

No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. [John 1:18]



December 2007

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,

Does God really care? The event that we recall and celebrate at Christmas gives a resounding "Yes" to that question. Jesus is born to a young woman in an occupied country at a time when life was very hard. The Gospel writers can hardly find language big enough to get across what they had come to realise this birth meant. Read those early chapters of Matthew, Luke and John again for yourself this December. List all the words and drama that they use to try and convey what happened there in Bethlehem. Allow your spirit to 'bend the knee' at the baby's feet.

For me it is summed up in the profound but simple theology in Matthew 1, verse 23, quoting the prophet Isaiah. His name, his very nature, is Emmanuel, which means "**God is with us**".

Archbishop Desmond Tutu has put it this way to his flock in South Africa. God is saying, "I am Emmanuel. I am God-with-you. I am one who's not going to give you good advice from a safe distance. I enter the fiery furnace with you."

Yes, God does really care. We are going to celebrate and rejoice in that fact through all of our worship this month. Each Sunday is special, but there is something extra special about worship as we approach and then celebrate Christmas.

At Trinity we are rejoicing too in the completion of Phase I of our **Revive** building redevelopment. I have come across a book that talks about church buildings being like "a 'cookie cutter' which gives particular shape to the lump of pastry on the kitchen table. The church building likewise gives shape and definition to the lump of humanity gathered within its walls, moulding it into the body of Christ".

Our new entrance, repainted Lower Schoolroom, new vestry, toilets, store-cupboards and new corridor seem to me already to be reshaping how others see us and how we see ourselves at Trinity. For those of us who could be there on the 18th Nov. for the Opening, it was great, wasn't it, to enjoy each others pleasure and surprise in that first look around? Then, at Church Meeting on the 20th Nov. we saw the plans for Phase II and heard our architect, Kelvin Sampson, explain the details of the 'new-look' sanctuary. We chipped in with extra thoughts and ideas and sent him away with our blessing.

With Christmas in mind, Bernie and I would like to invite you all to our home. On Dec. 15th and 22nd we shall be '**At Home**' for a Christmas flavoured time of 'cookies and chat', [plus mince pies and Christmas cake!] and a few optional fun activities thrown in for the young in years and the young at heart. If you are reading this, or are a friend of someone who has read this and told you about it – YOU are invited. Please come along between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., or between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. on either of those days, and stay for as long as you are able.

Bernie's church, Ickenham United Reformed Church, is also being invited for these times, so we hope that you will enjoy meeting them too.

And remember: God is with us,



Minister : Rev Dr Gwen Collins e-mail: gwen@trinity-urc.org.uk
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Church Secretary :Mrs Marian Mole, e-mail: secretary@trinity-urc.org.uk
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December Services & Rotas

Sunday Morning Worship at 10:30am - led by the Minister (unless otherwise stated)

Dec. 2	10.30	A Covenant Service for Advent Sunday with Holy Communion
	3.00 p.m.	Service of Prayer for Healing & Wholeness [more details on page 8]
Dec. 9		Morning Worship with a Christmas Card Theme
Dec. 16		Gift Service led by Junior Church
Dec. 23	10.30	Time to Think
	4.30 p.m.	Carols by Candlelight
Dec. 24	11.30 p.m.	Midnight Communion
Dec. 25	10.30 – 11.15	Worship on Christmas Day

Not included in this version

What's on in December



Dec 10th Xmas meal - Hit or Miss, Penn Street

WOMEN'S MEETING

- Tuesday 4th Dec Christmas preparations
- Tuesday 11th Dec Crown School Christmas Concert (in church).
[Time - TBA]
- Tuesday 18th Dec Christmas Party



All meetings start at 2.30 in the Lower Schoolroom, unless otherwise indicated



Get your festive dictionary out!

7th & 21st December

at 2pm

Diary Dates

- 1 Dec 8.30-10.30am Bible First
- 2 Dec 3pm Service For Healing & Wholeness
- 4 Dec 8pm Elders' Meeting
- 8 Dec Coffee Morning
- 15 Dec 2-5pm & 7-10pm Christmas 'At Home' at The Manse with Ickenham
- 16 Dec Gift Service led by Junior Church
- 16 Dec Church Christmas Lunch
- 21 Dec 6pm Carol Singing at Asda
- 22 Dec 2-5pm & 7-10pm Christmas 'At Home' at The Manse with Ickenham
- 23 Dec 4.30pm Carol Service
- 24 Dec 11.30pm Midnight Communion
- 25 Dec 10.30am Family Worship
- 8 Jan 8pm Elders' Meeting
- 15 Jan 8pm Church Meeting
- 26 Jan 2pm Quarterly pastoral Meeting for Elders & Pastoral Assistants
- 27 Jan 4pm Prayer Circle for Healing
- 1 Feb 6pm Bible First
- 8 Feb BARN DANCE** (more details in Jan Recorder)

December						
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Not included in this version

WANTED CRECHE HELPERS.

As of January 2008 I will be taking on the role of finding crèche helpers each week. No formal qualifications needed – just a willingness to:

Read stories
Build towers
Play games
and
Wipe noses!!

I would love to hear from you if you think you can help on a rota basis. Please speak to me in church or call.

Thankyou
Sarah H

FAIR TRADE FASHION SHOW

Put the 8 March 2008 in your diaries. On that date Trinity is holding a Fair Trade Fashion Show. Don't only remember the date but also think how you can be involved.

We are looking for offers for the following:

- Models to show off the clothes – men and women, all ages and sizes!
- Offers to make fair-trade food for the refreshments – biscuits, cakes, tea bread etc. (We will pay for the ingredients.)
- Help to sell the tickets
- Help on the day to:
 - Dress the models
 - Serve refreshments
 - Help sell the goods
 - Help count the money
- I'm sure there will be other ways you can help if none of these appeal

Please get in touch with Pat W if you would like to be involved in any way – Further information will follow in the January Recorder.

Commitment for Life

Zimbabwe

Jesuit Priest Brian MacGarry has worked in Zimbabwe on development and human rights issues since 1968, with a short break during the liberation war. We have used material from Father Brian in the past. Recently at a meeting in Oxford, he spoke about how Zimbabweans today described themselves as having the highest I Queue in the world as they queue for essentials. Very few people are in formal employment. The last official inflation rate given was 7,500%; it is more likely in reality to be 15,000 or 20,000%. However, he does not see the economy as the primary problem. The fundamental issue is that society has been disrupted and destroyed by a small group with a mania for control. Father Brian reminded the audience that a lot of the land that changed hands in the 1980s and was resettled had been state land. Of the land that was bought for resettlement, much went to ZANU-PF. It is remarkable that, alone in Africa, Zimbabwe's new government kept to the terms of the Independence Agreement that entrenched land clauses. Also remarkable that, for nearly 10 years after the entrenched land clauses ceased to have legal force, nothing was done to get rid of them. After the Referendum, however, everything changed.

Hardly anyone who holds land has secure tenure: tenure depends on the will of the Party. Some black commercial farmers who acquired land outside the Party were evicted in 2000. Most of the increased food production in the 1980s came from peasant farmers. But the vital hybrid maize seed was produced on the commercial farms and the fertilizer and equipment had to be imported.

The destruction of the commercial farming sector has had disastrous knock-on effects for the peasant farmers.

The Churches and other civil society organisations have been split by ZANU-PF's style of politics. The only group that has remained relatively intact is the trade unions. Morgan Tsvangirai must be given credit for this. But the scarcity of formal sector jobs means that the trade union movement is seriously depleted.

Brian's view of the prospects now is that there are no saviours waiting outside Zimbabwe. European interference only makes things worse. Because Mugabe and the ruling group operate by manipulation, they cannot imagine that anyone outside is not being manipulated by their own government.

No help is likely from other Southern African states whose leaders preside over systems sharing common features with Zimbabwe's own patronage system. Several Southern African governments don't want the skeletons in their own cupboards revealed. Within Zimbabwe, residents' associations are prepared to protest and WOZA encourage people to do so.

Father Brian concluded with a text message that he had received that morning from a friend in Zimbabwe:

"People are fast reaching the elastic limit and it may snap at anytime. What did Mbeki offer? Anything can happen. The pillars of oppression are feeling the heat." He ended "and they may be too weak to inflict their customary brutality."

WDM - Thanks

WDM warmly welcomed the announcement that the government is to replace air passenger duty with an environmental tax on planes. For the first time taxes on aviation will be linked to carbon dioxide emissions. Aviation accounts for 13 per cent of the UK's contribution to climate change and is the fastest growing source of UK emissions. To prevent catastrophic climate change impacting on the world's poor, the UK has to halt the growth in emissions from aviation.

STOP PRESS

Wonderful news! I've just heard from Gwen that we have been successful in obtaining the Synod grant of £100,000 towards the work of REVIVE Phase 2, the sanctuary.

Rejoice in the Lord.
Blessings,
Marian M

See full report on page 9

GIFT SERVICE

Junior Church will be leading our morning worship on Sunday 16 December for our annual Gift Service. They have chosen two charities to support, Oxfam Unwrapped 'Send A Cow' and the Wycombe Night Shelter, which we agreed to be one of the venues at our November Church Meeting.

You are asked to use the envelopes, which will be available in the pews for your donation to the 'Send A Cow' scheme. The idea was that the children would also be able to contribute towards this by donating some of their pocket money if they so wished. Suggested provisions for the Night Shelter are tea, coffee, sugar, biscuits, and cereals. However, items need to be consumable until the end of March 08.

Central Aid Society

Once more I have the opportunity to go to a Central Aid function – it's an invitation to their Annual 'get together'.

Here is some of the information included in the invitation:

The Society has tried hard this year to make people aware of what the Society is, what it does, and why its help is still needed by plenty of people even in these affluent times.

The Society receives plenty of calls from clients young and old, and other charities that need assistance because of hardship and distress.

The Pop-In in the Reggie Goves Centre in Paul's Row, High Wycombe, supplies meals, outings and friendship. At the Furniture Warehouse sales have increased and the furniture received is of high quality. The Society has given grants totalling 31909 to needy families since April 2007.

There have been some staff changes at the Pop-In and it is good to hear the buzz of conversation around the room as people meet old friends and make new ones. Bingo and Keep Fit are as popular as ever. Fundraising – Flag Days in High Wycombe town centre and Friday market stalls have been successful. The Society is always looking for bits and pieces to put on the stall.

Olivia P

Central Aid Society
103 Cornmarket, High Wycombe. HP11 2BW
(01494 535890)

Greetings cards for Prisoners of Conscience (Amnesty International)

At this time of year, in addition to sending cards to our friends, we also try to remember those we do not know who are imprisoned for their beliefs or for speaking out against injustice.

The purpose is to let the prisoner know (s)he is not forgotten, and also to let their governments know that the rest of the world knows what is happening. We are constantly being told by freed prisoners and by families of those still imprisoned, that receiving cards and messages from outside was what kept them going when they were ready to give up.

So please make an effort again this year to send a simple card and the message to those in solitary confinement, maybe suffering torture, that somebody cares.

I have put four booklets at the back of the church containing names and details of different people. Please choose and send as many as you can and return the book to church for others to use.

One note of warning: - do not put anything that could harm the person receiving it. Do not mention Amnesty, nor anything political or religious (eg "we are thinking of you" is acceptable – but NOT "we are praying").

Thank you, on their behalf.

For any further details or questions, see me in church.

Audrey B

Service for Healing and Wholeness

On Sunday December 2nd, we are holding a special service for Healing and Wholeness in the church.

For some time we have had a group of people meeting regularly to uphold in prayer any of our members and friends who are experiencing special difficulties of any kind. We also include these friends in our private prayers. In addition, we have a prayer chain so that we can pass on to each other any emergencies or details of illnesses which need our special prayerful support and action.

We would warmly welcome anyone who feels they would like to share in this very important ministry. Please have a word with the Minister. As James says, in chapter 5 of his letter, "Pray for each other so that you may be healed".

And so, on December 2nd, we shall be doing just that - in a public act of intercessory prayer and worship in the church, when we can all bring our concerns for ourselves and each other to God as we ask for His support and guidance in this vital part of our church life.

Wycombe Half Marathon.

Thankyou to everyone who sponsored and supported me back in the summer when I took part in the Wycombe Half Marathon.

I was able to hand over £ 400 for the **Revive** fund.

I am now planning my next project!!! The Flora London Marathon 2008.

Watch this space.

Sarah H

FINANCE AND REVIVE REPORT

The year end forecast and 2008 budget was presented at the Church Meeting on Tuesday 20th November. We are budgeting for a deficit on normal activities of £8125 in 2008, largely attributable to some overdue work on the exterior of the manse. I explained to the meeting that the focus on Revive meant that we had to be vigilant about running into cash flow problems if our expenditure continued to exceed our income on normal activities. The budget was approved.

Church meeting also agreed to the following:

Gift Aid Tax refunds - £31.03, divisible amongst four charities supported last Christmas; £122.69 to be divided equally amongst the two charities supported by Sarah and Simon at their wedding.

£100 donations to Silvera House, Zimbabwe, South Bucks Hospice, Iain Rennie Hospice, Historic Churches, Wycliffe Bible Translators and a "Student Sponsorship" to be proposed by Gwen.

An increase in contributions to Ministry & Mission from £30,000 (2007) to £30,900 (2007).

An increase in cleaners' wages and a Christmas bonus of one week's wages to our cleaners.

Bank balances to end October 2007 were given, as follows:

Barclays	£27,976.92
Nationwide	£47,000.00 (est, as pass book with Society following merger with Portman)
TOTAL	c. <u>£75,000.00</u>

Revive Phase 1 Completion:

Proceeds from "Selling your skills" £795.23

Church office furniture cost just over £1000

Budget of £300 approved for peripherals to complete church office

Licence from Wycombe District Council regarding access on-going

Synod grant of £50,000 is being spent on Phase 1

Votes of thanks expressed for several people

Revise Phase 2:

Following the Church Meeting we have received the wonderful news that GLPC has approved our application for a capital grant of £100,000. This means that we are presently forecasting funds of c. £160,000 by mid 2008. The potential sale of the manse plot and an imminent bequest may well draw us close to our requirement of c. £210,000 to fund Phase 2 in its entirety.

The application to LBAC has to be presented by early February and we will be advised if we have permission to remove the pulpit and the pews by May 2008. If approval is given work on Phase 2 could commence by summer 2008.

I outlined first steps on the development of a Mission Strategy for our premises which will be led by Gwen.

Finally, Kelvin Sampson, of our architects JBKS, presented the plan for Phase 2, which seemed to have broad approval from those attending Church Meeting.

I will be bringing one additional expenditure item to church for approval on Sunday 25th November regarding the purchase of a temporary ramp.



[Treasurer]

Fairtrade Christmas Cake

If you haven't made a Christmas cake this year yet here's one that needs eating within 3 weeks!

Ingredients

- 350g Fairtrade sultanas
- 110g Fairtrade raisins
- 50g Fairtrade currants, rinsed & dried
- 50g glace cherries
- 60ml brandy or sherry (optional)
- 50g Fairtrade brazil nuts, roughly chopped
- 50g almonds or pecans, roughly chopped
- 110g butter
- 90g Fairtrade soft brown sugar (demerara or muscovado)
- 1 teaspoon Fairtrade lemon zest, grated
- 2 large free-range eggs
- ½ teaspoon mixed spice
- pinch of cinnamon
- pinch of nutmeg
- pinch of salt

Method

1. Soak the fruit overnight in the brandy. Preheat the oven to 150 degrees centigrade/Gas mark 2 and grease a 20cm cake tin.
2. Cream together the butter and sugar until fluffy, then add the lemon zest. Slowly add the eggs one by one, beating each one in. Sift the dry ingredients and fold into the batter, followed by the fruit, brandy and nuts.
3. Pour the mixture into the tin and bake in the centre of the oven for 2-2 1/2 hours. To check it's ready, insert a skewer into the centre; it should come out clean.
4. Remove from the tin and leave to cool for 10 minutes before turning out onto a wire rack. When cool, brush all over with a couple of tablespoons of extra brandy. Wrap immediately in foil to keep the cake soft. Store in an airtight container.

'THE EMPTY PLATE'

As is our usual practice each Christmas 'The Empty Plate' will be on the piano in the church throughout Advent for you to make your donations to the following charities:

**Christian Aid
Crisis
Women's Refuge
The Old Tea Warehouse, High Wycombe**

If you would like to Gift Aid your donation please use & complete a blue envelope.

CHURCH WEEK-END

Book these dates in your diary now
for a week-end of Christian fellowship, friendship and fun!

September 19-21 2008
at

The Wycliffe Centre
Horsleys Green

Come and stay or visit by the day
Facilities include: Sports courts, sauna, outdoor pool, brand new Discovery Centre
En suite rooms available, full disabled facilities, children's menus

More details in the new year.



Congratulations



With Best Wishes to

Margaret & Colin (7th)

on celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary
With love from us all at Trinity.

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

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

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

prayer page

ADVENT

A prayer of love



Love incarnate –
You changed our world forever.
You dwelt with the poor and
raised the humble high.

Love come in –
Change our hearts this Christmas.
Challenge our consumerism and
fill us with your love.

Love reach out –
Change our world forever.
Bring life to the poor and
freedom to the oppressed.

In your precious name, Jesus.
Amen.

© Christian Aid 2007

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2007

Peace Child Peace Child,

in the sleep of the night
in the dark before light
you come,
in the silence of the stars
in the violence of wars –
Saviour, your name
Peace Child,
to the road and the storm
to the gun and the bomb
you come,
through the hate and the hurt,
through the hunger and dirt –
bearing a dream

Peace Child
to our dark and our sleep
to the conflict we reap
now come –
be your dream born alive,
held in hope, wrapped in love:
God's true shalom.

*Shirley Erena Murray. From 'Dare to Dream' edited
by Geoffrey Duncan*

Abba our God,
whom the heavens disclose,
may your name be held holy,
your authority come.
May your longing be fulfilled
as in heaven, so on earth.
Give us today
the bread of tomorrow,
and cancel our debts
as we have already
forgiven our debtors.
Do not draw us in
to sinful enticement
but set us free
from the grip of evil;
for authority and power and glory
are yours alone, for ever.
Amen.

*From 'Bread for Tomorrow',
SPCK/Christian Aid 1992*

O God:
Enlarge my heart
that it may be big enough to receive the greatness of
your love.
Stretch my heart
that it may take into it all those who with me around
the world
believe in Jesus Christ.
Stretch it

that it may take into it all those who do not know him,
but who are my responsibility because I know him.
And stretch it
that it may take in all those who are not lovely in my
eyes,
and whose hands I do not want to touch;
through Jesus Christ, my saviour, Amen.

*Prayer of an African Christian (World Council of Churches
1989)*

Weekly prayers through December:

Sunday	For the Wycombe Night Shelter project
Monday	For the Salvation Army
Tuesday	For all who are homeless – for those seeking help and those whose lives disable them from doing so
Wednesday	For young people and the peer pressure they experience
Friday	For those who have lost their way of faith, that Advent may be a time of refreshment and hope
Saturday	For women, men and children who are the main carer in their families