

This special web edition of the Recorder has been edited to remove personal details, whilst, it is hoped, still allowing the reader to get a fair impression of the life of the Church.



February 2003

The Recorder

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Trinity - A Family Church

Worshipping together - Caring for one another - Sharing with others

‘A Declining Church – A Growing Church?’

Revd. Michael Shrubsole

Minister of Trinity United Reformed Church

Trinity URC, High Wycombe is a very typical URC church – it is a declining church. Over the past ten years membership, adherence and attendance at worship have all tended to decrease. But if you look around us at neighbouring URC churches and at neighbouring churches of other denominations most of them are showing the same trend of decline. At District, Synod and National level the numbers of people in the URC are slipping downwards. In this month’s Recorder there is a very frank letter from Revd David Cornick, our General Secretary, for you all to read for yourselves.

It is not all gloom, Trinity URC, High Wycombe is not declining in its membership and attendance figures as fast as some other churches. And as we look around us at other churches, some are growing, there is life and energy in certain parts of the Christian church in Britain. We can look at, and learn from these areas of growth, see what they are doing well, and have the humility to adapt ourselves to some of the more successful practices we see in other churches.

If asked, people outside the church sometimes say that the Christian church today seems irrelevant and out of date to them. When asked, many Christians who have ceased to associate with organised churches and have ‘gone solo’ report the same sense of empty irrelevance, if anything the activities and concerns of the typical church seem to drive believers away faster than the church can attract new believers in.

And yet, the people outside the churches are not faithless unbelievers. Many non-Christians report a deep sense of personal spirituality and a firm faith in God and the power of prayer. And Christians who cease to associate with churches often report that their faith is still strong and important for them, it’s just that in our churches their faith seems to shrivel rather than grow. Many report feeling the essential need to free themselves; to escape the restricted horizons of our churches, and then to grow spiritually.

But it doesn’t have to be like that. I have listed before some of the factors that do seem to help some churches grow; well organised churches where people feel encouraged and not held back, churches where people feel freed and challenged to grow, churches where people are helped to discover their own gifts and talents and skills and put them into practice in many different ways in the life of the church and community, churches where people are helped to explore faith issues and life concerns. Growing churches scratch people where they itch. Growing churches have as their business and purpose relevant church tasks and church programmes, and individual members can see that these church activities match their own personal spiritual goals and ambitions. Growing churches are not seen to be irrelevant at all. Attendance and full participation in the life of a growing church can be seen to be the most life relevant thing a spiritually seeking person can do.

So how do we move from decline to growth? Suggestions please to the Minister and Elders, as well as to David Cornick.

Mike

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February Services

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.

2nd Feb Morning Worship: Communion Deut 18:15-20, 1 Cor 8:1-13, Mark 1:21-28

9th Feb Morning Worship: Isi 40:21-31, 1 Cor 9:16-23, Mark 1:29-39

16th Feb Morning Worship: [Geoffrey Bending] 2 Kings 5:1-14,
1 Cor 9:24-27, Mark 1:40-45

23rd Feb All-age Worship: Is 43:18-25, 2 Cor 1:18-22, Mark 2:1-12

Evening Worship at 6.30 pm

As an experiment we will be exploring the use of different communion liturgies over the next few months. Orders of Service will be taken from our own traditions and from other denominations, some will be old and some will be new. What will different formulae of words bring to our experience of sharing together in communion? Come and find out.

23rd Feb Communion - URC Draft Order of Service 2000

Rotas for February

Duty rotas are not available on the web edition.

What's on in February

Monday 3rd February - "Present Laughter" at Wycombe Swan
(Meet at the Swan at 7.15pm)



Monday 17th February - Winnie's reminiscences
(Hostess - W G) 8pm

WOMEN'S MEETING

Tuesday 4th February	Prayers and Praying
Tuesday 11th February	Call my Bluff. Bring and Buy.
Tuesday 18th February	Members' Meeting - Bring & Buy
Tuesday 25th February	Amanda Martin - The New Cancer Unit



All meetings start at 2.30 in the Lower Schoolroom

What better way to pass a miserable winter afternoon?

Scrabble

7th and 28th February

"Tiles up" at 2pm

CHURCH WALK

On Saturday February 22nd, our Chief Walker is leading an easy-paced walk of 3 miles from Booker Memorial Hall for Wycombe District RA Group. Anyone who would like a walk is invited to meet at the Memorial Hall (grid ref 834914) at 10.30am. Be prepared for mud. More details from OS.



Due to the personal nature of this item, it is not reproduced for the web edition.

TRINITY NIGHT – TUESDAY 14TH JANUARY – Cheese and Wine Social

The inaugural meeting of this group was held on 14th January. A good selection of cheeses and ample wine was provided and 15 people attended.

The following “jottings” are given to promote thought and discussion amongst those who attended and any others who may be interested in attending in the future.

Is Tuesday the best night? Perhaps both the second and fourth was suggested, rather than just once a month.

Bear in mind - The Hall is only available Tuesday or Friday evenings. Should we give Friday night a try? Mike suggested starting at an early time for the youngsters, with a meal (pizza?); this to be followed by adults activities.

Note: Simon and Sarah have organised a young peoples group who already meet on Wednesday evenings and teenagers on Sunday evenings.

Some suggestions for activities: (“Let’s have some fun”)

Quizzes - Beetle Drive - Badminton - Table Tennis - Line Dancing - Exercise/keep fit
Short mat bowls - Skittles - Internet café - Whist - Scrabble

There could be a choice of several activities on the same night, interspersed with breaks for refreshments. People could move from one activity to another.

A small committee would be needed for organising and publicity etc. The following have either expressed an interest, or their interest has been volunteered on their behalf!!

Daphne (willing to help but doesn’t want to be in charge)

Simon (willing to advertise and publicise)

Sarah?

John (assisted by Joy)

Willie

Margaret?

First committee meeting to be held on Thursday 23rd January at 7.30 pm.

Commitment for Life

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

Fairtrade

No 4 in the series, **Going Global**, presented by *Commitment for Life* and the World Church programme of the United Reformed Church.

You might spend as much as £1.75 for a cappuccino – but the Fairtrade Foundation estimates that only about 5 pence of that would go to the coffee bean producer. The reason is the recent fall in coffee's market price, which is currently hovering at a fifty-year low of about 50 cents a pound. That pound of coffee costs farmers in Latin America about 80-85 cents to produce.

Whether in Nicaragua, Mexico, Peru, Colombia, or Uganda, coffee producers are being ruined. Many coffee plantation workers who still have jobs in Mexico earn as little as \$1 a day – which is what a litre of milk costs! Thousands of others are leaving their farms, causing massive upheaval. Coffee companies are reporting record profits.

In contrast, Fairtrade farmers continue to receive a fair price for their coffee: about 162% of the current market price for arabica beans and 488% of the price of robusta. Fairtrade coffee companies guarantee long-term stable contracts, and offer a social premium which farmers can invest in schools, clinics and other services. They also require freedom of organisation for workers.

"We don't need charity, we are not beggars. If we are paid a reasonable price for our coffee, then we can do without charity" – Isaías Martínez, UCIRI, Mexico

Fairtrade is about partnerships with growers across the world working for a more sustainable future. The Fairtrade Mark is the only independent consumer guarantee that ensures that approved standards are met. The Fairtrade Foundation, with its international partners, checks that approved products continue to meet these criteria

Fairtrade standards are not just about price, though a fair price is critically important. For workers on plantations or estates, the standard includes fair wages and decent working conditions, safety and environmental standards, the right to join a trade union and no child or forced labour. For small (independent) farmers the standards include democratic, participative structures for their co-operatives or other organisations.

It is not just coffee, of course:

Costa Rican banana grower, Maynor Ugo Ugalde, says: *"it would be difficult for us to survive, let alone prosper and plan for the future without Fairtrade"*.

"Now I am getting fair wages . . . 40% more than before. Also we are getting a bonus in the Eid festival. I saved some money and built a new house. My son and daughter are studying in the government school" Sheraj Gagi, weaver for a group of fairtrade cloth producers, Aarong, in Bangladesh

As Fairtrade is also about development, the standards not only provide minimum requirements which producers must meet to be certified Fairtrade. They also encourage producers to continuously improve working conditions and product quality, increase the environmental sustainability of their activities and invest in the development of their organisations and the welfare of their producers/workers.

Growth

Fairtrade has grown dramatically over the last few years: Total fairtrade sales leapt by an average of 40% during 2001 – with bananas growing by 83%. £46 m was spent by the British public on Fairtrade in 2001.

[Continued on page 7]

There are now over 100 Fairtrade Foods available in most supermarkets. Look for the FAIRTRADE Mark on coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate, sugar, honey, biscuits, fresh fruit and juices. Some 100,000 workers and farmers currently benefit from trading under the standards of the Fairtrade mark.

New logo

The FAIRTRADE Mark is about to evolve into a new dynamic and memorable symbol. Most of the 17 countries involved in selling FAIRTRADE Mark products will adopt the new label which represents the only internationally recognised fairtrade standards which are independently monitored. Designed to be much more visible and recognisable on busy supermarket shelves, the new logo retains strong elements of the original design, but incorporates a silhouette of a cheering person representing the people, both consumers and producers at the heart of Fairtrade. The new logo appears on products in October 2002.

The **United Reformed Church** has been a supporter of the Fairtrade Foundation for several years and actively promotes the use of fairly-traded produce such as Traidcraft goods. Commitment for Life has given a grant to the Fairtrade Foundation of £4000 this year, and also supports Traidcraft with £600 particularly for the Deesign Inc fairtrade cooperative in Zimbabwe.

Fairtrade and the Trade Justice Movement

Promoting fairtrade standards is an important aspect of the trade campaign, which seeks to ensure that all trade works for the poor. The Trade Justice campaign extends to more products and issues. Take for example your cup of coffee. You might buy fairly-traded coffee but what about the milk.

Milk comes from the EU producers, who receive huge subsidies and produce more than we consume. The EU exported to Jamaica US\$13m of subsidised powdered milk in 1998 which undercut farmers.

"Unless these subsidies are stopped, the future of dairy farming in countries like Jamaica is bleak"
John Madeley, ('Hungry for Change: How the poor pay for free trade', Zed Books, 2000)

Ending rich country subsidies, and protectionism, as well as controlling multi-national corporations' practices which undercut labour standards, are key to a fair trade system.

What can we do?

As individuals:

Buy Fairtrade Foods as part of your weekly shop. Look for the Fairtrade Mark on coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate, sugar, honey, biscuits, fresh fruit and juices. Recommend these to others.

As churches: Commitment for Life asks all churches to ensure that only fairly traded tea and coffee are used in their local church as a mark of concern for the poor.

We suggest that churches promote Traidcraft as one of the Fairtrade organisations. You can get materials to promote Fairtrade foods from the Fairtrade Foundation 020 7242 9632.

Find out how companies like Nestlé do harm to the poor by promoting infant formulae in poorer countries. Contact Baby Milk Action (tel: 01223 464420; e-mail: info@babymilkaction.org).

We commend Fairtrade Fortnight in March as a key opportunity to promote fairtrade.

We urge church members to use their power as consumers to persuade their local supermarkets to stock fairly traded goods and to consider their own ethical policy as buyers of produce.

How about working with other churches, campaigning groups, schools, women's groups, and other community groups to make your village, town or city a Fairtrade Town, City or Zone. Order the pack by visiting <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/towns/index.htm> or order a copy by ringing the Fairtrade Foundation on 020 7242 9632.

£££'s

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who so generously responded to our Giving Campaign. As a result we have pledges of over £4800 of new giving.

I have recently made the comment to one of our members how as Church Treasurer I witness the many ways that our people respond to the constant need to secure the financial welfare of Trinity.

We are not "out of the woods", but our recent initiatives have secured a window of opportunity for the next eighteen months to turn round the decay in our membership which is the root of our financial problems and I have made this known to the District Treasurer, Elders and Finance Committee alike.

One little note for our weekly stewards when collecting the offertory. Around 25% of our members have now elected to pay by monthly standing order so please don't be surprised when they pass the offertory bag!

I B

January 2003

SYNOD RESOURCES EXHIBITION

Saturday 28th June 2003
The City Temple, Holborn Viaduct
10 am - 4pm

Following on from the success of last years *Resources Exhibition* we are planning to hold another one open to Ministers and other Church leaders and officers. This is a one-day event, which publicises the resources available through the Synod and offers Ministers and Elders the opportunity for individual consultation with relevant Synod office-holders and staff.

There will be a number of seminars on the general theme of *Worship* and we hope to cover various subjects, such as:

Making worship accessible
Writing liturgy
Making Worship Relevant

Ideas for All-age Worship
Multi-media presentation
Crossing Cultural Boundaries

The next edition of the Recorder will be published on 23rd February.
Closing date for contributions is Friday 14th February.

Recorder Editor

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

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

Church Weekend

Friday 13th – Sunday 15th June
Parmoor Centre, Lane End

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

Our theme is 'Art and Creativity in the life of the Church' Something for everyone, young and old, family groups specially welcomed.

Details available soon.

Do make sure you have the dates in your 2003 diaries.

Church Meeting

February Church Meeting will be on Tuesday 11th at 8.00pm in the Schoolroom. **This is not a third Tuesday!** Revd David Skipp, Synod Property Officer, will be attending this meeting to share with us some of his insights into the possible way ahead for us as we seek to deal with our building problems. All welcome. Do please try to come along and participate in the news sharing and decision making life of the church.

Lent Courses

Ecumenical Lent Groups will start week beginning Monday 10th March.

Do consider signing up for a 5 week course.

Details will be available soon.

Extract from a letter

I do appreciate receiving news of Trinity each month, and make use of some items at Pilgrim. The one on "O Little Town of Bethlehem" may well come in useful next Christmas.

Best wishes to all at Trinity and a happy New Year to everybody.

Marion

Women in Mission

Thursday 27th February
7.00 for 7.30pm

Speaker: Fiona Castle

'Come and see ... go and share'

Evangelism for all temperaments.

Venue: Union Baptist Church, Easton Street.

Leaflets are on noticeboard

Praying for our Future

**Sunday Prayer Meetings
5.00-6.00pm
in the Church Sanctuary**

**This month: February 9th 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.)

Peace March

Saturday 15th February

Roberta Rominger our Moderator invites you to join her for a Peace March.

Meet at Methodist Central Hall, Storey's Gate, at 12.00 for 12.30.

Bring a church banner or peace banner.

The whole march is from Trafalgar Square via Whitehall to Hyde Park for open air speakers.

See letter on church noticeboard for further details.

Wycombe Prayer – February 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 1st February, at Sunnybank, Downley Methodist.

Remember last month's brain teaser?

The question:-

By moving one of the following digits, make the sum correct. $62 - 63 = 1$
Turn to page 13 for the answer.

An open letter

From the General Secretary of the United Reformed Church
The Revd Dr David Cornick

A pastoral letter to all ministers and church secretaries. To be circulated as appropriate.

4th December 2002

Dear Friends

I am writing to you as part of the process initiated by October's Mission Council. The Council focused on two inter-related yet distinct issues, the mission of the United Reformed Church, and the way in which we use our resources and finance them.

1) The mission of the church

It was an exciting, realistic Council, blessed with a true sense of being a consultation of representatives of the whole church. It was clear to the Council that we are living through a difficult time of transition in the history of the Western European church. We have lived with a century and more of the steady erosion of the faith and its institutions by the waves of secularisation. That decline, imperceptible to all but historians at first, gathered a savage intensity from the mid 1950s. Some now detect a shift in the intellectual climate that might result in more favourable weather for all kinds of spirituality (including Christianity). For the moment though, its effect can be measured more in the Body, soul and spirit' sections of bookshops than in any change in church attendance and membership figures.

The statistics (notoriously difficult though they are to interpret) suggest that Lesslie Newbigin's analysis of modern Britain as the most difficult mission field he had ever worked in was correct. Only 7.4% of the population of England and Wales and 13.4% of the Scottish population attend church regularly. 44% of the British population claim no religious affiliation at all. For the first time in more than a millennium the British churches have to learn how to be missionary churches and re-discover how to tell the Christian story and live the Christian life in ways that engage and move our culture.

That re-alignment of churches to the task of mission is happening in some places. New ways of being church are emerging, new styles of engagement with the community, new ways of disciplined, disciplined living. These new shoots need nurturing. The landscape is far from being a barren wilderness of declining chapels and ageing congregations. Our faithful God has not finished with us yet. However, if we are able to grasp the opportunities of God's future we need to be realistic about the resources we have been given.

2) The use of resources and finance

In common with most mainline churches our membership has shrunk by half over the past thirty years. In the same period the number of churches has reduced by about one sixth and the number of ministers by about one third. We are a community of some 90,000+ members and adherents in 1745 churches spread across three nations, served by 884 ministers (725 stipendiary and 159 non-stipendiary) and 15 active Church Related Community Workers. The Churches Information for Mission denominational profile shows that our membership is significantly older than the population as a whole, and it is therefore possible that we will halve in size again over the next thirty years. The implications are clear. A smaller membership is more thinly spread and an increasing financial burden has fallen on fewer and older shoulders. Ministers have been asked to cope with multiple pastorates that sometimes have no relationship to each other but economic necessity.

The reasons for decline are complex but there is no evidence that the trends are about to change. If we are to be prudent and realistic we need to plan for the future accordingly. That is not to preclude the possibility of faith and revival (for which we all earnestly pray). If it is God's gift to us, it will finance itself. If it is not (and God is less likely to confuse size with success than we are), it is our vocation to continue in faithful witness and discipleship. That means that we will need to hear what God is asking of us,

organise ourselves accordingly and provide the funding. We are a small church that is getting smaller, but that doesn't mean that we can't still do great things with God.

We presently fund our mission through the Ministry and Mission Fund. Out of every pound that we spend, 76p goes on stipends and salaries of local ministers, Moderators and Church Related Community Workers, 9p on training ministers and lay people and 6p on other mission programmes. Only 8p is spent on administration and support activities.

The Ministry and Mission Fund is financed through local church contributions. Because our membership has declined faster than the number of ministers, the amount of Ministry and Mission Fund contributions, expressed as an amount per member, has had to increase over the years at a rate very significantly higher than inflation. It is a matter for rejoicing that over the years these increases have been achieved but there are clear signs that the capacity of local church congregations to go on increasing their contributions at these rates is under strain. Furthermore, the current stock market decline may require us to increase annual contributions to the Minister's Pension Fund by up to half a million pounds, putting yet more pressure on our financial situation.

It is not realistic to assume that increased costs of this scale can simply be passed to local churches. Appeals for increases in Ministry and Mission Fund contributions have to be accompanied by proposals to manage costs in a way that recognises our current and prospective circumstances. It should be obvious from the breakdown of expenditure above that our financial situation cannot be controlled simply by paring down 'non-essentials' and we certainly do not have reserves from which to draw for more than short-term fluctuations. Mission Council, realising that the future mission of the church, and the way we finance that mission, are profoundly interrelated, therefore committed itself 'urgently and radically to re-think the church's priorities, programmes and processes'. It is important that we realise that this affects all of us.

We will therefore be gathering information about what we actually do, so that it can be used to inform our praying and decision making about our priorities. Mission Council has asked me to devise a process by which this can happen and a small steering group will soon be beginning its work. It is clear that the group will need to consider all the questions, which have been bubbling up all over the church in the past couple of years. So, attention will be given to our structures, to the way we use ministers, our levels of decision making, the balance between work undertaken by the Assembly (at Church House, for Church House is nothing more and nothing less than the offices of the General Assembly) and the Synods, which have evolved significantly in the last decade. We shall need to consider such matters as whether we can continue to provide stipendiary ministry for each local United Reformed Church, how we should deploy ministers, how many institutions (like training centres and colleges) we need and can afford, and whether we need to meet in General Assembly annually.

Our faithful God has not finished with us yet and it should not surprise us that when Jesus spoke of the kingdom, he used pictures of salt and yeast and mustard seeds - small things that have a disproportionate effect. They are good, heartening pictures for us, for they recall us to the core reality of our Christian life - the grace of God working in us, through us, and despite us. God is calling us to follow. We cannot expect the journey to be easy or smooth, but we can be assured that only by following will we discover God's blessing.

I hope that the process Mission Council has initiated will be as open as possible, and I would be pleased to hear from any who wish to contribute to the on-going debate, whether through the councils of the church or as individuals. Please write to me at Church House or email me at david.cornick@urc.org.uk.

May the peace of Christ be yours

David Cornick

AN INVITATION TO ALL
an opportunity to invite your friends

A NEARLY - **NEW YEAR PARTY** – IN FEBRUARY

Saturday 1st February 2003
5.00 – 7.00 pm

A chance for all of us to get together and have fun. A party for all ages, young and old with plenty of games and activities for all different ages.

This has always been a great fun event.

Please bring some 'finger food' for a shared buffet supper.

Tea, coffee and cold drinks provided.

Organised by Junior Church. See Louise for further details or offer of help.

Wild Fire – Notes of the Spirit
The Life and Witness of Stephen
with Roger Jones – musician and composer
A National GEAR Conference
Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick
14-16 February 2003

A musical and spiritual weekend with teaching, worship and prayer.

Adults £70, generous discounts for children.

See leaflets at back of church for more details, or contact

Conference Secretary: Mrs Heather Cadoux Tel: 020 8868 9002

Synod Quiet Day

Space to reflect, to be still, to be inspired

Monday 3rd February

All Saints Pastoral Centre, Colney Hatch, St Albans

10.30 am – 4.00 pm

Praying Through Art

Leader: Revd Neil Thorogood

Lancelot Andrewes (1555 – 1626)

This is the nice sounding and correctly spelled name of a real person. King James (the sixth and first – ie the Sixth of Scotland and the First of England) who ruled from 1603 to 1625, was asked at a Hampton Court conference if a new version of the bible could be produced, the idea appealed to the King. There had been many translations already, but James thought another one could be produced – a uniform version acceptable to everybody. Never had so many scholars been used for a Bible translation, and committees and panels and councils were set up all over the country, and the work was completed rapidly, in about three years – remarkable in the days of difficult communication. The pivot was Lancelot Andrewes, Dean of Westminster Abbey, fluent in 15 languages and six ancient ones, with a gift for a musical understanding of the English language which is responsible for much of the final effect of the translation which is commonly known today as the King James Bible, and is used by many of us, sometimes by the readers at our morning service at Trinity.

Lancelot Andrewes, it is said, had a special relationship with his God, praying daily for hours, often with tears in his eyes but nevertheless he persecuted Jesuits and Puritans to death. He was a gifted writer, so if you come across his prayers, give them special attention. Here are extracts from two of them:-

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who didst create the firmament of heaven, the two lights, sun and moon, the greater and the lesser, and the stars for lights, for signs, for seasons to rule over day and night. Blessed art Thou, O Lord for waters above the heavens, for showers, dew, hail, snow as wool, clouds from the ends of the earth, lightnings, thunders, winds out of Thy treasures, storms; waters beneath the heavens for drinking and bathing. Blessed art Thou, O Lord.

from Private Prayers – adapted

Vouchsafe to keep me this day without sin. Uphold me when I am falling and lift me up when I am down. Preserve me this day from any evil of mine, and me from the evils of the day. Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee, for Thou art my God. Let Thy loving Spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness.

an abridged version

OP

<u>Coffee rota</u>	<u>Trinity Creative Writing Group.</u>
<p>There seems to be some confusion over what to supply when volunteers are kind enough to cover the Coffee Rota on a Sunday after the Service. Please supply at least two pints of milk and two packets of biscuits. I hope this clears things up.</p> <p>Thanks for all your support.</p> <p>A H</p>	<p>The members of Trinity Creative Writing Group are looking forward to Easter and are meeting on Thursday, February 6th at 2.00p.m. at the home of J S, [redacted] to discuss plans for contributing to one of the services at that time in the Church's calendar. We welcome new members with original ideas for hymns, prayers,, meditations etc. suitable for use in church worship. Anyone who is interested in contributing but who is unable to meet on Thursday afternoons please contact either Joy or Olive [redacted] as we may be able to arrange another time. Please let us have your ideas, in any case.</p> <p>OS</p>

Brain teaser answer: $2^6 - 63 = 1$
(ie $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ minus 63)

AGM 2003

Elders Elections

Nominations for four Elders for the coming year are required. Elections will be held at the A.G.M. on Tuesday 18th March. Please use the slip provided, (or a hand written alternative) and ensure your nomination is with the Church Secretary on or before Sunday 9th March so that a complete list of nominations may be announced on Sundays 9th and 16th.

We already had three vacancies in 2002. Now L [] S [] has come to the end of a three-year term and is eligible to be re-elected for a further three years. We therefore have four vacancies and one name and are seeking three further persons. Therefore the membership is encouraged to consider themselves and others. Who is God calling to a position of Eldership at this time? Is there a non-serving Elder on sabbatical who it is right to ask to return to active Eldership? Is there a new person who has mature spiritual, pastoral and leadership qualities that make them right for Eldership at this time? (M.S.)

Elders Election A.G.M. 2003 **Nomination Form**

NAME NOMINATED:

NOMINATED BY:

SECONDED BY:

If elected I am prepared to serve the Church as an Elder.

NOMINEES SIGNATURE:

Annual General Meeting **Tuesday 18th March at 8.00 p.m.**

Secretaries of Organisations and Committees – the Editor would like to receive your annual reports by the Sunday 23rd February please. If they can be submitted by e-mail or on a floppy disc (in any format) so much the better. Otherwise a typed report would be appreciated. When writing reports bear in mind the value of brevity. Tell us i) who your organisation is for, ii) what your aims and objectives are, iii) what the highlights and low points for you were over the last year and, iv) what are some of your plans for 2003.

At this time of year we reconfirm, or re-elect many of our church members to many different posts, committees responsibilities, appointments, delegations and representations etc. It makes for an impressive sight listing how much is done by so many different people. I invite you to dig out last year's book of reports and look at the list of post holders listed there. Some have of course changed, and some are vacant. Some of you will thankfully continue with a task you have been faithfully undertaking in the past. Some posts are being held by people who are quite rightly ready for a change. Some of your names don't appear in the list, or don't appear very often, or don't appear in a post of responsibility. There are lots of things to think about. I encourage you to prayerfully consider the ways in which you would like to continue to serve the church into this coming year, and to consider the changes you wish to make in your service of others. Do let the Minister, or the Secretary, or an Elder know where you feel you are being led to serve at this time. Paul's letter to the Ephesians is good to read (See Eph 4:1-16). "He prepared God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ might be built up." (Eph 4:12) (M.S.)

Values and Visions

London Interfaith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, NW6 6RG
Saturday 8th February, 10.30 – 16.30

Keynote address by Roberta Rominger
Wide choice of seminars

Worship led by Revd Neil Thorogood
Bookstall and exhibitions

See posters in Schoolroom for further details.

Deleted item

Young People's Group

Forthcoming activities

2nd Feb - Bowling - Maidenhead

16th Feb - Service Planning - Sunnybank

2nd March - Pancake Party - Trinity

The Secret

One day, one friend asked another, "How is it that you are always so happy? You have so much energy, and you never seem to get down."

With her eyes smiling, she said, "I know the Secret!"

"What secret is that?"

She replied, "I'll tell you all about it, but you have to promise to share the Secret with others."

"The Secret is this: I have learned there is little I can do in my life that will make me truly happy. I must depend on God to make me happy and to meet my needs. When a need arises in my life, I have to trust God to supply according to HIS riches. I have learned most of the time I don't need half of what I think I do. He has never let me down. Since I learned that 'Secret', I am happy."

The questioner's first thought was, "That's too simple!" But upon reflecting over her own life she recalled how she thought a bigger house would make her happy, but it didn't! She thought a better paying job would make her happy, but it hadn't. When did she realize her greatest happiness? Sitting on the floor with her grandchildren, playing games, eating pizza or reading a story, a simple gift from God.

Now you know it too! We can't depend on people to make us happy. Only GOD in His infinite wisdom can do that. Trust HIM! And now I pass the Secret on to you! So once you get it, what will you do?

YOU have to tell someone the Secret, too! That GOD in His wisdom will take care of YOU!

[Submitted by A W]

Prayer Page

(Prepared by the womens' meeting)

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A Prayer for the morning

O Lord, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day; Defend us in the same with thy mighty-power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A Prayer for those living alone, as many of our members do.

I live alone, dear Lord, stay by my side
In all my daily needs be thou my guide.
Grant me good health, for that indeed I pray
To carry out my work from day to day.
Keep pure my mind, my thoughts, my every deed,
Let me be kind, unselfish in my neighbour's need.,
Spare me from fire, from flood, malicious tongues,
From thieves ,from fear, from evil ones.
If sickness or an accident befall
Then humbly, Lord,I pray, hear thou my call.
And when I'm feeling low or in despair
Lift up my head and help me in my prayer.
I live alone, dear Lord, yet have no fear,
Because I feel thy presence ever near.

A verse for reflection and meditation.

May every task be done with joy
And every word that we employ
Show the Lord in Heaven above
That all we do, we do for love.

2003

A Prayer for peace

God of power and might we are weary with violence fearing it on our streets
and seeing it on our screens.

God, we pray give us your peace.

We live in an aggressive age when nations and minorities
seek power and justice through terror.

God, we implore you give us your peace.

Teach us your ways
so that we may follow the Prince of Peace
and be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.
God, in Jesus give us your peace.

A Prayer for evening

O lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life until the shadows
lengthen and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed and the fever of
life is over and our work done;
Then of thy great mercy grant us a safe lodging and a holy rest and peace at the
last, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.



Amen