

We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him. (Romans 8: 28)



February 2013

The Recorder

Inside - this month . . .

Pastoral letter	2	Church family & Life	5 - 9
Services & Rotas	3	Commitment for Life	8
What's on?	4	Prayer Page	12

An edited version of this magazine is available on the Church Website.

(Personal details are NOT included)

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

Trinity - A Family Church

Worshipping together - Caring for one another - Sharing with others

Dear Friends,

This month Bernie and I are taking a week's holiday to go to Hampshire and begin to investigate where in that county we should live for the rest of our lives! That sounds ultra-dramatic, but I think that in essence it is true. The United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society will provide a house for us as we more than qualify through Bernie's 41 years of service. It is good that we are able to choose both location and house, under a set value. We have decided on Hampshire because of family geography. But village or town, city centre or suburb? These are open questions. As is the question of finding a church to belong to. I can't quite decide if all of this is exciting or frightening.

Some of life's twists and turns we know about in advance, like this one. We may not know exactly, or even broadly, how it is going to work out. But we know the general outline of what we need to do to negotiate this change. Other things in life come upon us unawares and we may find ourselves suddenly confronted with an unexpected turn in life's road. It may be something that is hard and unwelcome, and knocks us for six. Or it may be something that is unbelievably joyous in opening up possibilities that we had thought were closed to us. Either way, sudden change can demand a lot of us emotionally and spiritually. How can we be as prepared as possible?

There must be many answers to that question. Certainly there are quite a few in the Bible. I think that they 'boil down' to one though: trust.

"Would you believe it?" by Patricia St John is one of my favourite books of stories for children and young people. The author is a wonderful teller of real-life stories. Here is the story she has chosen to include as an illustration of Romans 8:28 (see front cover).

Mikhail was a shepherd boy in the Lebanon. He was responsible for leading the flock to pasture every morning, for guarding it through the long hours of the day, and leading it home at night. One ordinary day he bent over to pick up a smooth shiny object. He picked it up and had no idea what happened next, because he had picked up an unexploded bomb. Next thing he knew he was in pain and darkness, aware of people hurrying around. Gradually he realised that he was in hospital; blind and without his right hand. He longed to die. When they took him home he just lay with his face to the wall and took no notice of anyone. Amongst the many visitors who came were two ladies who said they wanted to offer Mikhail a place at the Blind School in Beirut. Boys learned to read there, and make things. They were happy. Mikhail couldn't believe this. He wouldn't go. Time passed. One day he astonished his parents by suddenly saying, "That Blind School in Beirut! You'd better take me there."

So they went, but it was too late – all the spaces had been taken. Mikhail would not accept that answer. He pleaded, "The ladies promised I could come." Seeing his desperation the headmaster took him in.

"So", writes Patricia St John, "Mikhail started off on what was to become his life work; for he himself is now the headmaster of the Blind School." One evening, years later but when he was still a boy, all the boys were listening to a Bible talk and the speaker asked if any of the boys would like to share something they had learned. Mikhail rose to his feet. "I want to thank God for my blindness," he said simply, "because without it, I should never have known the Light of the world."



Minister : Rev Dr Gwen Collins
e-mail: gwen@trinity-urc.org.uk

Church Secretary : Mrs Sue Saunders,
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February Services

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

- Feb 3 Service of Holy Communion, Homelessness & Poverty Action Week
- Feb 10 Morning worship
- Feb 17 All age worship led by Barbara and David Sparks
- 4.00 Service of Holy Communion led by Alan Yates
- Feb 24 Thinking Day Parade Service (N.B. not all age worship)

Rotas for February

Not included in this version

What's on in February



Monday 18th Feb- - A presentation on Mexico
Hostess & Speaker - Marian M

WOMEN'S MEETING

Tuesday 5th Feb The Storm at Sea (St Mark - Ch4 v35-41)
 Tuesday 12th Feb Favourite Hymns. Pancakes
 Tuesday 19th Feb Speaker: Richard Harding
 Tuesday 26th Feb A look at France



All meetings start at 2.30 in the Lower Schoolroom

Diary Dates

Event	Time and date	Venue
February		
Vision 20/20 Prayer meeting	Wednesday 6th 9.30am	Sanctuary
Coffee Morning	Saturday 9th 10.30am	LSR & Sanctuary
Traidcraft Stall	Sunday 17th	LSR
Evening Communion	Sunday 17th 4.00pm	Sanctuary
Housegroup	Tuesday	134 Brands Hill Ave
Vision 20/20 Prayer meeting	Wednesday 20th 9.30am	Sanctuary
Anne Sardeson, Thames North Training Officer.	Saturday 23rd 9.45am	Sanctuary
Coffee Morning	Saturday 23rd 10.30am	LSR
Parade Service	Sunday 24th 10.30am	Sanctuary
Radical Welcome Meeting: Find out more!	Monday 25th 7.30pm	Northwood Hills URC
Elders Meeting	Tuesday 26th 8.00pm	LSR
Prayer Circle Healing Service	Sunday 3rd March	Sanctuary

February 2013						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

Not included in this version

Dear

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Dear Trinity Friends,

Thank you all for your support during the last 6 years while Robin has been ill.

Your prayers have been a great comfort to us both.

Many thanks for all the cards, telephone calls and visits. They were very much appreciated.

Norma and family.

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Gwen S writes from Horsham to send her good wishes to all who remember her. She is now a proud Great Grandmother (the title of which makes her feel her age). She reports that her church (Horsham URC) inducted a new minister last January, which has resulted in the church having a good year.

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Women's World Day of Prayer 2013



Friday 1st March

The theme for 2013 is "I was a stranger and you welcomed me", prepared by the women of France.

The services for the town centre are:

10.30am The Salvation Army Citadel –guest speaker: Captain Hilary McClintock. (crèche available)

2.00pm The Avenue , Castlefield– guest speaker : Rev. Iesinga Vunipola

Worship at Trinity – themes for 2013

We will be engaging with some important aspects of Christian Life in our worship at Trinity this year. These are our themes:

- Jan 6 – Feb 3: BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES 5 weeks in which we see that the invitation to participate in God's great work is extended to everyone.
- Feb 10 – March 24: TOWARDS JERUSALEM Luke describes Jesus setting his face to Jerusalem. Over 7 weeks we travel with Jesus on his journey from the Mount of Transfiguration to the glory of the cross.
- March 31 – May 19: SEEING THE EXTRAORDINARY 8 weeks in which we find in the Acts of the Apostles Luke's understanding of what it means to encounter the risen Christ.
- May 26 – Trinity Sunday
- June 2 – July 7: MEETING NEW CHALLENGES 6 weeks in which we find in Galatians clues to help us witness to God's new creation in our own context.
- July 14 – Aug 4: LIFE-INFORMING STORIES 4 weeks in which Luke the storyteller offers us surprising ways to be fit for the kingdom of God.
- Aug 11 – Sept 1: THE WINGS OF FAITH 4 weeks in which we discover how the images in the Letter to the Hebrews empower the language and music of our worship.
- Sept 8 – 29: PROCLAIM AFRESH 4 weeks in which we find the ancient message of the Scriptures proclaimed afresh in Luke's Gospel and made relevant for our life today.
- Oct 6 – 27: GUARD THE GOOD TREASURE 4 weeks in which we explore the Second Letter to Timothy as a model for handing on the faith we have received.
- Nov 3 – 24: IN OUR TIME 4 weeks in which we see how Luke reveals the significance of the crucifixion for his readers.

As for last year, this is following 'Roots' resources for worship and the set readings agreed ecumenically (lectionary).

WAYS INTO PRAYER: We will continue with weekly 'Ways into prayer' related to each Sunday's main reading included in the notices on the order of service. I hope that you will find them useful in giving a fresh impetus and focus to your prayers, week by week.

VISITING PREACHERS: We are very grateful to those who make themselves available to lead worship at Trinity. Our visiting preachers this year will be told of themes we are following in worship, but we will also make it clear to them that they are completely free to choose their own topic and theme if they prefer to do so.



Radical Welcome

As most of you are aware the publicity campaign for Radical Welcome was cancelled in 2012. However, the URC still wishes to encourage its congregations to welcome ALL into its family. Thames North Synod has picked up the mantle and have organised a number of Radical Welcome meetings on various subjects. They are to help us with how we should welcome all, and feel comfortable in doing so. Gwen and I will be attending some meetings, if you would also like to attend please let us know.

February 25th 7.30 - 9.30pm. Venue: Northwood Hills URC.

Radical Welcome launch in Thames North: a chance for people to find out what is planned and discuss ideas together.

April 10th 7.00 - 9.00pm. Venue: Lumen, Central London

A Radical Welcome for those living with HIV/Aids: guest speaker Phil Schneider who helped set up the "London HIV/Aids community Chaplaincy". Phil will talk about his work and what radical welcome means to those he works with.

July 10th 7.00 – 9.00pm. Venue: St John's URC.

A radical Welcome for those with Mental Health Issues.

November 11th 7.00 – 9.00pm. Venue: TBA

A Radical Welcome for all ages: getting beneath the surface of what we often call "all age Church"

Shed

AGM Reports

If you need to make a report and have not yet done so, time is running out!! All reports **MUST** be received by 3 March at the latest if they are to be included in the Annual Report package!! Either paper (typed) or e-mailed reports will be fine, but any handwritten ones need to be with me without delay to give me time to type them up!!

Angus



Are you ready for Fairtrade Fortnight?

**25 February
to
10 March 2013**

ZIMBABWE

I'm a Christian; three surprisingly emotive words with the ability to at once soothe or aggravate. These days, the strongest emotion I feel upon hearing these words is indifference. Too many people think that simply declaring "I'm a Christian" makes it so.

This question developed firm roots during a recent visit to Zimbabwe with Christian Aid. As one of 14 'OPPs' this year, (One Programme Participants) I am employed by the Methodist Church, working within a project, aiming to make a difference to the lives of others and to those in my local community. My project is with Christian Aid, so to gain a deeper understanding of how they work in partnership, thirteen Christian Aid interns and I went to Zimbabwe.

Seeing first-hand how much of a difference Christian Aid partners were making in the lives of the communities we visited was truly inspiring. Even more inspiring however, were the people we met. These were people who lived in poverty. Who oftentimes did not have enough food with which to feed themselves for the whole year. They had lost daughters, sons, and mothers to HIV and AIDS. Yet, despite this they were selflessly committed to helping one another.

One initiative endorsed by the Institute of Rural Technology, a Christian Aid partner, was an art project. Time after time we witnessed how members of the community supported each other, giving 10% of the proceeds generated from selling the pieces they had created to helping orphans or those with HIV/AIDS. They were also dedicated tithers, giving 10% of the food they grew or the proceeds, to their church, even though it meant they may not have enough food left for themselves. It struck me how much their actions reminded me of the early church. There was a real sense of community, and they didn't meditate on how little they had, but aimed to help those with even less.

While we speak the gospel of love, they live it. Is this not what it means to be a Christian? Should love not be seen as opposed to merely heard? They were, to steal a line from the Christian Aid Collective, 'love in action'.

The best way for me to conclude, is to include an excerpt from the journal I kept while I was in Zimbabwe: "I had heard about the importance of the work Christian Aid does countless times before. But now I have seen it, and know it for myself. What Christian Aid does is important. It is Biblical, and most importantly, it is truly changing people's lives for the better and making a real difference."

Let's not live life simply declaring "I'm a Christian". Let's show it.

Syntiche Dedji Christian Aid Collective Intern

Mystery Worshipper

Church Meeting in July agreed our Vision 2020 priorities for the next 3 years:

1. Spirituality and prayer
2. Community partnerships
3. Hospitality and diversity

As part of moving forward on the last of these (hospitality and diversity), Elders Meeting decided that we would register with 'Church Check' to be visited unannounced by a 'mystery worshipper' who would check us out for welcome and accessibility.

Quite unknown to us we were visited on December 2nd and sent the report on the page opposite. I hope that all of you who make a point of welcoming strangers to Trinity and helping them to feel at home will be encouraged by our score – 100%. Amazing! Well done to all concerned.

Thank God that he is answering our daily prayer to be 'warm and welcoming, flexible and friendly'.

Profile: Female, 30s

Attendance: Occasionally

VISIT REF 17315

FIRST IMPRESSIONS & WELCOME		SECTION	32 / 32
A1 Parking / access to church easy	2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A2 Exterior appearance of church	Clean and well maintained 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Modest / unremarkable 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Unkempt / untidy 0 <input type="checkbox"/>
A3 Exterior noticeboard	Well maintained and up to date 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasonably maintained and up to date 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Untidy / lots of out of date information 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	A4 Initial contact on entering the church	Welcomed AND offered help-what to do, where to sit 8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Just welcomed 4 <input type="checkbox"/> No welcome or directions provided 0 <input type="checkbox"/>
A5 Name / description of greeter:	Rose	A6 Pre-Service atmosphere	Formal / reverential ns <input type="checkbox"/> Middle of the road ns <input type="checkbox"/> Noisy / informal / casual ns <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A7 Pre-Service involvement	Made to feel welcome & included 8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Only superficial interest expressed 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Felt awkward / like an outsider 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	A8 Comfort	Comfortable temperature 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequately comfortable seats 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suitable music / sound and volume 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A9 Approximate size of congregation	35	A10 Visit made alone or accompanied	Alone
<p><i>The church had a relaxed atmosphere. Rose initially welcomed me to the church and asked if I had visited before. I was then directed to where I could sit and handed a leaflet explaining the various aspects of the church. There were only two children, with the rest of the congregation being elderly or adult.</i></p>			

SERVICE		SECTION	58 / 58
B1 Adequate guidance on what actions to take & when throughout the service	Very clear guidance 8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate guidance 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Very little / No guidance 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	B2 The Sermon was...	...Audible 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ...Understandable 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ...A comfortable length 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B3 Actual length of sermon (Minutes)	15	B4 Music during service felt a comfortable volume	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B5 Congregational singing	Enjoyable / uplifting 8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unremarkable 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Uncomfortable / difficult to join in with 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	B6 Length of service felt comfortable	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B8 Refreshments available (at any stage during the visit)	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B7 Actual length of service (Minutes)	90
B10 Information available internally, well presented and easy to access	2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B9 Evidence of 'fair trade' within the church	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B12 After service chat / conversation	Welcoming, pleasant and engaging 8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unremarkable 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Over zealous 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Non existent / felt excluded / uncomfortable 0 <input type="checkbox"/>	B11 Information about the church actively / specifically provided	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B14 Name of service	Advent Sunday and Gift Day	B13 Offertory...	...bag / plate passed with some pressure to give ns <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ...bag / plate passed with no pressure to give ns <input type="checkbox"/> ...opportunity to give before / after the service ns <input type="checkbox"/> ...not aware of any opportunity to give ns <input type="checkbox"/>
B15 Name / desc of service leader	Rev Dr. Gwen Collins	<p><i>Good guidance was given during the service, I knew exactly what to do and when. The sermon was accessible, modern and included everyone. The theme was Prepare to Change and was about the meaning of Advent. The two children in the congregation had made a model of a church out of paper and that was brought up to the altar, then there was a small discussion on people being the most important aspect of the church. After the service, I was approached by a number of different members of the congregation. They were interested to find out what I thought of the service and checked I had all the information I required. Refreshment was also offered.</i></p>	

OVERALL		SECTION	26 / 26
C1 Overall sense of 'community' at the church	People sat together 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People appeared to be engaging with each other 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community activities mentioned / discussed 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C2 The overall church visit made the visitor feel	Comfortable, involved and genuinely welcome 8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasonably comfortable 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted but as an outsider 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Unwelcome, excluded or uncomfortable 0 <input type="checkbox"/>
C3 If you were a churchgoer, then, based on this service, would you return to this church	Definitely - excellent experience 8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encourages a return - good experience 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Uninspiring experience 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Poor experience, would discourage a return 0 <input type="checkbox"/>		

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LEGEND: = Yes = No = Not Applicable 4 = Score applicable to this question

TOTAL

116 / 116 = 100%

RETAIL maxim

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH UPDATES

Note from Kate Y: these are genuine updates from my own neighbourhood watch co-ordinator.



Scam in Taplow (and possibly elsewhere)

There is currently a scam happening at Sainsbury's in Taplow. Persons both male or female and sometimes both approach people leaving the store holding up a £10 note or similar and saying that the victim must have dropped this. The victim usually older or vulnerable, then gets their wallet out to put this away not believing their luck at this kindness and by very quick hand movement and or distraction the victim's bank card or credit card is removed from their wallet and used almost immediately. People who have realised almost immediately and contacted their bank straight away to cancel their cards, have still had money removed from their accounts. People need to be aware of this and note very carefully any descriptions of persons approaching them and contact the police. On no account get their wallets out or allow any form of distraction by these people who are very skilled in this deception.

Non-emergency calls to the Police – "101"

If you need to call the police on a non-emergency issue, you should ring **101**, the new national single non-emergency number, which replaced the old 0845 number which was switched off on 1 December 2012.

101 is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Calls to 101 (from both landlines and mobile networks) cost 15 pence per call, no matter what time of day the call is made, or the duration of the call.

Some wise words from an old (American) farmer

"Keep skunks and bankers at a distance."

"Life is simpler when you plough around the stump."

"A bumble bee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor."

"Words that soak into your ears are whispered.....not yelled."

"Meanness don't just happen overnight."

"Forgive your enemies; it messes up their heads."

"Do not corner something that you know is meaner than you."

"It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge."

"Every path has a few puddles."

"When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty."

"The best sermons are lived, not preached."

"Most of the stuff people worry about, ain't never gonna happen anyway."

"Don't judge folks by their relatives.."

"Don't interfere with somethin' that ain't bothering you none."

"Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance."

"The biggest troublemaker you'll probably ever have to deal with, watches you from the mirror every mornin'."

"Always drink upstream from the herd."

"Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment."

"Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in."

"If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around."



Happy Birthday



This month we would like to wish

Arthalia P (2th)

Grant C (5th)

Nathan C (9th)

Matthew H (9th)

Jonathan L (23rd)

Gwenda D (24th)

Adam T (29th)

A Very Happy Birthday
with love from all at Trinity.

giftaid it

Enclosed as an insert with this copy of The Recorder is a copy of the new Gift Aid Declaration (as mentioned last month). Those members of the congregation who donate by this method will need to complete this form to maintain their donations under the Gift Aid scheme. Others who may be interested in starting to give by this method, should see Tony H,

*The March edition of the Recorder will be published on 24th February.
Closing date for contributions is Friday 15th February*

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

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

prayer page

Essentials of Christian Prayer

As a Christian, praying doesn't need to be complicated. If you're approaching God in Christian prayer, make sure that you approach your prayer with the five qualities in the following list to be certain that you're prayer-ready:

- **Be aware.** When you pray, be aware of exactly whom exactly you're praying to, acknowledging the Lord.
- **Be real.** Don't put up a front or say words that you think God wants to hear; simply be honest and open to God.
- **Be repentant.** Unconfessed sin in your life can be a major block to your prayers, so always approach prayer with a repentant heart.
- **Be dogged.** When you pray, be diligent, praying, then praying some more, and, when you think you're all done, praying more about it.
- **Be expectant.** Have the certainty that God will answer your prayer.

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2013

"All our life is a celebration for us; we are convinced, in fact, that God is always everywhere. We sing while we work, we sing hymns while we sail, we pray while we carry out all life's other occupations. "

Clement of Alexandria (c.150-c.215) Theologian

My God, I am not my own but yours.
Take me for your own,
and help me in all things to do your holy will.
My God, I give myself to you,
in joy and sorrow,
in sickness and in health,
in success and in failure,
in life and in death,
in time and for eternity.
Make me and keep me your own;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Source unknown



Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world, we pray
That you, with steadfast love, would keep
Your watch around us while we sleep.

From evil dreams defend our sight,
From fears and terrors of the night;
Tread underfoot our deadly foe
That we no sinful thought may know.

O Father, that we ask be done
Through Jesus Christ, your only Son;
And Holy Spirit, by whose breath
Our souls are raised to life from death.

From the service of Compline

Creator of all, lead me to see the
light, and instruct me that I may be
able to reason. Guard me against
spectacular endeavours, that I may
be genuine. Amen.