



February 2004

The Recorder

Inside - this month . . .

Pastoral letter	2	Lighter stuff	8, 9
Services & Rotas	3	AGM	10, 11
What's on?	4, 5	Prayer Page	12
Odds 'n' ends	6, 7		

*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

‘The Five Gs of Church Membership’

Rev. Michael Shrubsole

Minister of Trinity United Reformed Church

I would like to follow up last month's letter by drawing on an idea from Bill Hybels and the Willow Creek Church. (Remember that I went on a two-day course in the autumn.) Bill says that the participating members of a successful church will share certain qualities as they continue to grow in their relationship with Christ. And a church full of Christian disciples who are growing in Christ will almost certainly be a growing and thriving church. Bill says it is less important to talk about church growth, and more important to get the individuals in the church (that means you!) to think about their own personal growth. Do the Five Gs describe how your life is growing?

1. Grace. Christ followers have abandoned their attempts to earn God's favour through their own accomplishments and have individually received Christ's free gift of eternal life by his grace alone, through repentance and faith. They have come face to face with their own sinfulness and have humbly accepted Christ's payment on the cross. They have been baptised as a way of identifying with his death and resurrection, and they proclaim to the community their desire to be his disciple.

2. Growth. The ongoing response to God's grace over our lifetime. Christ followers allow the Holy Spirit to reshape them from the inside out. They deepen their faith through the practice of spiritual disciplines and resist those things that would hold back their growth. Christ followers nurture their spiritual development through authentic prayer, sincere worship and enquiring Bible study. They want to be obedient to the teachings of the Bible. They actively turn away from sin. They are so grateful for God's grace that they want to share what they have discovered with others.

3. Group. Relationships make the church. Christ followers enter into the community of believers so that they can grow in Christ-likeness, express and receive love, and carry out the ministry of the church. They participate in the corporate gatherings of the church for worship, teaching and communion; and want to be part of a small group where they can be encouraged, supported, challenged and lovingly held accountable. Christ followers also reform impure relationships, reconcile broken friendships and resolve conflict wherever it arises.

4. Gifts. The church is an inter-dependent community of believers who offer their unique, God-granted gifts in ministry to one another. Strength comes through diversity as different people express different gifts in service of each other. A strong sense of unity and common purpose is achieved as all the gifts are used to build up the church as a whole.

5. Good Stewardship. Jesus Christ gave up all that he had so that the world could be reconciled to God. Christ followers likewise strive to be responsible stewards of all they have received from God, freely submitting their resources to God's authority. Their use of money and assets is at clear variance from selfish status seeking. Good stewardship is the result of a heart that is responsive and thankful to God.

Are the Five G characteristics true for you, and helping you to grow? And as you grow as a Christ follower, you will also cause the church to grow.

Mike

Minister :
Rev Michael Shrubsole,

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

Church Secretary:
Mrs Margaret Lewis,

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

February Services

Sunday 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.

1st February - Morning Worship with Communion.

Luke 4:21-30; Jeremiah 1:4-10; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

8th February - Vocations Sunday. Luke 5:1-11; Isaiah 6:1-8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

15th February - All-age Worship. Luke 6:17-26; Jeremiah 17:5-10; I Corinthians 15:12-20

22nd February - Parade Service Luke 9:28-36; Exodus 34:29-35; 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

29th February - Luke 4:1-13; Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Romans 10:8-13

Evening Worship at 6.30pm.

A quiet monthly communion service. We meet as a small gathering to share bread and wine in a reflective and liturgical atmosphere.

15th February - Evening Communion

Rotas for February

Not included in this version

What's on in February



Monday 9th Feb - Book Reviews & Book sale
(8pm. Hostess - Barbara Macleod)

Monday 23rd Feb - Pancake Evening
(8pm. Hostess - Norma Garden)

WOMEN'S MEETING

Tuesday 3rd Feb Speaker from the Toybox charity.
Goods on sale. Visitors very welcome

Tuesday 10th Feb "Have a laugh" meeting

Tuesday 17th Feb Quiz afternoon

Tuesday 24th Feb Shrove Tuesday.
Preparing for Lent. Bring & Buy

All meetings start at 2.30 in the Lower Schoolroom



You have two opportunities to demonstrate your loquacity this month. Get along there and show off!

Scrabble

13th and 27th February



Church Walk

No separate church walk this month but there is an easy-paced Ramblers' Association walk of 3 miles from Hughenden Church on February 28th starting at 1.30 pm.

A reminder that there is the *Simply Walk* programme for anyone free during the week. A new up-to-date leaflet is on the notice board in the Lower Schoolroom.

Not included in this version

Women's World Day of Prayer, Friday, March 5th.

The following services have been arranged:

10.30am Trinity URC, Speaker- Julie Cartwright (Creche available for this service)
1.30pm Rev Gerry Foster - St Anne's, Wycombe Marsh
7.30 pm Speaker - Miss Sarah Armitage

There is a choir practice at 10.30 am on Monday 1st March at Wesley Methodist Church. You will see that we are hosting the morning service so we shall need volunteers to help with stewarding, coffee etc. More details in the next Recorder.
Olive Shepherd & Sue Saunders.

Diary

Elders Meeting - Tuesday **3rd February**, 7.30pm. in the Schoolroom

Finance Committee - Tuesday **10th February**, 7.30pm in the Schoolroom

Church Meeting - Tuesday **17th February**, 8.00pm. in the Schoolroom.

Pancake Night & Mardi Gras - Tuesday **February 24th** - 7.30 – 9.30 pm in Crendon Hall

Come along on Shrove Tuesday for an evening of fun and pancake eating and to add to the fun we thought we would have a little competition. Why not make a mask or a headdress and bring them along with you? Whatever takes your fancy from whatever bits and pieces you have around the house.

We will have our very own pancake race to start the evening, followed by a parade of the masks and headdresses and finish with pancakes and tea and coffee. All welcome, young and not so young, and why not bring a friend?

. . . and in the future . . .

Church Concert - Saturday **March 27th** - 7. 00 pm in Crendon Hall

Unfortunately, due to my fall, the concert had to be postponed last November, but we have rearranged it for Saturday March 27th, and you have plenty of time to choose a party piece. So whether you sing, dance, recite or play a musical instrument I will be delighted to hear from you so that I can organise a varied programme for the evening. So please, don't be shy, come along and take part, but if you really can't, then come along and play the part of an audience. And again, why not bring along a friend or neighbour to enjoy the evening with us.

Caribbean Evening with Silent Auction of Items and Promises - Friday Evening **April 30th** -

Put this date in your diary so that you keep it free. More details next later, but in the meantime please look out any items that you are willing to donate or any promise that you can give, to the Auction.

For the “techies”

If any readers have “moved with the times” recently, and would now like to receive a copy of the Recorder each month by e-mail, please let the Editor know. *There is no charge for this.* This can either be in addition to a paper copy, or as an alternative.

The e-mailed version is in PDF format, (requiring Acrobat Reader – a program which is installed on almost all computers,) thereby providing exactly the same result on screen as on paper.

Why not give it a try – even if only for one month?

A glimpse of the past

During the past few months Simon and I have been working behind the scenes to convert some very old Trinity church magazines into a format whereby they can be stored on computer for anyone who may want to have a glimpse of the past. Whilst the task is technically not difficult, it is rather time consuming, and the results require either a lot of computer storage space, or a format which loses the authenticity of the originals. We would like to know whether anyone out there would be interested having access to these old magazines in some digital format – which provide an interesting few hours of insight into the “good old days”, or whether we should just content ourselves with having some paper volumes of history. Please let either Simon or me know your feelings, and whether you would particularly want to view an exact copy of the originals, or just the actual content. If there is no response, we will probably not invest the time to create a historical archive in a computer format.

AM

Catching the Vision

Saturday 7th February
London Interfaith Centre
10.00-16.30

How can interfaith insights help guide the URC in arriving at its new vision for our future? Come and hear guest speakers from other faiths address the questions the URC is now facing.

See the poster on church noticeboard for more information. (M.S.)

Women in Mission



'I Won 4 God'

Having conversations that count

Main Speaker - Elaine Storkey

Choice of workshops:-

- A - 'Me . . . A story to tell?' Talking about God in your own life
- B - 'Jesus . . . what's so special about him?' Explaining how the Gospel fits in today's culture
- C - 'So . . . how do I start?' Helping someone to make a decision and grow in Christ

Venues:- *(all sessions are from 7:30pm to 10pm)*

Tues 17th Feb	Wycliffe Baptist Church, Reading
Mon 23rd Feb	The Theatre at Headington, Oxford
Tues 24th Feb	Union Baptist Church, Easton Street, High Wycombe
Thurs 26th Feb	Thame Barns Centre, Thame
Tues 9th March	Newport Pagnall Baptist Church
Mon 15th March	The King's School, Witney

Please register with the contact shown below prior to the event you wish to attend.

There is a different contact person for each venue, as follows:-

Reading - Jenny Orr - 0118 987 4448
Oxford - Helen Mitchell - 01865 513495
High Wycombe - Heather Butler - 01494 724577
Thame - Sally Corfe - 01844 292883
Newport Pagnall - Sue Graham - 01908 618679
Witney - Carol Hall - 01608 658252

For the past few months, the copy supplied for inclusion in the Recorder has been quite plentiful, and several snippets of general interest or amusement have not been afforded space. This month, however, the supply has dried up - so the next two pages bring you a few of these held-back items.

On the lighter side

One day God called down to Noah and said, "Noah me old china, I want you to make me a new Ark".

Noah replied, "No probs God, me old Supreme Being - anything you want, after all you're the guv' ...

But God interrupted, "Ah, but there's a catch. This time Noah, I want not just a couple of decks, . . I want 20 decks one on top of the other".

"20 DECKS!", screamed Noah. "Well, OK Big Man, whatever you say. Should I fill it up with all the animals just like last time?"

"Yep, that's right, well . . sort of right . . this time I want you to fill it up with fish", God said.

"Fish?", queried Noah

"Yep, fish . . well, to make it more specific Noah, I want carp - wall to wall, floor to ceiling - Carp!"

Noah looked to the skies. "OK God me old mucker, let me get this right, you want a New Ark?"

"Check".

"With 20 decks, one on top of the other?"

"Check".

"And you want it full of Carp?"

"Check".

"Why?" asked the perplexed Noah, who was slowly but surely getting to the end of his tether.....

"Dunno", says God, "I just fancied a Multi-Storey Carp Ark."

While working on a message the pastor heard a knock at his office door. "Come in," he invited.

A contrite-looking man in threadbare clothes came in, pulling a large pig on a rope.. "Can I talk to you for a minute?" asked the man with his hat in his hand. Wordlessly, the pastor indicated the chair and the man sat down in it gingerly. The pig proceeded to sniff around the office.

With one eye on the animal and one on the man, the pastor folded his hands on his desk and leaned forward, curious to hear the fellow's story. "What can I do for you?"

"My family is hungry," started the man. "So I stole this pig. But I feel that I have sinned. Would you please take it?"

"Certainly not," said the minister.

"Then what should I do with it?" asked the man.

"Give it back to the man you stole it from, of course!" the pastor explained.

"I offered it to him, but he refused to take it. Now what should I do?"

"In that case," the minister said, "It would be all right for you to keep it and feed your family."

That seemed to settle things as far as the man was concerned. "Thank you for your help, sir." With a lighter step, he walked out of the office, leading the pig on the rope behind him.

Later that afternoon when the minister returned home, he said to his wife as he walked in, "Have I got a story to tell you."

"I have something to tell you first," she exclaimed. "Someone has stolen your prize pig!"

Some catty jokes!

Q: How do you know if your cat has eaten a duckling ?

A: She's got that down in the mouth look !

Q: What do you get if cross a cat with a canary ?

A: Shredded tweet !

Q: What do you get if you cross a cat with a tree ?

A: cat-a-log !

Q: Why did the cat join the Red Cross ?

A: Because she wanted to be a first-aid kit !

Q: How do you know that cats are sensitive creatures?

A: They never cry over spilt milk!

Q: Why was the cat so small?

A: Because it only ate condensed milk!

Q: What does the lion say to his friends before they go out hunting for food?

A: 'Let us prey.'

Q: Why happened when the cat swallowed a coin?

A: There was some money in the kitty!

GUIDANCE

When I meditated on the word GUIDANCE, I kept seeing "dance" at the end of the word.

I remember reading that doing God's will is a lot like dancing.

When two people try to lead, nothing feels right. The movement doesn't flow with the music, and everything is quite uncomfortable and jerky.

When one person realizes and lets the other lead, both bodies begin to flow with the music.

One gives gentle cues, perhaps with a nudge to the back or by pressing lightly in one direction or another. It's as if two become one body, moving beautifully. The dance takes surrender, willingness, and attentiveness from one person and gentle guidance and skill from the other.

My eyes drew back to the word GUIDANCE.

When I saw "G", I thought of God, followed by "u" and "I". "God, "u" and "i" dance"!

God, you, and I dance. This statement is what guidance means to me.

As I lowered my head, I became willing to trust that I would get guidance about my life.

Once again, I became willing to let God lead.

Thanks to Andrew Winton, Mike S, and anyone else who may have contributed to the above items! If the "funnies" made you groan, send some better ones to the Editor!

Elders Elections 2004

Nominations for Elders for the coming year are required. Elections will be held at the A.G.M. on Tuesday 16th March. Please use the slip provided, (or a hand written alternative) and ensure your nomination is with the Church Secretary before the service on Sunday 7th March so that a complete list of nominations may be announced on Sundays 7th and 14th.

In 2003 we had eight serving Elders plus Ian co-opted to the Meeting as Treasurer. Simon Evans and Barbara Raleigh have come to the end of a three-year term and are eligible to be re-nominated and re-elected for a further three years. We have four vacancies and are therefore seeking at least two new nominations. You, the members, are required to do this work of seeking Elders for 2004. 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? Talk to one another about this. Our church needs to call out the people from amongst us who are gifted in leadership and pastoral skills, who have a heart, and time, and energy, to work for the needs of the people, and who can work with the Minister and other Elders in helping shape our future.

If you are invited to stand as an Elder don't dismiss it straight away, please talk to our Minister about the duties and qualities required. Mike has papers about the post of Elder to distribute to interested persons. (M.S.)

Elders Election A.G.M. 2004 Nomination Form

NAME NOMINATED:

NOMINATED BY:

SECONDED BY:

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

NOMINEES SIGNATURE:

*May there always be work for your hands to do;
May your purse always hold a coin or two;
May the sun always shine on your windowpane;
May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain;
May the hand of a friend always be near you;
May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you*

[Reportedly an Irish poem, submitted by Andrew Winton]

Annual General Meeting Tuesday 16th March at 8.00 p.m.

Secretaries of Organisations and Committees – A M would like to receive your annual reports by Friday 27th February – at the latest - please. 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 2004.

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.

A sign-up list for 2004 will appear in the church soon. Please indicate on it your willingness to serve as a post holder for 2004. (M.S.)

Guidance notes:

If Reports can be submitted in any computer format on floppy disc, or be sent by email so much the better. Even typed on an old fashioned typewriter is much easier to process than a handwritten report.

Please do not wait until the deadline date. If you can get your masterpiece in early, it will help!



**African proverb: Be patient.
In time, an egg will walk.**



*The next edition of the Recorder will be published on 29th February
Closing date for contributions is Friday 20th February.*

Recorder Editor :

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

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

Prayer Page

(Prepared by Trinity Guides)

The guides have talked about who they feel need our prayers at the moment. We would ask you to remember in your prayers at this time.....

F
e
b
r
u
a
r
y

2004

...All of those who have been affected by the stabbing of the schoolgirl at The Sir William Ramsey School in Hazlemere.

...Our families and friends, especially those who are ill or sad.

...Our pets and all the animals in the world and ask that you help us to look after them properly.

...Ourselves, as we think of times when we have not done things we should have and need to say sorry.

...All those who live in Iraq and have been hurt by the war. We also remember all the soldiers and their families who have been affected by the war.

Thinking Day on February 22nd is a special day in the guiding calendar that is celebrated by guides all over the world. Every year on this date Girl Guides and Girl Scouts everywhere make time to think about each other. Therefore, one theme we ask you to think about this month is '*The World*'

Holy Father, We pray for the people in this and other lands, especially the children.

Some would learn but have no teacher;
Some are sick but have no doctor;
Some are sad, and have no one to comfort them;
Some are hungry and poor and have no helper;
Some are happy and cared for as we are ourselves,
For all we ask Your loving care.
Supply their needs and comfort their hearts.

Amen

Lord, in a world of conflict and war, a world of arguments and hate, let there be peace. May your peace flow over each and every one of us, like an endless river.

Amen

