



August 2003

The Recorder

Inside - this month . . .

Pastoral letter	2
Services & Rotas	3
What's on?	4
Family news	5
The wider church	5 - 9
Moderator's letter	10 - 11
Prayer Page	12

Trinity - A Family Church

Worshipping together - Caring for one another - Sharing with others

'News from General Assembly'

Revd. Michael Shrubsole

Minister of Trinity United Reformed Church

Two weeks ago I was one of the Chiltern District Council's delegated persons to go to General Assembly at Portsmouth Guildhall. One of my tasks is to ensure people have a chance to hear from me something of the news of what went on at this year's Assembly. I've been doing so in Sunday worship and at Church Meeting and now through the Recorder. In September, when Trinity Church hosts the next meeting of District Council, I will have another chance to speak again.

(Please put the date of the next District Council – Wednesday 10th September (The meeting starts at 7.30pm. but we need the building open and set up from about 6.45pm onwards), in your diaries. We need volunteers as welcomers, providers of refreshments, helpers with opening worship, and guides to show our friends from other churches around our building.)

Assembly is always a mixture of fairly routine business; moments of high passion when delicate resolutions are debated; boring reports; times of worship (sometimes stimulating, sometimes not, according to personal preferences); Bible study; and a chance to catch up on church news, to socialise with friends from around the country. In other places I have already commented on the decision to close Yardley Hastings Youth Centre, and on the high percentage of business to do with ecumenical and international relationships, I have also commented on the finances of the church and on the major review of the whole of the working of the URC which is currently under way. I want now to comment further on one more major issue that came out of General Assembly.

We heard news of the current deplorable situation in Palestine, including a presentation by a spokesperson from PARC (the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees). The suffering of the Palestinian people and their subjugation to random acts of wanton violence, intimidation and humiliation are causing increasing concern over the past year. And it is not only Palestinians but also Israelis, who in differing ways suffer from the injustices and tensions. Still the settlement building goes on, and nothing seems to halt the Israeli government or oblige it to abide by UN resolutions prohibiting the occupation of Palestinian land. At General Assembly we were invited to understand more about the realities of life for many Palestinians, and then we were urged to move from awareness to advocacy in alliance with other organisations. If you are interested in reading a major report on land issues I recommend the recent 60 page report by Christian Aid – 'Losing Ground. Israel, poverty and the Palestinians.' If interested, ask to borrow my copy. Alternatively you could send for their briefer booklet 'Peace under siege', or the video of the same name. More information is provided on the Christian Aid web site.

Why should you take any interest in this? Because as the prophet Isaiah says, as quoted about Jesus in Matthew's gospel: 'Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.' (Matt 12:18) To be a follower of Jesus is to be someone who shares his passion for justice.

Mike

Minister :
Rev Michael Shrubsole,

e-mail : minister@trinity-urc.org.uk

Church Secretary:
Mrs Margaret Lewis,

e-mail: secretary@trinity-urc.org.uk

August Services & Rotas

Morning Worship at 10.30 a.m.

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.

- 3rd August Morning Worship with Communion.
Worship leader: Rev Geoffrey Bending [Organist: Mr Jason Pelcher]
- 10th August Morning Worship. Worship leader: Rev Mike Shrubsole
[Organist: Mr Jason Pelcher]
- 17th August Morning Worship: Worship leader: Rev Mike Shrubsole
[Organist:]
- 24th August Morning Worship. Worship leader: Mrs Beryl McGowan
[Organist: Mr Jason Pelcher]
- 31st August Morning WorshipWorship leader: Rev Mike Shrubsole
[Organist: Mr Jason Pelcher]

Evening Worship

Evening Communion Services will restart in the autumn.

Rotas for August

Not included in this version

What's on in August

WOMEN'S MEETING

The Women's Meeting is on holiday until September. This month, however, there is a special meeting - at the usual time of 2.30pm

Tuesday 5th August Olivia Price invites us to enjoy her garden

Lifts will be arranged - contact Olive Shepherd



CHURCH WALKS



On Saturday 30th August, our "chief walker" is leading an easy paced walk of 3 miles from Hughenden Manor Car Park (NOT the church car park). Grid reference 862955. Friends from Trinity are invited to join this walk, which starts at 10.30am.

Wycombe Prayer – August 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 2nd August, Abundant Life Church, Corporation Street.

COFFEE MORNING

SATURDAY 9TH AUGUST
in the Lower Schoolroom
from 10.30 am till 12 noon

Why not come along and bring your friends for a sociable morning, with tea or coffee and a chat.

Laminator

The church has now purchased a laminator. It will seal paper and card up to A4 in size. It is stored, together with a supply of plastic wallets, in the right-hand stationery cupboard in the Lower Schoolroom.

Ideas for use – to make long lasting posters, to make glossy certificates, to preserve documents, to make frequently handled pieces of paper last longer, to preserve art-work and flat craft items such as bookmarks. Or do you have a better idea? For further information contact the Minister. (M.S.)

AUTUMN FAYRE

Saturday 11TH Oct - CRENDON HALL

Please make a note of this date and keep it free. More details will be available later, but if you are sorting out cupboards and have any items for the Bric-a-Brac stall, Audrey Richardson will be pleased to receive them.

Not included in this version

Thames North Synod **Autumn Academy 2003**

What is it?

A learning event for lay people, recognising the Synod's commitment to 'Equipping the Saints'.

Why 'The Word and the World'? To acknowledge our reformed tradition which gives the highest authority to the Word of God discerned through searching the scriptures while seeing the world as an arena of God's grace.

How will we go about all this?

We'll start on Friday evening with an opening session and a 'Hallowed Party'. Saturday will be spent being nourished and refreshed by some excellent speakers. In addition to Lawrence Moore we have input from Roberta Rominger and Julian Templeton, with other session leaders in the pipeline. There'll be time to take part in a trading game from Christian Aid/ as well as start preparing worship for Sunday.

When do I have to be there?

Come for the whole weekend, or sign up for particular sessions. Stephen Collins and Henry Playle will be running a parallel event for children and young people, so all ages are welcome.

What does it cost?

£85 per person for full board for the weekend; £16.15 for morning coffee/lunch/afternoon tea; £10.45 for evening meal. Subsidies may be available through the Synod Lay Development Fund.

Where do I get further information? Send your name and address to Sue Russell at the Synod Office: 0207 799 5000 or sue.russell@urcl0.org. You'll be sent a booking form by the end of July when the details have been finalised. Places are limited, so contact Sue now.

News from Spring Harvest for 2004

Spring Harvest continues to have amazing popularity!

Booking Line Update - Booking lines opened on 11 June 2003 and most accommodation was sold out in the space of a few hours. We're really sorry if you're one of the disappointed people who didn't manage to make a booking, or get the accommodation that you wanted. A Wait List is in operation and you can join this by calling 01825 769000.

We should give thanks for the way that God uses Spring Harvest to touch so many lives, but we'd also ask you to join us in prayer as we seek to find a way of increasing availability.

Skegness Early Week - If you haven't managed to get accommodation at Spring Harvest and you're able to take time away outside of the Easter holiday then you could consider Early Week (29 Mar - 3 Apr). Early Week includes a special 'Adult Stream' as well as student.evolution and is available at a SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED PRICE.

There's also the option of under-occupancy by one person per chalet so it's great if you're wanting to come as a smaller group.

Local homes needed for cross-cultural volunteers

High Wycombe's community groups will be amongst those to benefit from the arrival of 18 young volunteers (17-25 years old) *from* India and the UK in September. The World Youth Programme at Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), has chosen High Wycombe as one of three communities this year to host this exchange. During their three month stay in town, the volunteers will live and work in cross-cultural pairs, devoting their energy and over 6000 hours of volunteer work to the community, educational and environmental projects in and around High Wycombe. The Project Supervisor for this project, Erin Bateman, is appealing for local families who would like to accommodate a pair of volunteers. A weekly allowance is paid to cover expenses and pairs will share a room. The volunteers will be working on their projects for four days each week, followed by a team-based educational activity day where they will share learning about community issues. After spending three months in High Wycombe, the volunteers will continue their work in a local community in the Garwhal Hills of India.

If you are interested in hosting the volunteers in your home, or would like to find out more about the World Youth Programme in High Wycombe, please contact Erin on 07866 541889 or at erin.bateman@vso.org.uk



The sum of £100 has been put into church funds, being the excess of contributions from after service coffee after payment for all ingredients. Thank you all for your generosity.

A H

Nurturing the Open Church

Saturday 13th September 2003 Potters Bar United Reformed Church

Time: 9.30am - noon

The first of a series of seminar based workshops intended for those either working with the "Open All Hours?" material as well as those just exploring some of the issues raised in trying to be an 'open church.'

There will be input from a guest speaker, Jeanne Hinton, who as a member of "New Way" works with churches trying innovative concepts at 'being' church, as well as time for discussion and sharing practical ideas for further action.

Sign up for two of the following sessions:

- **Connecting & Integrating people in the church** Jeanne Hinton will lead us in looking at how to make connections with visitors to church and ways of getting them more involved in the life and work of the local church.
- **Becoming a missional church** Suzanne Adofo (CRCW co-ordinator) will share some aspects that are necessary for churches to work at in order to move from a maintenance to mission mindset and ethos.

OR

- **Engaging with the local community** Jeanne will conduct a workshop to discuss aspects of how to enable the church to establish itself more relevantly and form partnerships with groups in the local community.
- **Being more open and welcoming.** Peter Hurter will lead discussion in what could be the most important ministry needing to be exercised by current churches.

[The sessions are timed in such a way that you must pick either the first pair or the second pair. You cannot mix them.]

Contacts for more Information:

Peter Hurter 020 8504 8882 Email: peter.hurter@lineone.net

Sue Russell: 020 7799 5000 Email: sue.russell@urcl0.org

or **Mike Shrubsole**

CHURCH WEEKEND JUNE 13TH – 16TH

What a truly wonderful time we had at St.Katherine's, Parmoor on our church weekend away, and in such a delightful setting. The weather was kind to us with sunshine every day and just enough breeze for flying the kites that were made in one of the sessions.

So much work went into this weekend led by our minister, Mike, and all those who organised and prepared the various workshops that were available. Louise and Valerie with all the 'Have a go' crafts and Banner making and Daphne who took the flower arranging. Olive with the creative writing group, Andrew who led the 'Fun with Music Theory' and Simon with Digital technology. Then we had Soobie Whitfield a drama teacher who took two drama workshops and Margaret Craner, a County Guides bell ringer who brought along the hand bells for a hands on session. We also shared in worship morning and evening and it was a pleasure to welcome other members of the congregation who joined us for the Sunday morning worship at 11.0 am. The chapel was decorated with the flower arrangements and banners made during the weekend and we sang a hymn written by the creative writing group and another group narrated and performed a short drama. The week end finished on Sunday afternoon with a quiet communion service and then a final cup of tea and a cake before packing everything into the cars and setting off for home. So much effort went into this weekend both beforehand and during our stay, but it gave so much pleasure and enjoyment to everyone who took part, so a BIG, BIG thank you to you all.

M L

[Apologies from the Editor, who allowed this item to escape from inclusion last month!]

Simply Walk

"Simply Walk" is a scheme organised by the Primary Care Trusts and District Councils of Southern Bucks as part of the national "Walking the way to health" initiative. It is co-ordinated by Fiona Whitmore.



The walks are led by trained walkers and are for people who may not have walked regularly or are recovering from illness or who have been advised by their doctor to take gentle exercise. They are also a way of getting to know other people so are important socially as well as physically.

Leaflets are available detailing the current programme of walks from Lane End, Booker Common and Marlow, and a copy is on the notice board in the Lower Schoolroom. If you know anyone who is interested in or who would enjoy the walks please pass the information on.

Fiona hopes to extend the programme to cover more areas and to do this more volunteer leaders are needed. This does involve a day's leader training and half a day's emergency aid training. Some leaders commit themselves to leading nearly every week but most offer their services when they are free, which may not be on a regular basis.

If you are interested in joining the walks or in being a leader contact Fiona Whitmore on 01494 586502 or 01494 421736. email: fiona_whitmore@wycombe.gov.uk
I have some leaflets if anyone would like one.

Olive Shepherd

*The next edition of the Recorder will be published on 31st August.
Closing date for contributions is Friday 22nd August.*

Recorder Editor :

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

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

The Word and the World

Thames North Synod Autumn Academy 2003

What is it?

A learning event for lay people, recognising the Synod's commitment to 'Equipping the Saints'.

Why 'The Word and the World'? To acknowledge our reformed tradition which gives the highest authority to the Word of God discerned through searching the scriptures while seeing the world as an arena of God's grace.

How will we go about all this?

We'll start on Friday evening with an opening session and a 'Hallowed Party'. Saturday will be spent being nourished and refreshed by some excellent speakers. In addition to Lawrence Moore we have input from Roberta Rominger and Julian Templeton, with other session leaders in the pipeline. There'll be time to take part in a trading game from Christian Aid/ as well as start preparing worship for Sunday.

When do I have to be there?

Come for the whole weekend, or sign up for particular sessions. Stephen Collins and Henry Playle will be running a parallel event for children and young people, so all ages are welcome.

What does it cost?

£85 per person for full board for the weekend; £16.15 for morning coffee/lunch/afternoon tea; £10.45 for evening meal. Subsidies may be available through the Synod Lay Development Fund.

Where do I get further information? Send your name and address to Sue Russell at the Synod Office: 0207 799 5000 or sue.russell@urcl0.org. You'll be sent a booking form by the end of July when the details have been finalised. Places are limited, so contact Sue now.

Friday 31 October - Sunday 2 November

The "When"

The "Where"

All Saints Pastoral Centre, Colney Lane, St Albans

- Keynote address by Lawrence Moore, Director of the Windermere Centre
- Bible Studies, trading game, practical workshops
- LITE bite-size, to try out the new material for people leading worship

The "Highlights"

From the Synod Moderator

Summer 2003

Dear Friends,

Earlier this summer I made the round of the district councils (with the exception of Roding, in the diary for September) in order to make a progress report on our synod strategy process. I would like to share that with all of you and invite your participation in the next stage.

The process has already been underway for a year. Last September the ministers and Church Related Community Workers gathered for a day's conversation. After presentations about the strategic thinking underway in other parts of the URC and the challenges of our contemporary culture, we simply talked. The ideas flowed.

In November there was a two-day residential meeting for all of the committee conveners, appointees and officers of the synod where we worked actively to identify our vision and goals for the period ahead. After a bit of polishing, this is what I presented to the districts this summer.

Vision Statement

Through confidence in the Gospel, with excitement about the United Reformed Church's expression of Christian faith, and by our belonging to one another, the Thames North Synod envisions a future of courageous discipleship leading to growth.

Our vision is founded on the following values:

- commitment to the big picture of God's purposes for the whole created order
- a living Reformed inheritance, characterised by the centrality of scripture, courageous discipleship, freedom of conscience, openness to change, liturgical freedom, and conciliarity
- abundant life expressed in affirmation of diversity, inclusion of people of all ages and backgrounds, deep reflection, confident sharing of faith, reconciliation and healing, vitality and enthusiasm, and cherishing of the gifts of the whole people of God.

Synod Goals (2003 – 2007)

1. Encourage confidence in engaging with scripture and our changing society to nurture growth in Christian faith and life
2. Strengthen existing ministries and extend the diversity of ministries, among the whole people of God
3. Foster a greater sense of covenantal belonging to the Synod by the local churches
4. Ensure that the structures and leadership of the Synod are truly representative of the diversity of local congregations and their communities.

A third strand of the process is now actively underway. Our new synod clerk suggested that it would be helpful to review all the synod committees against their remits, both so that he could get to know them better, and so that they might be challenged to see where changes needed

[cont on page 11]

to be made. They have visionary names – “Leadership Development Group”, “Mission Initiatives Group” – how far do they succeed in living up to those names?

In the meantime, those of you who read Reform will know that the national URC is beginning a similar process. Under the leadership of the General Secretary, a small commission is working to create a Vision Statement for adoption at General Assembly in July 2004. Once we have agreed on our vision, they say, the particular questions that are the subject of their review will be easier to answer. We need to be more adventurous in forms of leadership and oversight if we are to be true to our mission in the 21st century. David Cornick’s review promises radical proposals... by summer 2005!

Thames North Synod is potentially a bit ahead of the game. While we do not want to impede the creative energy that has been generated by our synod vision process, we are conscious that David Cornick’s new Vision Statement may challenge us with something we hadn’t thought of. Therefore we intend to wait until March, or even October, 2004 to bring our work to Synod. The committees have been instructed to act on the goals we have identified until Synod replaces them with something better. That way we hope our corporate life will have a momentum to it as we seek to be faithful to our gospel calling.

I would like to invite you to get involved in this creative thinking in three ways.

First, each congregation is asked to hold a special Church Meeting in January 2004 to consider the national Vision Statement in its draft form. Please set a date now if you don’t already have one!

Second, the synod website now hosts a forum where we can hold “cyber discussions” on the life of the URC. Some of the questions that have arisen from the committee reviews are already there. And you are welcome to add more! Please visit www.urch10.org/disc1_frm.htm and join the discussion! I am hoping it will be a lively one. Those of you who don’t have access to the internet are welcome to submit comments to me by post. (Or trot down to your local library and learn to use the internet!)

Third, the synod has been asked to appoint two (or more) Synod Listeners to take part in the Cornick Vision Statement process. During February and March next year we will be holding meetings around the synod for the churches to report on the discussions of their January Church Meetings. We need volunteers to attend these meetings, gather the comments, and take them on our behalf to a national consultation in March. Those chosen will be people who are good at hearing what is actually being said, discerning the mind of the church, and being able to articulate it for others. Familiarity with the basic structures of the URC is necessary. If you would like to volunteer for this task, please write to me (Thames North Synod URC, 32-34 Great Peter St, London SW1P 2DB) with a paragraph describing why you wish to do the job and why you think you are suited for it. 1st October is the deadline.

I welcome your comments, large and small! In the United Reformed Church we believe that we discover the mind of Christ by sharing our insights with one another in the context of prayer. Do pray for this process, and tell us what you see. “God isn’t finished with us yet,” David Cornick likes to say. I agree.

Yours in Christ,

Roberta Rominger

Prayer Page

Our Prayer Page contributors are having a break this month. Instead, reflect on this -

A newly arrived soul in Heaven was met by St. Peter. The saint took the soul around Heaven. Both of them walked side by side inside a large workroom filled with angels.

St. Peter stopped in front of the first section and said, "This is the Receiving Section. Here, all the petitions to God said in prayer are received". The soul looked at the section, and it was terribly busy with so many angels sorting out petitions written on voluminous paper sheets from all the people of the world.

They walked again until they reached the 2nd section, and St. Peter told the soul, "This is the Packaging and Delivery Section. Here, the graces and blessings the people asked for are packed and delivered to the persons who asked for them down on earth."

The soul saw how busy it was. There were so many angels working in that room, since so many blessings were being packed and delivered to Earth.

Finally at the farthest corner of the room, the soul stopped at the last section. To the surprise of the soul, only one angel stayed there idly, doing nothing.

"This is the Acknowledging Section," St. Peter told the soul.

"How is it that, there is no work here?" enquired the soul.

"That's the sad thing," St. Peter answered. "After the people received the blessings they asked for, very few send their acknowledgements".

"How does one acknowledge God's blessing?" asked the soul.

"Simple," St. Peter answered.

"Just say, "Thank you, Lord'."

Thank you Lord, for giving me the chance to share this message with others and also, for giving me so many wonderful people to share this with.

A few "ifs" to consider (- and for which to be thankful)

•If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep . . . you are richer than 75% of this world.

•If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace . . . you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

•If you woke up this morning with more health than illness . . . you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.

•If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation . . . you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

•If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death . . . you are more blessed than three billion people in the world.

•If your parents are still alive and still married . . . you are very rare, even in the Philippines.

•If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful . . . you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.

•If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder, you are blessed because you can offer healing touch.

•If you can read this message, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read at all.