as the planets were brought to birth.

Let not the noise of the world confound you,
Its wars, injustice and sense of wrong.
Strong arms are ready to hold and support you,
A Lover awaits, and has waited long.

Shirley Aranzulla - from Beaconsfield URC Family
Newsletter, March 2003

*The next edition of the Recorder will be published on 27th April.
Closing date for contributions is Friday 18th April*

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The Six Point Plan for Peace

1. Indict Saddam Hussein for his crimes against humanity and send a clear signal that he has no future in Iraq, setting into motion the internal and external forces that could remove him from power and bring him to trial at the International Court in The Hague. History has shown, as with Slobodan Milosevic, that this can help bring down a criminal regime.
2. Pursue coercive disarmament with greatly intensified inspections backed by a U.N. mandated multinational force.
3. Foster a democratic Iraq through a temporary post-Hussein U.N. administration, rather than a U.S. military occupation.
4. Organize a massive humanitarian effort through the U.N. and nongovernmental relief agencies for the people of Iraq now, rather than only after a war.
5. Commit to implement the "roadmap" to peace in the Middle East, with a clear timetable toward a two-state solution that guarantees a Palestinian state and a secure Israel by 2005.
6. Re-invigorate and sustain international cooperation in the campaign against terrorism, rather than having it disrupted by a divisive war against Iraq that intelligence officials believe will likely lead to further attacks.

Such a morally rooted and pragmatic initiative could help achieve an historic breakthrough and set a precedent for decisive and effective international action instead of war.

Jim Wallis, Executive Director and Editor-in-Chief of Sojourners;
John Bryson Chane, Episcopal Bishop of Washington, D.C.;
Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church USA;
Melvin Talbert, Ecumenical Officer of the United Methodist Council of Bishops;
Daniel Weiss, Immediate Past General Secretary of the American Baptist Churches in the USA;
and millions of concerned Americans.

Read the complete 6-Point Plan at www.sajo.net/action

21 March 2003
Dear Editor,

We had a fine Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 18th March, well conducted, very interesting, with a lot of thoughtful participation, comments and questions from members.

A lot of well-deserved thanks too were given to the hardworking and gifted people who go to make up our community, but we ought to give special thanks to our hard-working Secretary, Margaret Lewis, who was not mentioned by name. In spite of a quite extraordinarily busy life, she nevertheless finds time to slog away with the details and business which are involved in keeping Trinity and its activities going.. So, applause, admiration and thanks to Margaret.

At this meeting I offered to try to get some publicity for special events in Trinity Life – but Editors can be a bit dictatorial about dates, so may I ask those of you who are involved in forthcoming events to let me know the details as soon as you can – a week in advance for some publications, and longer than that for some others.

Yours faithfully,

O.P.

Women are Naturally More Religious – It's Official!

Recently published research has shown that throughout the world women are more religious than men, according to the Newhouse News Service in the US.

University of Washington sociologist Rodney Stark compiled the international research that shows that women attend worship services more often, participate more in churches, mosques and synagogues and are more likely to say religion is important in their lives. Stark's examined data from 49 nations. In every country, a higher percentage of women than men said they consider themselves religious. The same pattern persisted in research in seven non-Christian nations. Stark believes that the difference is due to biological factors. The old assumptions that gender differences were more a matter of nurture than nature – that the culture gave women responsibility for faith and family – just don't measure up over the last generations, he said. With more women entering the workplace and more men embracing nontraditional roles, there was an assumption there would be a levelling off of religious differences. But the differences are unchanged.

Religions promote long-term commitments to loving and caring relationships with God and each other as a prime consideration, religions also promote a concern for eternal values and destinies; but testosterone-driven men are more attracted to short-term immediate gratifications through energetic and even risky or violent actions. Most men would agree that religious concerns do matter to them, but many give active commitment to these concerns a low priority in their lives.

The most unusual area of religious activity in Stark's survey where men markedly outnumbered women was in active Satanism in Australia! Men will join in with religious activity if it is seen to be energetic, active and even risky and counter-cultural! A Christian faith that is attractive to women will not be attractive to many men without first considering masculine needs. Christian churches often talk about promoting a 'muscular Christianity', and if churches are to have good numbers of men inside them this is essential, but what the average man wants is often a long way from what the average church full of women ever dreams that it could offer. The challenge goes out to all naturally religious women everywhere – what can you come up with that will attract the naturally irreligious men in your life to take a more serious, active and energetic interest in God, love and eternity? (M.S.)

Wycombe Prayer – April Meeting Calling all Intercessors

Prayers for those who wish to intercede for local issues concerning church and community. All welcome.

Venue this month: 6.00-9.00a.m. Saturday 5th April, at Wycliffe Centre, Tyndale Room.

Church Meeting

There is no church meeting scheduled for the month of April.

Elders Meeting

Tuesday 1st April, 7.30pm in the Schoolroom.

Have you been helping Junior Church collect for the JAR OF GRACE – UNICEF APPEAL?

Junior Church children would like you to bring your jars to church on any Sunday before Easter so that they can start the count of coins!!

Please give your jars to a Junior Church leader – Valerie, Louise, Sarah, Julie or Jan or to one of the children.

Memorial Concert
In memory of Anthony Stephens
Saturday 5th April
6.30pm
The King's Centre
Tickets £5.00 concessions £2.50
Organised by The Church of God of Prophecy. Tel 447444
In aid of Sickle Cell Foundation

'TRINITY TUESDAY' FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 15th April at 7.30pm to 9.30pm in Crendon Hall **POTTED SPORTS** or **GENTLE GAMES**.

Try your hand at some fun games – Bagatelle, Shoveha'penny, Marbles, Putting, Darts.
Tea, Coffee, Squash and Biscuits will be provided.

Friday 2nd May at 7.30pm to 9.30pm in Crendon Hall **LEARN HOW TO LINE DANCE**.
£1 per head for an evening of fun and gentle exercise
We have 2 charming lady demonstrators who will teach us some simple dances.

And don't forget the coffee mornings on the 2nd Saturday of the month 10.30am to 12 noon

If you have any other ideas for things you would like to do on these social evenings please let us know, or if you would like to join the organising committee you would be most welcome.

Additional Special Services for Holy Week

Thursday 17th April 8.00pm - Maundy Thursday Communion Service
We are invited to share with Wesley Methodist Church. It is their turn to host this united service.

Friday 18th April 10.15am - Good Friday Service
We meet at Union Baptist Church to share in a contemplative service on this, the day of crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ

.Friday 18th April 11.00am - Good Friday Walk of Witness
Gather in the Railway Station forecourt for a short and silent ecumenical walk by all the town centre churches through the High Street, with solemn hymns and readings.

.. on the other hand . . .

There were 3 good arguments that Jesus was Italian:

1. He talked with his hands
2. He had wine with every meal
3. He used lots of olive oil

. . . but then . . .

There were 3 good arguments that Jesus was Jewish:

1. He went into His Father's business
2. He lived at home until he was 33
3. He was sure his Mother was a virgin and his mother was sure he was God.

CAN YOU NAME THE 16 BOOKS OF THE BIBLE HIDDEN IN THE PARAGRAPHS BELOW?

I once made the remark about the hidden books of the Bible. It was a lulu: kept some people looking so hard for facts and for others, it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalized. But the truth finally struck home to numbers of our readers: to others, it was a real job.

We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. Yes, there will be easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better

See how well you can compete. Relax now, for there really are sixteen names of books of the Bible for you to seek out.

Answers next month

(This item was published in the Beaconsfield URC Family Newsletter – March 2003)

First Coming

God did not wait till the world was ready, till... nations were at peace.
God came when the Heavens were unsteady, and prisoners cried out for release.
God did not wait for the perfect time. God came when the need was deep and great.
God dined with sinners in all their grime, turned water into wine. God did not wait till hearts were pure. In **joy God** came to a tarnished world of sin **and** doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame God came, and God's Light would not go out.

God came to a world which did not mesh, to heal its tangles, shield its scorn
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh the Maker of the stars was born.
We cannot wait till the world is sane To raise our songs with joyful voice,
For to share our grief, to touch our pain, God came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

Madeleine L Engle

(This poem was published in the "Parish Newsletter" of Holy Trinity Penn, December 2002,m and then again in the Beaconsfield URC Family Newsletter of March 2003)

Commonplace Book

Have you ever heard of a Commonplace Book? For those of you not familiar with this term, it is any ordinary notebook in which you write any quotation or personal thought or idea or prayer, or a line of poetry which to you is special and which you don't want to forget. It is not a diary, and it is not for other people to write in. Whether you let them see it or not is a personal matter. But if you hear a bit of prose you like, or have a lovely thought or have a private passion for a line of poetry it is quite proper for these things to be collected in your Commonplace Book.

They were popular many years ago and the idea seems a bit old fashioned now, but it is still evergreen and wonderful to read when you feel a bit low.

The dictionary definition is - Commonplace Book: a book of notable passages.

[Submitted by O.P.]

On the lighter side

****Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves for they shall never cease to be amused****

MODERN MAN'S BIBLE QUIZ

Q. What is one of the first things that Adam and Eve did after they were kicked out?

A. They really raised Cain.

Q. What excuse did Adam give to his children as to why he no longer lived in Eden?

A. Your mother ate us out of house and home.

Q. The ark was built in 3 stories, and the top story had a window to let light in, but how did they get light to the bottom 2 stories?

A. They used floodlights.

Q. Who is the greatest babysitter mentioned in the Bible?

A. David. He rocked Goliath to sleep.

Q. Why was Goliath so surprised when David hit him with a slingshot?

A. The thought had never entered his head before.

Q. What do they call pastors in Germany?

A. German Shepherds.

Q. What is the best way to get to Paradise?

A. Turn right and go straight.

Q. Which servant of Jehovah was the most flagrant lawbreaker in the Bible?

A. Moses. Because he broke all 10 commandments at once.

Q. Which area of Palestine was especially wealthy?

A. The area around the Jordan. The banks were always overflowing.

Q. How do we know that Job went to a chiropractor?

A. Because in Job 16:12 we read, "I had come to be at ease, but he proceeded to shake me up and he grabbed me by the back of the neck and proceeded to smash me."

Q. Which Bible character had no parents?

A. Joshua, son of Nun.

Q. Why didn't Noah go fishing?

A. He only had two worms!

[Submitted anonymously by a chap who sometimes wears his collar back to front and is often seen standing at the front of the Church!]

. . . or alternatively . . .

There were 3 good arguments that Jesus was a Californian:

1. He never cut his hair
2. He walked around barefoot all the time
3. He started a new religion

. . . but then again . . .

There were 3 good arguments that Jesus was Irish:

1. He never got married
2. He was always telling stories
3. He loved green pastures

But perhaps the most compelling evidence of all - 3 proofs that Jesus was a woman:

1. He had to feed a crowd at a moment's notice when there was no food.
2. He kept trying to get a message across to a bunch of men who just didn't get it
3. Even when he was dead, He had to get up because there was more work for Him to do.

Prayer Page

(Prepared by the Guides)

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2003

Dear Lord,
Please keep us in peace. Do not let people destroy other people's lives and that war could be over.
Amen

Dear God,
We are thinking of all the families that have to wait for their relatives to come home safe from the War in Iraq. Please Lord; let the families come back together when the Iraq crisis has finished.
We also pray for the people who don't have a roof over their heads.
Amen.

Dear God,
I pray for new beginnings and an end to all things bad. I pray for the safe return of the armies' fighting in Iraq. At Easter we remember the sacrifice that Jesus made and how he gave his life for us.
Amen

Dear Lord,
We give you thanks for your creation, especially at this time of year when we are aware of your creative activity throughout the world.
We see new birth all around us as the buds on the trees and plants burst into life; crocuses and daffodils break through the once dead looking soil, and the sights of new-born lambs remind us that spring has arrived.
Amen

Dear Father,
I'm praying for the food we eat; sugar, candy and barley wheat.
I'm praying for the beds at night, the sun and candles soothing light.
I'm praying for the birds that sing and how they fly with their delicate wings.
I'm praying for the clothes we wear, grapefruit apples and golden pears.
I'm praying for the Kings and Queens, rugby, hockey and football teams.
I'm praying for the poor and needy and all the fields that need to be seeded.
Dear lord, please take care of our World.
Amen

