



December 2005

The Recorder

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*An edited version of this magazine is now available on the Church Web-site.
(Personal details are NOT included.)*

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

Trinity - A Family Church

Worshipping together - Caring for one another - Sharing with others

Dear Friends,

One of the benefits of being retired is enjoying listening to daytime radio and this week I've been listening to the auction bids on Radio2 for 'Things Money Can't Buy' as part of the BBC's appeal for Children In Need. The items offered were fantastic as equally the bids were and much has been raised for a worthy charity. People were bidding many thousands of pounds for the experience of a self-survival week-end with a celebrity, or to be hosted, wined and dined by the RAF. At the other end of the scale there was a Bid For A Quid scheme, which would have been more suited to my purse.

This set me thinking about the Christmas season with all its modern day commercialism and how the true essence of the Christmas message cannot be bought for any amount of money. It is given to us by God's grace as His gift to mankind, the greatest gift there has ever been or ever will be, free for us all to enjoy and share. His Son, Jesus, came into our world through God's inestimable love for us. No amount of money could have brought about His birth. It happened in God's time and in God's way.

The run up to Christmas this year will be very different for me compared to the past 38 years and I can't help wondering if I'm going to miss being an integral part of all the events that happen in an Infant School. What I don't want to miss is the wonderment of young children as they experience the Christmas story. Jesus often referred to children in His teachings for their trustfulness and unquestioning belief in things. He said: 'Anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it'. (Mark 10. 15) As part of our preparations during Advent we need to clear away the clutter in our lives and our adult wariness in order to receive Him with a child's simplicity and willingness remembering that His birth was just the beginning of God's gift of eternal life to us.

As you prepare for and participate in the Christmas events take time to stand aside and wonder and give thanks with the eyes, mind and heart of a child, for we are all God's children. May you and your loved ones experience a truly joyous and blessed Christmas.

Marian Mole

Minister :

Church Secretary:
Mrs Margaret Lewis,

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

December Services

- Dec 4th 10:30 am - Revd Andrew Busby (our Interim Moderator)
- Dec 11th 10:30 am - Mrs Valerie Lockhart and Junior Church
- Dec 18th 10:30 am - Mr Alan Yates (HW URC)
- Dec 18th 4:30 pm - Carols by Candlelight - led by the Elders and Choir
- Dec 24th 11:30 pm - Mr Alan Yates
- Dec 25th 10:30 am - Revd Graham Long
Graham is a recently retired URC minister and is
Andrew Long's father)
Includes the of Baptism of Imogen Andie Buchanan)

Rotas for December

What's on in December . . .



Monday 12th December - Kings Head Little Marlow

Xmas meal

"Forks in" at 7:30 pm !!

WOMEN'S MEETING

Tuesday 6th Dec
Tuesday 13th Dec

Preparations for Christmas Party
Christmas Party

Next meeting is on Tuesday 10th January 2006!

All meetings start at 2.30 in the Lower Schoolroom



Scrabble

**There is
NO Scrabble
this month**

That Lot!

That Lot! held a sponsored bike ride around the Rye in the summer and due to your generous support they have raised £247.80 for St Laurence's Hospice in Romania, part of Children in Distress; thank you to everyone who sponsored them. Chris, Nina, Ben, Ellie, Ellen, Alec, Chloe and Erin completed a total of 67 laps of the Rye. The route taken meant one lap was 1.8 miles so they cycled 120 miles between them! Thank you also to the parents who provided the pit stop with repairs and drinks. And well done guys for raising so much.

That Lot! meet in the Lower Schoolroom every other Sunday from 6.30 – 8.00 pm and welcome any young people aged 10+. We come from 3 different churches to meet together for fun and friendship with a Christian basis. Our programme for the rest of this term is:

Sunday 27th November – music making with Jonny (bring an instrument)

Sunday 11th December – Christmas Crafts

Sunday 8th January – Planning and Pringles

It is some months since we updated you with details of our HoverAid Tsunami Appeal. The total raised exceeded £25,000, and we have been sending regular donations to the People's Church in Colombo to help fund their relief projects. Dharshan Fernando has written in the past week to say:

"Let me give you a brief update on our relief and development efforts.

We are still committed to 4 communities of Tsunami affected people:

- **Galle:** We have built 20 houses in Galle (South of Sri Lanka). The pastoral team that we sent out have got into the community and are working with the affected people.
- **Mulleitivu:** We have just commenced a 100 house project. This is in the Terrorist controlled areas. We are working with the local pastors who are directly in touch with the affected people for whom we are building houses. One of our key pastors is coordination this project.
- **Thirukkivil (East):** We have purchased a 25 Acre property and have 250 families (Approx). We have built temporary shelters for these people. The permanent housing will commence soon. We had to wait till the government secured the property, although we were on it from the week the Tsunami hit us.
- **Kalutara:** This is a town close to Colombo. We were awarded a property and then the government took it back within a week. If we do not get land from Government by end December we would have to give up building houses. Although we are working with the affected communities in other aspects.
- We are assisting two other projects (In the north and far south). These two churches were working independently and were promised aid from government and donor agencies which did not come through. We are now trying to help them as well. "

Thank you again for your committed support.

Mike Holdsworth

for HoverAid

Family news from our former Minister!

On Sunday 20th November Christopher Shrubsole competed in the British Indoor Rowing Championships 2005 at the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham. In his J13 (under 13 years boys) event Chris came 4th out of a field of 94 rowers from all over the country, he rowed 813 meters in his 3 minute dash, narrowly missing a medal position. The official report on the race says: "Good lord there are some powerful 12 year olds around!" The arena was filled with 120 brand-new, top-grade 'Concept 2' rowing machines, all computer-linked to a race control system and display boards and to the competition's website. Throughout the day a succession of races were timed from the youngest under-11's category, through to the top British athletes of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Sir Steve Redgrave was there, and this year's Oxford and Cambridge crews, and the current British squad. You can re-live Chris's race at http://www.concept2.co.uk/birc/results_detail_2005.php?event=A20

Just click on 'Race Analysis' to re-run the race.

Congratulations Chris.

MakePovertyHistory

The Editor receives monthly updates from the Commitment for Life team. Recently, these have been arriving earlier than they used to, so can now be included a month ahead of what had been our practice. The November update has been omitted (as the following article includes some of that material anyway). It is hoped that future contributions continue to reach us on time to be included more currently than was once possible.

Commitment for Life MPH Update

As we approach a very busy time within our Churches let's remember all the amazing moments there have been this year. This meeting in Hong Kong of the WTO is so important to carry the message of hope for people in poverty towards 2006. Please try to do one action to finish off this year of mobilisation.

Mass Lobby

Over half of all MPs were lobbied on 2 November by 8000 campaigners calling for the Government to stop forcing poor countries to liberalise their economies through WTO negotiations. The final number lobbied publicly released is '375 MPs' making this event **the largest lobby of the UK parliament ever**. Congratulations to everyone involved and to those new campaigners spurred on by Edinburgh.

Early Day Motion 679 'Making Poverty History through Trade Justice' has been tabled.

There are currently 262 MPs who have signed the EDM and it was one of the asks (for MPs) at the Mass Lobby. Please promote the EDM to your supporters and your contacts, as it is currently the 6th most popular in the parliamentary list of over 1000 EDMs. TJM and MPH should aim for this to become the biggest before December.

The EDM, along with a request to write to Trade and Industry Secretary Alan Johnson about stopping forced liberalisation at the WTO were the specific asks of MPs at the **mass lobby**.

Some MPs waited in Westminster Hall whilst their constituents were outside in the queue but were reluctant to venture out because of the rain. But Diane Abbott, MP for Hackney and Stoke Newington bucked the trend and set off outside at a great pace on hearing her people were outside.

International update

European Action for Trade Justice - Monday 21 November, Brussels

On November 21/22, European Union trade ministers will meet to finalise the EU's negotiating position for the WTO talks in December. Thousands of campaigners from across Europe will gather in Brussels to demand that the EU supports our call to make poverty history by delivering trade justice - not free trade.

Action will be taken outside the EU institutions and MEPs will be lobbied at the European Parliament, as campaigners stand in solidarity with the 15 million Europeans who have already taken action on trade and poverty in 2005.

The Brussels mass lobby has been called by different national European trade campaigns and campaign networks – including the EU national platforms of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) (www.whiteband.org) – and is supported and endorsed by the UK Trade Justice Movement.

Melanie Frew (Convenor of the Commitment for Life Sub Committee) is going so we should be able to hear her views of the day when she returns.

[continued on page 7]

NEW!!! Email Mandelson

The **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** website will carry an 'Email Mandelson' trade justice action from w/c 21 November. A call to take this action will go out to the over 500, 000 subscribers to that site. Do link to the action from your website when it goes live. This is part of a global action ahead of the WTO with the ONE campaign in the US carrying a 'Email Bush/Portman' action and the GCAP site (www.whiteband.org) enabling the developing world's representatives/key leaders from the South to be sent messages encouraging them to stand up to rich countries' pressure and continue to press for trade justice see: www.whiteband.org/act/wto

White Band Day 3

The Vote for Trade Justice remains the key action . Over 650,000 people in the UK have now cast a Vote for Trade Justice. With a final push from everyone, we will achieve our aim of having over a million votes by UK citizens by White Band Day 3

The call will be to Tony Blair and the other leaders of the world's most wealthy countries, urging them to make radical changes to the way world trade is currently managed, so it benefits the poor and acknowledges its impact on the environment. The UK Government delegation will be left in no doubt as to what they must do in Hong Kong!

The theme across the globe on White Band Day 3 is 'spotlight on trade justice', reminding world leaders that we are still 'watching and waiting for them to make poverty history' and highlighting trade justice demands.

As the UK delegation leave for the World Trade Organisation Ministerial, **MAKEPOVERTY-HISTORY** and the Trade Justice Movement will take to 10 Downing Street all the Votes for Trade Justice collected by thousands of campaigners since summer last year. Hopefully this will take the form of a celebrity Santa with live reindeer. All the votes will be delivered in sacks. This will actually take place on the 9th December to get it in the press for the 10th.

- Use the theme of '**Spotlight on Trade Justice**' for an awareness-raising stunt - for example, put something representing trade injustice, like a **pair of unfair scales**, in a public place and shine a spotlight on it.
- You could use the stunt to get media coverage and to collect **Votes for trade justice**
- Collect votes for **Trade Justice** - there's still time up until the end of the **WTO**
- Get your town's **Christmas** lights dedicated to **White Band Day III**, and get publicity on the back of this
- **Wrap local landmarks** in white bands - for example your town Christmas tree

It would be great if all URC Churches around the country put up the poster to be found on the web page and photocopied it so all members put one in their window. Don't forget to wear your white band.

Other ideas for this day can be found on <http://www.makepovertyhistory.org>

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Linda Mead
Commitment for Life Co-ordinator
United Reformed Church

Has your MP signed the EDM 679 "Making poverty history through Trade Justice or written to Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Industry, asking him what the Government will do to respond to the concerns raised in the above. In particular, given that the UK government has said it will not force poor countries to open their economies, please ask Alan Johnson to specify what changes he is calling for in the EU's negotiating position at the WTO

Curl up with a good book – R & R Events in 2006

“When we find our obedience to the Gospel in our local context God’s blessings may both surprise and subvert the accepted ways of the world.”

Ann Morisy, p. 11 Journeying Out

Do you like reading books that make you think? Books that offer a new perspective on what it means to be a follower of Jesus? Have you ever read such a book and wished that you could meet the author to ask them a few questions? To say to them ‘Yes, but....’ in order to tease out how their ideas fit with your experience?

Well, now is your chance. As part of the ‘Open All Hours?!’ project the Synod’s Development and Training Team is encouraging you to read a particular book and to come and meet the author.

The first book is ‘Journeying Out’ by Ann Morisy, and Ann will be available for you to meet on the morning of Saturday 11th February at Potters Bar United Reformed Church.

Originally from Liverpool, Ann has many years experience of working with churches engaged in mission in urban areas. Her latest book has something to say to suburban churches too - in fact any church which is looking at its surrounding area and asking ‘What is God’s purpose in us being here?’

In her book Ann discusses the importance of living story-rich lives, of taking risks in encounters with others, and of being confident in the reality of the cascades of grace that enfold us when we are in the right place.

Intriguing? Puzzling? Find out for yourself by reading the book. You could read it on your own, or perhaps encourage a group of your friends to read it together. Could it be something to study during the winter in one of those ad-hoc groups which churches sometimes support?

And if you’re wondering what R & R stands for, so far we’ve come up with ‘Reading & Reflection, Rest & Recreation, Rigour & Relaxation’ – the choice is yours.

‘Journeying Out’ (2004) is published by Morehouse and costs £12.99.

Call Sue Russell on 020 7799 5000 or email sue.russell@urc10.org to find out more.

Fiona Thomas
Thames North Synod Training Officer

Carols by Candlelight (18th Dec)



I will be contacting you for mince pies for the above event in mid December.

Many thanks to Rose and Sue for their offers of help to serve the refreshments and mulled wine.

Thank You
Anne H

No!!

Last month, Audrey Brthrew out a challenge to readers to come up with some poetry using the word "no" in a positive sense. The editor has been swamped with contributions, to such an extent that these will be published over the next few months, rather than include them all this month. A particularly seasonal one is to be found below.

No Christmas Bird

No turkey this Christmas,
No poultry at all!
No eggs,
No chickens,
No birds in our kitchens.
No goose,
Nor no duck,
We've run out of luck.
No pigeons for pies,
No, nothing that flies.
This Avian Flu' is just waiting for you!
So, no parrots please
(they might spread the disease).
No partridge for me
(even in a pear tree!)
No poultry for us
For our Christmas dinner
No, we don't mind nut cuts,
(at least we'll be thinner).
No bird means no worries
But no turkey curries.
No platter,
No matter.
No bird –
No bird flu'.
A merry, turkey-free Christmas to you!

Joy P

A worldwide survey was conducted by the UN.

The only question asked was:

"Would you please give your honest opinion about solutions to the food shortage in the rest of the world?"

The survey was a huge failure.....!!!

In Africa they didn't know what "food" meant.

In Eastern Europe they didn't know what "honest" meant.

In Western Europe they didn't know what "shortage" meant.

In China they didn't know what "opinion" meant.

In the Middle East they didn't know what "solution" meant.

In South America they didn't know what "please" meant.

And in the USA they didn't know what "the rest of the world" meant!

Here to help!!

The problem . . .

At a recent Church meeting, it was mentioned that some of our number are finding it difficult to get to hospital for appointments.

The answer . . .

Three members of the congregation have volunteered their services to drive anyone in difficulty. They would appreciate reasonable notice.

The catch . . .

There is no formal charge for this service, but it is hoped that anyone using it would make a contribution to the Building Fund.

Contacts: John Standfield 01494 441782
 Willie Macleod 01494 711967
 Audrey Bruton 01494 443619

These names are in no particular order. Please do not always start at the top and work down. John will get worn out!

Coffee Mornings

We had a special one on November 12th to try to attract you and your friends – we had, apart from the usual good refreshments, nice produce for sale – apples, cakes and home made preserves, all supplied by friends, and we raised about £40 to go to the Restoration Fund which Arthur W told us about at Morning Service on November 6th.

These Coffee Mornings have raised several hundreds of pounds over the years but we would like to do more to make these cheerful occasions busier.

Thanks to Jim Tanner, we had a lively report in the Bucks Free Press Community Column, and thanks are also due to Audrey R, Rose C and Margaret L for their regular and unstinting help.

Saturday mornings are busy for all of us – shopping, visiting, chores about the house and garden, but we shall be glad to see you and your friends at Trinity Coffee Mornings.

The next one will be on December 10th – with other dates to be fixed around Christmas activities. The time is always from 10:30 to noon.

Olivia P

Did you Know?

Life expectancy for weekly churchgoers is 82; for those who attend more than once a week, it's 83. Non-churchgoers live an average of 75 years.

(Who worked this out - and how?)

Church Walks

Readers of The Recorder may have noticed that the Rocking-chair has been appearing more frequently than the Walker in recent months. They will not know that only the leader and her dog have arrived at the start of the last few walks. They, we, have enjoyed the exercise but I have decided that church walks in their present format have had their day.



I am getting older and coffee-mornings on the fourth and usually last Saturday of each month are very welcome (after an earlier dog-walk, of course, but I can hardly expect anyone to join me on that). The remaining members of the original group will not mind, I am sure, if I say that they too are getting older and also have family and other commitments (apart from coffee) at weekends and Bank Holidays. So let's not pretend that there are still church walks.

I have enjoyed my time as leader. It has been an excellent way of getting to know each other as well as enjoying the Chiltern and Thames Valley countryside.

With many thanks to those who have joined me in the past and with hope that there may be a similar group in the not-too-distant future.

Olive P



Eve had a chat with God one day;

"Lord, I have a problem"

"What`s the problem, Eve?"

"I know that you created me and provided this beautiful garden and all of these wonderful animals, as well as that hilarious comical snake, but, I`m just not happy"

"And why is that Eve?"

"Lord I am lonely. and sick to death of apples."

"Well, Eve, in that case, I have a solution. I shall create a Man for you"

"Man? What is that Lord?"

"A flawed creature, with many bad traits. He`ll lie, cheat and be vain. All in all he`ll give you hard time. But he will be bigger, faster and will like to hunt and kill things. I will create him in such a way that he will satisfy your physical needs. He will be witless and will revel in childish things like fighting and kicking a ball about. He won`t be as smart as you, so he will also need your advice to think properly."

"Sounds great," says Eve, with ironically raised eyebrows, "but what`s the catch Lord?"

"Well....you can have him on one condition."

"And what`s that Lord?"

"As I said, he will be proud, arrogant and self- admiring...so you`ll have to let him believe that I made him first. And it will have to be our little secret.....you know, woman to woman."

Anon (*submitted by a female member of the congregation (of course!)*)

Lessons of Life

There was a man who had four sons. He wanted his sons to learn not to judge things too quickly. So he sent them each on a quest, in turn, to go and look at a pear tree that was a great distance away.

The first son went in the winter, the second in the spring, the third in summer, and the youngest son in the fall.

When they had all gone and come back, he called them together to describe what they had seen.

The first son said that the tree was ugly, bent, and twisted.

The second son said no - it was covered with green buds and full of promise.

The third son disagreed; he said it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful, it was the most graceful thing he had ever seen.

The last son disagreed with all of them; he said it was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and fulfilment.

The man then explained to his sons that they were all right, because they had each seen but only one season in the tree's life.

He told them that you cannot judge a tree, or a person, by only one season, and that the essence of who they are and the pleasure, joy, and love that come from that life can only be measured at the end, when all the seasons are up.

If you give up when it's winter, you will miss the promise of your spring, the beauty of your summer, fulfilment of your fall.

Moral:

Don't let the pain of one season destroy the joy of all the rest.

Don't judge life by one difficult season.

Persevere through the difficult patches and better times are sure to come some time or later.

A Kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children while they were drawing. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's work.

As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was.

The girl replied, "I'm drawing God."

The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like."

Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute."

We cannot be certain when the fir tree first came to be linked with the birth of Christ. According to a legend that comes to us from the early days of Christianity in Britain, a monk named Saint Wilfred felled a great oak tree, which in the Druid religion was an object of worship. As it fell to earth the oak tree split. From its centre there grew up a young fir tree which was dedicated to the Christ-child. "Its wood," the saint said, "is the wood of peace for your houses are built of fir." It is the sign of endless life for its leaves are evergreen.

An atheist was taking a walk through the woods.

What majestic trees!

What powerful rivers!

What beautiful animals!" he said to himself.

As he continued walking alongside the river he heard a rustling in the bushes. Turning to look, he saw a 7 foot grizzly charging towards him. He ran as fast as he could up the path. Looking over his shoulder he saw that the bear was closing in on him. His heart was pumping frantically and he tried to run even faster. He tripped and fell on the ground. He rolled over to pick himself up but saw the bear raising his paw to take a swipe at him. At that instant the atheist cried out: "Oh my God!..."

Time stopped.

The bear froze.

The forest was silent.

It was then that a bright light shone upon the man and a voice came out of the sky saying: "You deny my existence for all of these years, teach others I don't exist and even credit creation to a cosmic accident.

Do you expect me to help you out of this predicament? Am I to count you as a believer?"

The atheist looked directly into the light, "It would be hypocritical of me to suddenly ask you to treat me as a Christian now, but perhaps, could you make the BEAR a Christian?"

Very well," said the voice.

The light went out.

And the sounds of the forest resumed.

And then the bear lowered his paw, bowed his head and spoke,

"Lord, bless this food which I am about to receive and for which I am truly thankful."

Please note - to save dragging the production team away from making mince pies and other such exciting delicacies on Christmas Eve, the next edition of The Recorder will be issued one week later than usual - on New Year's Day. Although the closing date for contributions is also a few days later than usual, please get your items to the Editor as soon as possible.

*The next edition of the Recorder will be published on **1st January**
Closing date for contributions is Tuesday 20th December*

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

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

prayer page
(prepared by the nightbirds)

Prayers for Advent and Christmas

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God of hope,

As we light the Advent candles in preparation for our celebration of the birth of your Son, may the fire of your love burn away the dusts of our complacency. May we be able to see the world as it really is and light anew the flame of our passion for justice.

Amen

Linda Jones

Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day. We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us. We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence. We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light. To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

Amen.

Henri J.M. Nouwen

God of our desire and longing, we await your coming with eager expectation and with joyful hope. Strengthen our hearts and minds with the beckoning light of your redeeming love that we may earnestly work for the coming of your kingdom and be ever ready to receive you in those we meet.

Amen.

© *Annabel Shilson-Thomas*

Loving Father, Help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.



May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

Robert Louis Stevenson