



*January 2005*

# *The Recorder*

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

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

**Trinity - A Family Church**

**Worshipping together - Caring for one another - Sharing with others**

## 'Opening a New Door'

**Revd. Michael Shrubsole**

**Minister of Trinity United Reformed Church**

The old year has drawn to its end. The cold, damp, dark days slow the pace of life and our energy levels fade. But within the cycling seasons of the world we conceive a new life of hope. When we opened the door of the year of 2004, we hoped it might be a year of progress through the world towards peace and unity. However, to our great regret, we witnessed yet another year of division, hatred and violence. It seems that the entire world is dragged into tribulations and hard times of mutual rejection, hatred, hostility, retaliation, fear and fright. In this insecure world we believers are called to look together for the right way of how to think and how to behave, and where to go.

And so as we open the door of the year of 2005, how can we play our part to ensure that as best we are able, this year might be different? In these difficult times only the Word of true life can cast lights on our path. So, we should cherish and seek to live out the guiding words of the Bible: "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). In fact, as the times become more difficult, we should more actively open ourselves to the guiding Word of the Lord and trust ourselves to our merciful God. Only when we try to live according to the Bible, not according to the 'logic' or 'wisdom' of the 'world', do we find a right direction and obtain strength to overcome difficulties. Then, the Word of the Lord, the source of life, will lead us to tolerance, love, unity and peace, not to hatred and division.

If you are going to make a New Year's resolution, make it this one; that you will make a place and a time in your life in which you will read your Bible regularly in a prayerful and meditative way. And now do something to help you to keep that resolution - perhaps you should treat yourself to a new Bible, or a Bible reading aid such as a commentary. Perhaps you will be able to focus better if you buy a candle, or a cross or a religious picture to put in the place where you will be comfortable doing your reading, some little thing to remind you that as you read the Bible, so you are entering into a holy relationship with God who reveals himself to you through his written word.

As people are physically nourished with daily meals, so we should seek spiritual and moral nourishment by living upon the Word of the Lord through daily reading and meditation on the Bible. In the example of the cry of Peter, let us confess anew our faith in Lord. "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). May this be our prayer for 2005: "Lord, help us to read your Bible and understand its words, and believe the Bible as the Word of Life, and live it, and proclaim it, so we can enjoy the peace which your Holy Spirit brings into the lives of those who trust in you. Amen"

Mike

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Rev Michael Shrubsole,

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Mrs Margaret Lewis,

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## January Services

### Morning Worship at 10.30 a.m. (Other services as indicated.)

Children of all ages meet for part of morning worship using the new 'Light Years' material from Scripture Union. Adult worship usually follows the texts of the Revised Common Lectionary.

2<sup>nd</sup> January - Morning Worship with Communion.

John 1:1-18; Jeremiah 31:7-14; Ephesians 1:3-14; Psalm 147

9<sup>th</sup> January - Morning Worship.

Matthew 3:13-17; Isaiah 42:1-9; Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 29

16<sup>th</sup> January - Morning Worship.

John 1:29-42; Isaiah 49:1-7; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; Psalm 40

23<sup>rd</sup> January - Mayor's Civic Service.

Matthew 4:12-23; Isaiah 9:1-4; I Corinthians 1:10-18; Psalm 27

23<sup>rd</sup> January - 6.30pm - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Town Centre Churches are invited to unite for evening choral communion hosted by All Saints Parish Church. ALL WELCOME

30<sup>th</sup> January - Morning Worship Vocations Sunday.

Matthew 5:1-12; Micah 6:1-8; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Psalm 15

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Rotas for January

# What's on in January



Monday 10th Jan - New Year Celebrations  
(8pm. Hostess - PW)

Monday 24th Jan - My 2004 Holiday  
(8pm. Hostess - B M)

## WOMEN'S MEETING

Tuesday 4th Jan Rev Mike Shrubsole -  
Tuesday 11th Jan Olivia P - A Leisure Group  
Tuesday 18th Jan A Winter Miscellany  
Tuesday 25th Jan AGM.



*All meetings start at 2.30 in the Lower Schoolroom*

## 7th and 21st January

Scrabble

at 2pm  
So far, the Scrabblers have raised almost £850.  
For a minimum donation of £1, you get tea and cake, lots of  
laughter - and a few games of Scrabble.  
Why not give us a try?



## Church Walk

No church walk arranged this month but if you would like a walk on  
Saturday January 29th why not join the Ramblers Association  
easy-paced 3½ mile walk from Cadmore End (opposite the school)  
at 1.30pm? (Grid ref - 783927)

**Diary**

**Elders Meeting** Tuesday **4<sup>th</sup>**, 7.30pm. in the Schoolroom

**TLS LITE** Wednesday **5<sup>th</sup>**, 2.00pm in the Schoolroom

**Prayer Circle for Healing** Sunday **9<sup>th</sup>**, 4.30pm in the Sanctuary

**Creation of new LEP church** Celebration of union between URC's and Methodists in the villages of Poyle and Colnbrook.

Sunday **16<sup>th</sup>**, 3.00pm in the existing church building. All welcome.

**Church Meeting** Tuesday **18<sup>th</sup>**, 8.00pm in the Schoolroom

**TLS LITE** Wednesday **19<sup>th</sup>**, 2.00pm in the Schoolroom

**Church Lunch** Sunday **23<sup>rd</sup>**, after morning worship, in the Schoolroom

**Property Management Committee** Tuesday **25<sup>th</sup>**, 8.00pm in the Schoolroom

**Induction of Revd Erna Stevenson to the Associate Ministry at Amersham Free Church**

Saturday **29<sup>th</sup>**, 2.30pm at Amersham Free Church. All welcome.

**Church New Year Party** Saturday **29<sup>th</sup>**, 5.00-7.00pm in Crendon Hall. See advert on page 10 for more information.

**The Sunnybank & Trinity Youth Group. . .**

. . . have a Planning Meeting (at Sunnybank) on 9<sup>th</sup> January

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*Please also see the details on page 6 of planned dates of events during the year. This should help forward planning (and possible clash of dates).*

## SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES FOR 2005

January 29 <sup>th</sup>	New Year's Party
March 12 <sup>th</sup>	Quiz Night
March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Church Annual Meeting
March 24 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup>	Easter Services
April 30 <sup>th</sup>	Caribbean Evening
May 15 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup>	Christian Aid Week
May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Church Gift Day
June 19 <sup>th</sup>	Church Picnic
July 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Bar B Q
September 11 <sup>th</sup>	Commitment for Life Sunday
October 1 <sup>st</sup>	Quiz Evening
October 9 <sup>th</sup>	Harvest Celebrations
October 15 <sup>th</sup>	Autumn Fayre
November 19 <sup>th</sup>	Church Concert

These are the dates that have been planned so far, so please make a note in your diary and more details will be available as we go through the year.

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***Last month, the Minister's pastoral letter used a computer story as an illustration. Here is another!***

Warning . Advent Virus -----

Be on the alert for symptoms of inner HOPE, PEACE, JOY AND LOVE. The hearts of a great many have already been exposed to this virus and it is possible that people everywhere could come down with it in epidemic proportions. This could pose a serious threat to what has, up to now, been a fairly stable condition of conflict in the world.

Some signs and symptoms of the Advent Virus:

- \* A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.
- \* An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- \* A loss of interest in judging other people.
- \* A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
- \* A loss of interest in conflict.
- \* A loss of the ability to worry. (This is a very serious symptom.)
- \* Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- \* Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
- \* Frequent attacks of smiling.
- \* An increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
- \* An increased susceptibility to the love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

Please send this warning to all your friends. This virus can and has affected many systems. Some systems have been completely cleaned out because of it.

## THANK YOU - Junior Church

What a delightful service the Junior Church children brought to us on the morning of 12<sup>th</sup> December. Such a clever idea to set the story of Jesus' birth in High Wycombe in 2004 and how well it was presented by both children and staff. The inclusion of the screen for the projection of traditional images and modern media items, and the touches of humour all added to the enjoyment and brought the story very much alive. Everyone played his or her part so well it was a joy to watch and be part of. Thank you for all your hard work in preparing this service. God bless.

*"A member" of the congregation!*

## Financial Review

As we begin a new church financial year, so we offer our annual reminder to you to ensure your giving to the church is kept up-to-date.

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. □ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. □ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life." (1 Timothy 6:17-19, NIV)

The United Reformed Church as a matter of national policy encourages all its members to see if they can give 5% of their income to the church. Some of you may feel able to give more, others may feel constrained and able to give less. It is entirely up to you to decide what is right for your circumstances. But please review your giving for 2005. Some of you may have had a pay rise and are now able to give more, others may have retired or are working reduced hours and can now only give less. It helps the Treasurer if you inform him of the result of your personal review. Envelopes for cash givers are available from Edna W. The Treasurer can advise you on setting up giving to the church by Standing Order. Tony H would be delighted to ensure that all payers of Income Tax have given him a completed Gift Aid form. (M.S.)

This edition should reach members during the festive holiday period. May I extend my best wishes to all readers - and encourage each one of you to try to submit (just) one item for the Recorder during 2005?!

*[Editor]*

## Wycliffe News

***An Article from a recent edition of the Wycliffe Newsletter showing how important new Bible translation work can be.***

When John first arrived on an island in southeast Asia with his family he was very much struck by how religious the Husa people seemed to be...

Every Sunday morning everyone turned out in their Sunday best and the little church was full. There were meetings almost every night of the week, making it difficult to find a free evening to meet with the translation committee. So it looked as if Christianity was well established and Bible translation wasn't needed...

However we soon saw that this was just a veneer, a form of godliness without the power. One day someone invited me to a prayer meeting. Since prayer meetings were held to commemorate special occasions, I asked him what this one was for.

"For my father, who died seven years ago." At that, the anthropological section of my mind sprang to life! "Is it usual to remember the dead seven years later?" I asked. "No, but he told me to." So he had been in contact with his father's ancestral spirit! He had already admitted quite openly that he communicated with his ancestors. Now this 'ancestral command' prayer meeting was taking place, led by the minister, showing how people's understanding of the gospel was mixed up with their traditional beliefs. Clearly no one, including the minister, knew that this was directly contrary to what the Bible teaches: 'What fellowship can light have with darkness?' (2 Corinthians 6: 14) The church had been established for decades but they could not understand the Bible that was in use.

Once I was walking through the jungle with a friend when a large tree fell across our path with an earth-shattering noise so I said, "Praise the Lord for protecting us!"

"Yes, even though you don't attend all the church meetings!" my friend retorted. True! People tried to attend as many church meetings as possible in order to gain God's favour. Our hope is that when they have the Scriptures in their language they will understand that they can only be saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then live out their love and gratitude to him.

Shortly afterwards I asked another friend if he was going to a special communion service. "No, " he replied, "I haven't attended enough church meetings!" This did not make sense to us until the service began. Twelve church members filed in ahead of the minister and sat at the top table. They were served before the rest of the congregation and apparently had been chosen on the basis of their church attendance. There was a humorous side too. Apparently the village head tried to get us chosen to sit at the top table, but we were never invited, presumably because we hadn't attended enough meetings! This brought home to us that Husa people see salvation as being dependent on works. It reminded us of the abuses of The Lord's Supper in the early church in Corinth that the apostle Paul brought out into the open—the social elite were honoured rather than the Lord's death.

When we were translating the story of Simon the Sorcerer in Acts chapter 8, we had to decide whether he practised white or black magic because Husa people don't have a word for 'sorcery' in general. So I asked the translation committee if such things were still going on. "Yes!" they replied, most emphatically, and then gave me an example of each, in most animated terms.

*[cont on page 9]*



At a baptismal meal the host was concerned that there wouldn't be enough food for everyone, a dishonorable thing. So he called in a master of white magic, who performed a magical ritual to make the guests feel full after only eating a little. As a result, there was plenty to go round. "It worked!" they said. "Just like the feeding of the 5,000!" Ironically, it fell very far short of what Jesus did. He multiplied a small amount of food, they ate to the full, and there was more food left over than there was to start with! The person who performed the ritual couldn't quite manage that; he could only reduce their appetites!

As an example of black magic they cited revenge. Someone who uses black magic can draw an invisible line across a path so that when the intended victim comes along, and no-one else, he will fall and break his leg. The avenger would choose a lonely spot so that his enemy would probably die there. There are still very obvious signs that Christianity is often just a veneer over traditional beliefs and the expression of respect and honour. People understand very little of our Lord's grace.

I have had the privilege of working with a translation team for 11 years and of seeing them grow. So far, Mark and Acts have been published, they have drafted and revised 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus and are working on Revelation and James. More than that, they have learned to apply Scripture to their lives, Titus 3:9 for example: "Avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless." This has helped them to see a divisive issue in their church in a new light.

*Will you pray that through the Scriptures they will come to know the reality of our Lord's grace and his cleansing power in their lives?*

*The series of chapters from the Rev Auty on the  
**History of Congregationalism in High Wycombe**  
will be continued next month*

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

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



AN INVITATION TO ALL  
an opportunity to invite your friends

## NEW YEAR PARTY

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2005  
5.00 – 7.00 p.m.



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 offers of help.*

The top 25 Christian songs in the UK as reported by churches in their Copyright Activity Reports, August 2004.

RANK	SONG TITLE	AUTHOR/S
1	Shout To The Lord	Zschech, Darlene
2	Be Still	Evans, David J.
3	Lord I Lift Your Name On High	Founds, Rick
4	Knowing You	Kendrick, Graham
5	Shine Jesus Shine	Kendrick, Graham
6	Come Now Is The Time To Worship	Doerksen, Brian
7	How Deep The Father's Love For Us	Townend, Stuart
8	The Servant King	Kendrick, Graham
9	Once Again	Redman, Matt
10	There Is A Redeemer	Green-Sievrigh, Melody
11	I Will Offer Up My Life	Redman, Matt
12	As The Deer	Nystrom, Martin
13	All Heaven Declares	Richards, Noel \ Richards, Tricia
14	We Want To See Jesus Lifted High	Horley, Doug
15	Faithful One	Doerksen, Brian
16	Jesus Is The Name We Honour	Johnston, Philip Lawson
17	Be The Centre	Frye, Michael
18	I Will Sing Your Praises	Smale, Ian
19	The Power Of Your Love	Bullock, Geoff
20	Here I Am To Worship	Hughes, Tim
21	Give Thanks	Smith, Henry
22	Majesty	Hayford, Jack
23	Refiner's Fire	Doerksen, Brian
24	Celebrate	Morgan, Patricia \ Bankhead, Dave
25	Great Is Thy Faithfulness	Chisholm, Thomas Obediah \ Runyan, William Marion

How many of them do you know?

## **LASTING MARRIAGES: MEN AND WOMEN GROWING TOGETHER**

'There is a growing together . . . like a tree around a boulder underneath the ground. The root eventually goes around it.' (57 year old man, married 25 years;)

Mackey and O'Brien (1995) interviewed 60 couples who married during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. They selected a sample of couples whose youngest child had completed high school that would provide a diverse sample representing major American religious, ethnic, racial and occupational groups. The interviews explored how their marriages had developed and progressed across the years, in particular the three broad phases of the early years, the childrearing years, and 'empty-nest' years.

In broad terms spouses' satisfaction with their marriage was not related to their sex or their age, to how many years they had been married, or how many children they had. Social demographic characteristics had minor effects. Husbands tended to be more positive about the relationship than wives, although wives reported both positives and negatives. Satisfaction was higher for those with less education and for those in the higher and lower versus the middle income brackets.

Mackey and O'Brien identified five factors that appeared to be important to marital longevity.

Containment of conflict ...

Mutuality of decision-making ...

Quality of communication ...

Relational values of trust, respect, understanding and equity ...

Sexual and psychological intimacy ...

The themes of adaptability, resilience and commitment recurred throughout the interviews. Satisfied couples adapted to change and drew on the marriage as well as the resources and support around them to help them cope. Commitment was seen as the glue that held them together . . . the 'assuring sense of being together, no matter what' (Mackey and O'Brien 1995: 144). While some of their values and attitudes underwent significant changes over the years, their views of marriage as a permanent commitment of love and fidelity held fast.

Mackey, R. A., and O'Brien, B. A. (1995). *Lasting Marriages: Men and Women Growing Together*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.

Taken from Robyn Parker <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/parker2.html>

# Commitment for Life

6th December 2004

Dear Commitment for Life Churches.

There are some BIG visions for 2005 - a year of unique opportunity for us to work together for lasting change. **MakePovertyHistory**, a coalition of churches, charities and campaigning groups, is about to launch its 2005 programme for **Trade Justice, Drop the Debt** and **More and Better Aid**. It is going to be big and much in the media spotlight. This links in with the United Reformed Church's own **Catch the Vision** "as we seek to be Christ's people, transformed by the gospel. announcing good news to the poor. . . "

There are some key dates (see Christian Aid's campaign guide), but we would specially like you to consider being in **Edinburgh** for the **mass rally on 2nd July**. Another date is the Churches event on **Saturday 29th January** at Bloomsbury Baptist Church, Shaftesbury Avenue, London | 1.00am-4.00pm.

The involvement of all our churches is crucial in actions to make a lasting difference to the lives of millions of people living in poverty. Please consider how to bring these issues fully and imaginatively before your church in worship and through its wider life, and then decide which actions you will follow up to make 2005 a year of real change. Email us if you want more information, articles for the church magazine, and other resources.

A mailing is about to go out to all churches in your Synod and it will include:

- Christian Aid's campaign guide for 2005 with key dates and much more.
- The **MakePovertyHistory** manifesto
- Fair-trade Fortnight Church Action Guide (promoting Fair-trade Fortnight is a requirement for a Fairtrade Church and a Fairtrade Synod).
  - Praying for a Change — prayers for the key moments in the first half of 2005
  - An additional copy of the Trade Justice card • the key action of this winter.

Please ask if you need more copies.

Furthermore, the situation in both Zimbabwe and the Occupied Palestinian Territories has become critical. It was felt by the Commitment for Life sub-committee that we should write to all churches inviting them to show their solidarity and concern. On the back is a page of information and suggested action to be done NOW even as we "prepare a way for the Lord" in the prophetic words of John the Baptist.

Please share the hope of peace with the people of Bethlehem this Christmas, and enjoy peace in your families too.

Shalom,

*[Also see the articles on page 13]*

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## The Cost of Ice Cream: What It Would Take to Eradicate World Poverty

The amount of money spent every year on ice-cream in the United States alone would make it possible, if it were added to what is now being done, to achieve the goal of access to primary education for all children. This was how UK government chief secretary to the Treasury Paul Boateng illustrated the point that Millennium Development Goals (MDG) could be reached if rich countries really wanted to reach them.

"We do not lack the awareness, we do not lack the science, we do not lack the resources. We have the technology, the medicine, the expertise - and the costs are not prohibitive. What the developed world lacks is the will to make reality of our Millennium promise," Boateng told participants at a half-day seminar on "The challenge of poverty eradication" held at the World Council of Churches (WCC) on 18 October, 2004.

## Zimbabwe

The humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe remains difficult. Christian Aid's field office reports that the country's shortfall in the staple maize means 4 to 4.5 million people are likely to need food aid between now and March 2005. Many people's nutritional status is worse now than it was several years ago, and many have sold their livestock and other assets to cope with past food shortages, leaving them even more vulnerable this year. HIV/AIDS has also had a major impact on people's ability to withstand food shortages in rural, urban and the newly resettled areas. All agencies working in Zimbabwe are doing everything they can to ensure that food will reach those in need this year. However, the Government is passing an NG60 bill through Parliament that requires non-governmental organisations to be registered in order to operate.

The NG0 bill has created a crisis for Silveira House, and for other NG0s engaged in the promotion and protection of human rights and good governance. For Silveira House these form the core of its activities. It will be a criminal offence, punishable by imprisonment or a fine, for any person or director to be responsible for the activities of an NG0 which is not registered under the new -Act. A registered N60 is required to re-apply for a registration certificate on an annual basis. The cumulative effect of the Bill is disabling, and makes it virtually impossible for them to operate, or get international funding.

This is truly a moment of crisis for Silveira House and its staff.

Christian Aid are advising us on behind the scenes discussions. The Moderator of General Assembly is writing to express our solidarity and concern on behalf of us all. Your church may wish to send an email to Father Dieter Scholz telling them of your concern, and your prayers so that the staff know they are not forgotten in their time of crisis. Email: [admin@silveira.co.zw](mailto:admin@silveira.co.zw)

## Israel/Palestine

During 2004 the world has stood by while the level of violence and destruction perpetrated by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories has continued. There is a growing sense that public pressure has to be brought to bear, to stop the Israeli policies of settlement expansion, suffocation of the Palestinian people and their economy through the separation wall, the road blocks, the permits and the brutal military force and culture of impunity. People are seeking a peaceful way of engaging with the Israelis to stop the violence and oppression and restore the possibility of peaceful co-existence for Israelis and Palestinians.

The political situation is right for progress to be made. We understand that the Prime Minister Blair will go to Israel in the days before Christmas. You are invited to write to Tony Blair and express your concern. Take stories and incidences from 'Moving Stories' or from Christian Aid's "Facts on the Ground" report. Urge him to meet with Palestinians, with Palestinian Christians and with peace groups.

Write to: The Prime Minister, Tony Blair MP, 10 Downing Street, London SW1A 2AA

*Resources available on request by email:*

'Moving Stories' a bi-monthly email newsletter (2 page) with stories from Palestinian organisations, from EAPPI monitors, peace groups and others. Boycott of Israeli goods - Commitment for Life discussion paper The Anglican Justice and Peace statement

Report of the 24th November: Israel-Palestine - a passion for justice consultation (2 page)

Report of the URC visit in October SPEAK campaign action on British arms sales to Israel - to be posted to you.

**prayer page**  
(prepared by the nightbirds)

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2005

***The Gate of the Year***

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year,  
'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown'.  
And he replied 'Go out into the darkness and put your  
hand into the hand of God . That shall be to you better  
light and safer than a known way.'

***Epiphany***

Bless those who go out to take Christ to all people.  
In their loneliness cheer them,  
In their dangers protect them  
In their discouragements, give them hope.

***Christian Unity***

Pray for the successful completion of the process of  
unification.

That churches find ways to communicate the Gospel in a  
secularised society

That the churches will speak clearly for justice and mercy  
about asylum and immigration.

***Leprosy***

Pray for awareness of those suffering with leprosy  
that we may be more supportive of the charities who  
work to alleviate this disease. We give special thanks to  
the members of the Women's Meeting,  
who have supported this charity for many years.

