



June 2004

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

‘Going Dutch’

Revd. Michael Shrubsole

Minister of Trinity United Reformed Church

A couple of weeks ago I enjoyed a lovely week in the Netherlands. I attended Spring School along with nearly 50 other Ministers from the URC in Thames North and Eastern Synods. Spring School is designed to be a time of training and refreshment for us Ministers, equipping us with new insights to help us. Usually Spring School is held somewhere in England, but this year the organisers discovered that it was possible to go to the Netherlands for the same cost, and with excellent support from our Synod administrator whose family live in the Netherlands, and with enthusiastic hosting by Training Officers from the Dutch church, and with the reason to go and share in the process of unification taking place in the Dutch churches at this time; well - it seemed an opportunity too good to miss. And we had a superb time, with good food and scenery and lots of interesting churches and church projects to visit.

Unification for them means the joining of three denominations – the Dutch Reformed Church, the Dutch Re-reformed Church and the Lutheran Church in the Netherlands, which on the 1st May 2004 became the new ‘Protestant Church in the Netherlands’. It is quite close the URC in the UK in style and tradition, except instead of being a minority church denomination like us, it is the biggest and ‘official’ state church, in these ways it is more like the CofE in the UK.

I don’t want to write now about windmills and polders and tulips. Yes we saw all of that, and lots more. We also saw some lovely ancient church buildings and learnt something about the history of the reformation in the Netherlands. It all helped make for a very pleasant trip indeed. But what I want to write about is the stories of living churches made up of Christians like you and me in that country.

What I saw was a largely white, middle-class, affluent church, not seemingly troubled by money issues. In fact, unlike the unification which led to the formation of the URC in this country, which sometimes resulted in two neighbouring churches in a town staying open even if both were less than half full, due to claims that there were irreconcilable differences between the two congregations; in the Netherlands we regularly met situations where there were two churches in a town and one was now being closed to fund the improvement of continuing Christian work now to be concentrated on the other site. And this is with churches that often both had several hundred members each! I wish we could learn to be so bold in this country! So money did not seem to be a problem. Church buildings looked well maintained and were well staffed and there was much talk of well-funded development plans and new initiatives.

I mentioned the size of the churches. In the Netherlands church attendance is still much higher than in the UK. On Sunday I attended a small town church in Eerbeek. The congregation was about 200 strong, and it was their Mothers Day so everyone was apologising that attendance was low that day as some people had stayed away from church for family social gatherings. It was lovely to worship in a church with a good volume of congregational singing. I felt quite at home; worship, although in Dutch, was a close match to what I am familiar with in this country.

[continued on inside back cover]

Minister : Rev Michael Shrubsole,

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June 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.

6th June - Morning Worship with Communion. Trinity Sunday. Church Gift Day
John 16:12-15, Proverbs 8:1-31, Romans 5:1-5

13th June - Morning Worship. Luke 7:36-8:3, 2 Samuel 11:26-12:15, Galatians 2:15-21

20th June - All-age Worship. Guide and Brownie Parade Service.
Luke 8:26-39, Isaiah 65:1-9, Galatians 3:23-29

27th June - Morning Worship. Luke 9:51-62, 1 Kings 19:15-21, Galatians 5:1-25

Rotas for June

Not included in this version

What's on in June



- Monday 14th June - Representative from "Nightingale Hospice"
Presentation of our cheque to the above charity
(8pm. Hostess - Norma Garden)
- Monday 28th June - Pub outing
(Meet at the Crown, Penn, at 7.15pm)

WOMEN'S MEETING

- Tuesday 1st June Readings for Summer
- Tuesday 8th June Speaker: Mrs José Barber
- Tuesday 15th June Enjoy a game of Beetle
- Tuesday 22nd June Speaker: Dr Abigail Macleod
- Tuesday 29th June End of Session Tea Party. Bring & Buy

All meetings start at 2.30 in the Lower Schoolroom



11th and 25th June

at 2pm -

Take a break from the labours of the garden.
Put your brain to work instead.

Scrabble



No walk is arranged for this month

Not included in this version

Diary

Elders Meeting - Tuesday 1st, 7.30pm. in the Schoolroom

Youth Fellowship- Games Evening - Sunday 6th, 6.30pm at Trinity URC

Chiltern District Council Meeting - Wednesday 9th, 7.30pm.

Coffee Morning - Saturday 12th, 10.30-12.00am. in the Schoolroom.

Church Spring Clean/Odd Jobs Day - Saturday 12th, 1.00-4.00pm. Meet all over the building! Everyone welcome! Everyone needed! You have a talent you can use. Bring your dusters and your toolkits. See our Property Officer, Simon Evans, to offer help and receive guidance on tasks to do.

Church Meeting - Tuesday 15th, 8.00pm in the Schoolroom. For all members to come and do the business of the church in an atmosphere of prayerful fellowship. We seek to discern God's leading for us as a Christian community in High Wycombe. Be there or miss out on important things.

Family Church Picnic (on Fathers' Day) - Sunday 20th, Approximately from 1.00-4.00pm. As usual meet after church on Hughenden Park just off the Coates Lane entrance. Fun and games for the young and lively. A quiet chat in the shade for the more mature of us. Don't know what to do with the old man? Bring Dad along to a family picnic. A bottle of wine, a game of quick cricket and then a chance to sleep in the sun – what more could he possibly want for Fathers' Day?

Youth Fellowship - Discussion - Sunday 20th, 6.30pm. at Sunnybank Methodist Church

Prayer Circle for Healing - Sunday 27th, 7.00pm. in the Sanctuary

All welcome to attend this church prayer meeting, which has a particular focus on the pastoral needs of members of our congregation. We meet to share a prayerful concern for the needs of each other. Do come and share with the Minister, Elders and others with a pastoral concern as we support each other through our prayers.

Thoughtful Quote

"Christ didn't say, "Love humanity as thyself," but, "Love thy neighbour as thyself," and do you know why? Because your neighbour, by definition, is the person nearby, the man sitting next to you in the underground who smells, perhaps, the man next to you in the queue who maybe tries to barge ahead of you; in short, your neighbour is the person who threatens your own liberty."

Luciano De Crescenzo

Thanks . . .

A big thank you to everyone who collected for Christian Aid again this year, it is not an easy job and spare time is very precious. So far the total is £865 but there is still some more to come in.

Thank you again, Margaret L

Gift Day

Trinity Sunday 6th June

Traditionally we often hold a Gift Day on the Sunday in the year that shares the same name as our church. All the households listed in our church directory should find a letter and appeal envelope attached to this copy of the magazine. Please do consider the appeal careful and decide what response you are able to make. This year we are asking for donations to go towards the special projects that are part of our plans to make improvements to our buildings. In the initial stages of this scheme we will need to find the money to pay for drawings of the work we have researched and prepared.

The Steering Group's recommendations were brought to the Church Meeting in April and were warmly received by all the members present as a well thought out expression of the likely way forward to make much needed improvements to our building, but without involving us in any excessive alterations or structural changes. Church Meeting was pleased to hear of: 1) the alterations to the property that would be based on the requirements for disability access, and 2) other improvements to the property to maximise church and community usefulness. When considering changes to property only minimal necessary alterations, retaining existing structures wherever possible, are being planned.

Those who missed the presentation at Church meeting and who have not collected a copy of the 'Brief for Church Meeting' can obtain one from the Minister on request. This describes what we expect our new plans to cover.

You may have seen how in one small part of the building the Schoolroom is currently being improved to make it more useful and attractive to users of the room. The scheme of improvements for this room should be complete by the end of 2004. We are very grateful to have obtained full funding of these modest improvements through a District grant of Synod money of nearly £5,000 through the Synod's 'Money for Mission' scheme. It is already improving the mission work of our buildings making them a much more attractive and welcoming space. But there is much more to do elsewhere in the building. We are very hopeful that our further planned improvements will continue to transform our building in a similarly modest and cost effective way.

We are not this year trying to start fundraising for major building works. It would be lovely to receive a major windfall donation. But we don't expect any such gifts yet. Until we have a firm set of plans to show people we cannot firmly tell any of you (or any potential providers of major grants) exactly what it is that we are fundraising for, nor exactly how much it will cost. So this year we are asking for gifts to pay to get new drawings done, so that after that we can go forward to the next stages of seeking planning permission, and supplying accurate costings, and seeking major funding.

Three years ago in 2001 you may recall that we fundraised for a similar project; to pay for half the cost of an architect's Feasibility Study on the building. (The other half of the cost being met by the Synod.) In the end the Church Meeting voted not to proceed with the results of that Feasibility Study. But it was not a wasted exercise. The Feasibility Study still serves as proof that we were not unwilling to seriously consider a bigger project. If people ask us to justify why our current modest plans are not likely to be fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act we can point to our Feasibility Study plans and show how it demonstrates that a fully compliant radical project was considered to be 'not feasible'. This time round we are now ready to proceed with a more modest scheme of work. But it needs new drawings, and that work must be paid for.

Can I, as your Minister, on behalf of the Church Meeting and Elders Meeting, encourage all members and friends to discover how you can support this next vital stage in the search for the way ahead for our church. Thank you.

Mike Shrubsole

Zimbabwe: Minister calls church and world to protest human rights violations

News from CWM concerning Zimbabwe, where our partner organisation in Commitment for Life, Silvera House, is based.

Anglican Rev Barnabas Nqindi of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe called for the church to speak out about human rights violations in his nation, Anglican mission magazine Transmission reported.

He said that quiet diplomacy and negotiations have failed in relation to dealing with the abuses of the government and that the church must speak out despite the cost.

"There is a challenge to be pro-active, even if it means that we must be prepared to lose our lives."

Nqindi called the church in Zimbabwe to speak out against human rights violations. He gave the examples of young women in militia camps being raped and infected with HIV and the elderly having their pensions removed.

He said the church should unite over issues of justice such as farm seizures, and the rigging of elections. "We need to press for an independent police force and a judicial system that is allowed to implement the law impartially."

DON'T FORGET

Commitment for Life Day – Sunday 11th July, 10.30am. Our annual appeal to consider the Commitment for Life 1% of income challenge to support the work of our chosen partners – Silvera House in Zimbabwe. Guest Speaker: Mrs Anne Martin of Commitment for Life.

SPRING HARVEST 2005

A group of us who have been to Spring Harvest before are planning to go again next year, and would love more friends to join us. It would be really great if we could make this another memorable Trinity event. If you haven't been to Spring Harvest before, you are probably wondering what to expect!

This is what the brochure says:

The programme is varied and offers something for everyone - whether you are seven or seventy, a Christian or "just thinking about it", with a group, or on your own. The programme features a choice of styles, and can be both interactive and reflective. Whichever style you choose you'll find that it's about more than just listening to speakers - and flexible enough for you to choose exactly how much or how little you want to do.

Spring Harvest 2005 offers everything you'd expect First class Bible teaching from many respected speakers. Uplifting and inspirational worship led by gifted musicians. Creative programmes for children and young people - allowing them to learn and grow in a safe and secure environment Plus the opportunity for relaxation, fellowship and making new friends.

For many it's a place of refuge • away from the busyness and pressures of everyday life, a place to focus on our Creator and respond to His voice.

Because of the tremendous demand for places, we have to apply early, and booking opens on June 10th. We will be trying for week 3 in Minehead - that means 5 nights from Tuesday April 5th to Sunday April 10th 2005. So pick up a brochure, make up your mind, speak to Mike or any of us who have been, and make sure you don't miss out on this opportunity to join us in 2005.

Daphne M

Fresh Noise

If you are in Secondary School or over 18, PLEASE REGISTER NOW to get involved in Fresh Noise Projects on June 4th & 5th, and also for Lighthouse Hazlemere children's holiday week and the Fresh Noise Summer Event (26th-30th July) at www.freshnoise.org or call Jo Hazelton on 01494 817203 for more information.

We are fast approaching the third Fresh Noise projects on Friday the 4th and Saturday the 5th of June, and the projects are looking exciting. Lighthouse Hazlemere is a Fresh Noise Project. Check out www.freshnoise.org for more details of all these projects and on how to sign up for Lighthouse as soon as possible, as places are going fast.

Prayer

Please pray that we will find enough adult leaders for the June projects, and that all the project planning and preparation would go well. Pray that the projects themselves would be successful and that they would affect those doing the projects as well as the people in the area the projects are being done.

Suggest your own project

It's still not too late to suggest your own project for the Fresh Noise Summer Event, and the closing date for the June projects is not until this Friday 21st May. This is your opportunity to do something about a need in your community. Contact Genny, Andy or Jo at the Fresh Noise office on 01494 817203 or go to the Suggest Your Own Project link at www.freshnoise.org.

Spread the word...

Tell others who you think may be interested. Fresh Noise only works if young people and adults like you get involved.

Register online today at www.freshnoise.org.

URC - Thames North Synod - Chiltern District

Invite you to : Enter the Labyrinth (or go on an awareness walk)

on Sunday 12th July from 3pm to 7pm
at

Burnham URC

Activities suitable for all ages

Followed by tea

Followed by a District Service at 6pm

Musicians & singers welcome

Drinks provided ----- Bring a picnic

For more information contact 01494 784786

Christians in Burma: 'We feel we are known by no one'

The Chin people of Burma, who number more than 1 million, and the Kachin, are both estimated to be 90% Christian. As a result of their Christian faith, they face persecution from the ruling military regime, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), on three fronts - ethnicity, politics, and religion. Yet most of the outside world is unaware.

Burma is ranked among the six worst violators of religious freedom by the U.S. State Department. No Christian, for example, can rise to the rank of head of department in the local government, or be promoted beyond the rank of major in the Army. Printing the Bible is prohibited in Chin State, and so the Chins smuggle in Bibles printed in India. In 2001, it was reported that the SPDC seized 16,000 Bibles and burned them all.

Benedict Rogers

A new facility is now available whereby the editor can obtain details of "Synod Soundings" - official, centrally produced snippets of information and articles relevant to Thames North Synod. The authors names are shown, although some of these names are probably not familiar to most of our readers.

Catch the Vision

On 30 March the Listeners from all the synods gathered at Church House to tell the "Catch the Vision" steering group what they had heard. The steering group was heartened by the clear desire for change across the church. Practically everyone agreed that we need radical proposals -- and we need them sooner than 10 years from now! There was strong support for ecumenism, making a difference to the community and the wider society, and focussing resources for mission. There was some ambivalence about lay leadership. Our synod was one of the ambivalent ones, and I wonder whether people read that part of the statement as shorthand for an ever-decreasing number of ministers. There was lively discussion about the nature of the gospel and the place of the Holy Spirit and prayer.

The steering group will meet later this month to discuss some minor changes to the statement, in preparation for its adoption at General Assembly in July. Then the hard work begins to turn it into policy proposals. We will see the first of these at Assembly 2005. Watch this space!

"Faith, Work and City"

This is a report on what Christians working in different sectors of London life think about the issues, and how they would call upon the Mayor and Assembly to improve. It is the product of eight consultation days held in the autumn. A copy will be provided to every London congregation -- watch for it! It is an excellent introduction to the issues behind the election, and it will help you reflect on what our Christian values have to say to the politicians.

WANTED: ARCHANGEL GABRIEL!

Two small but significant changes have been made to the procedure for introducing ministers to vacant pastorates. I hope to visit each of the district councils before the summer to explain this in person, but here's a preview.

In addition to preparing a full-length profile, each minister seeking a move and each pastorate will be asked to provide a one-page summary form of what they have to offer and what they are looking for. These sheets are for the use of the Moderators Meeting, so that each Moderator has a first-hand description of every minister and pastorate on the list. With this information in front of us, we hope the Spirit will lead us to see combinations we might have missed before.

Occasionally several ministers all express interest in a new vacancy on the list. In the past, the Moderators have debated over which minister should be allowed first sight of the pastorate profile. Under the new procedures, the profile can go to several ministers at a time. If two or three of them ask for an introduction, their personal profiles will all be sent to the pastorate. At that point, the vacancy committee (or elders) will be asked to choose one person to meet. If at the end of the process they have not called that minister, they are welcome to request the profile for Minister B, if he or she is still available and still interested.

Please feel free to contact me for more information.

Roberta Rominger

Synod request!

We would like to build up a list of volunteers, who we can call on at particular busy times, to help with mailings and other similar tasks. If you are able to offer your services from time to time in a voluntary capacity, please contact Bob Allen at the Synod Office. Tel: 020-7799 5000 or e-mail bob.allen@urc10.org

Things to think over

There once was a little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with cupcakes, several cans of root beer and started on his journey.

When he had gone about three blocks, he saw an elderly woman. She was sitting on a park bench watching the pigeons. The boy sat down next to her and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink from his root beer when he noticed the lady looked hungry so he offered her a cupcake. She gratefully accepted and smiled at him.

Her smile was so wonderful that he wanted to see it again, so he offered a root beer as well. Once again she smiled at him. The boy was delighted!

They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling without saying a word.

As it began to grow dark, the boy realised how tired he was and wanted to go home. He got up to leave but before he had gone no more than a few steps, he turned around and ran back to the old woman, giving her a big hug. She gave him her biggest smile ever.

When the boy arrived home his Mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face. She asked, "What has made you so happy today?" He replied, "I had lunch with God." Before his mother could respond he added, "You know what? She's got the most beautiful smile in the whole world!"

Meanwhile, the old woman, also radiant with joy, returned to her home. Her son was stunned by the look of peace on her face. He asked, "Mother, what has made you so happy today?" She replied, "I ate cupcakes in the park with God." And before her son could reply, she added, "You know, he is much younger than I expected."

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring; all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

People come into our lives for a reason, a season, or a lifetime.

Take no one for granted and embrace all equally with joy!

(This is believed to have been written by Leo Buscaglia, author of "Living, Loving and Learning.")

This is a story about four people: They seem to be found in many areas of everyday life!!

Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realised that Everybody would not do it. It finally ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Do you recognise any of them?

Interesting trivia - might be useful for the Scrabblers!!

The longest town name in the world has 167 letters. (Not allowed in Scrabble - a proper name!)

The longest word in the English language is 1909 letters long and it refers to a distinct part of DNA.

Shakespeare invented the word "assassination" and "bump."

The word "lethologica" describes the state of not being able to remember the word you want.

The following questions and answers were collected from last year's exams results and are some of the answers given by British students writing their fifth form GCSE Exams last year. (ie 16 year olds) These are genuine responses!!

Geography

Q: Name the four seasons.

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q: Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink.

A: Flirtation makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutant like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists.

Q: How is dew formed?

A: The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

Q: What is a planet?

A: A body of earth surrounded by sky.

Q: What causes the tides in the oceans?

A: The tides are a fight between the Earth and the Moon. All water tends to flow towards the moon, because there is no water on the moon, and nature abhors a vacuum. I forget where the sun joins in this fight.

Sociology

Q: What are steroids?

A: Things for keeping carpets still on the stairs.

Biology

Q: What happens to your body as you age?

A: When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental.

Q: What happens to a boy when he reaches puberty?

A: He says goodbye to his boyhood and looks forward to his adultery.

Q: Name a major disease associated with cigarettes.

A: Premature death.

Q: How can you delay milk turning sour?

A: Keep it in the cow. [He got an A]

Q: How are the main parts of the body categorised? (E.g. abdomen.)

A: The body is consisted into three parts - the brainium, the borax the abdominal cavity. The brainium contains the brain, the borax contains the heart and lungs, and the abdominal cavity contains the five bowels, A, E, I, O and U.

Q: What is the Fibula?

A: A small lie.

Q: What does "varicose" mean?

A: Nearby.

Q: Give the meaning of the term "Caesarean Section."

A: The caesarean section is a district in Rome.

Q: What is a seizure?

A: A Roman emperor.

Q: What is a terminal illness?

A: When you are sick at the airport.

Q: Give an example of a fungus. What is a characteristic feature?

A: Mushrooms. They always grow in damp places and they look like umbrellas.

English

Q: Use the word "judicious" in a sentence to show you understand its meaning.

A: Hands that judicious can be soft as your face. {do dishes}

Q: What does the word "benign" mean?

A: Benign is what you will be after you be eight.

Technology

Q: What is a turbine?

A: Something an Arab or Sheik wears on his head.

Our history

Chapter 2 of the writings of Rev Auty in 1924

WHEN the limit of time allowed by the Act of Uniformity expired some two thousand Rectors and Vicars left their charges rather than subscribe to its provisions. These men, says Green, "were the most learned and the most active of their order. The bulk of the great livings throughout the country were in their hands. They stood at head of the London clergy, as the London clergy stood in general repute at the head of their class throughout England. They occupied the higher posts at the two Universities. No English divine, save Jeremy Taylor, rivaled Howe as a preacher. No parson was so renowned a controversialist, or so indefatigable a parish priest, as Baxter. And behind these men stood a fifth of the whole body of the clergy, men whose zeal and labour had diffused throughout the country a greater appearance of piety and religion than it ever displayed before."

It was one of these godly and earnest ministers who became the first regular Dissenting Pastor in High Wycombe — the Rev. Samuel Clark, ejected from the living at Grendon Underwood, Bucks.

Whether Mr. Clark came to Wycombe in 1662, or within the next year or two, is not certain. In his "Brief History of the Church of Christ in connection with Crendon Lane Meeting House," published in 1848, the late Mr. John Parker wrote that Mr. Clark removed to Upper Winchendon, the seat of Philip Lord Wharton, the great friend of Nonconformists, where he "found a refuge from the storm," and that he "afterwards retired to Chepping Wycombe and took up his abode in Easton-street, and after the manner of the Apostles, formed a Church in his house, over which he presided, up to the period of his death."

The late Rev. W. H. Summers (formerly Pastor of the Beaconsfield Congregational Church) whose "History of the Congregational Churches of the Berks, South Oxon, and South Bucks Association" is a standard work, was doubtful whether local tradition correctly assumed Mr. Clark's establishment of a Church in Wycombe so early as 1662. He pointed to a record showing that in 1669 " Mr, Clark, an ejected Minister, "held services at Haddenham (near Upper Winchendon)", and to the fact that upon the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672 " the howse of Samuel Clerke in Winchingdon " was licensed in that year as a place of Presbyterian meeting.

Religious Poetry Required

BOOKMARK PUBLICATIONS . . . invites all writers to submit their poetry religious and non-religious for possible inclusion in our forthcoming anthologies.

Please note:

We do not charge for publishing your work, we choose poetry for our anthologies on its merit.

Guidelines:

- 1) 2 Copies of each poem must be submitted.
- 2) The poems must be your own work.
- 3) Poems must be in readable text, typed not hand written.
- 4) Text must be double-spaced.
- 5) One copy must have the author's name, address and phone number.
- 6) You may submit up to three poems.
- 7) The poems must be titled.
- 8) Poems should be no longer than 30 lines.
- 9) Enclose a large stamped self-addressed envelope.

Send to:

BOOKMARK PUBLICATIONS, 61 Chingford Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4PW
Enquires: Tel 020 8527 3284 (Mon - Fri 10 a.m - 6 p.m only) [Proprietor: Brian Magee]

But it is not all good news. Yes church attendance there is higher. But an increasingly aging congregation attends most churches. There is much grey hair in evidence. Our URC experience helped us form the opinion that in about 25 years time the churches in the Netherlands are likely to be as empty as they are in the UK. And the ministers and people over there are aware of this impending problem. They were very keen to discuss with us reasons why the church now seemed irrelevant to younger generations. They were discovering for the first time a real need to construct new and specialised youth and children's work programmes. The old ways of doing things were no longer working.

I had one interesting conversation with a group of church people who were concerned that the local village Protestant school had no religious meaning to most of the parents who chose to send their children to that school. (There was also a Catholic school and a State school in the village.) They said parents chose the Protestant school because it had a good academic record, and because they approved of the moral ethos of the school, but attendance at the school was not resulting in a connection to the church being formed. They asked; what could they do to change things? I met another group of retired men in a small town of Bussum who had set up a church publicity group to get their church known in the community. Nobody new was coming through the doors of their building. So they were producing new church noticeboards and signs and were printing leaflets and posters to display in town. They were also setting up open church sessions for quiet prayer and coffee and chat. Typically they had a good budget to do things well, but even so, the results of their labours seemed slim. In the morning that we were there only one person came through the doors.

In many ways the problems they now faced over lack of attendance and seeming irrelevant are just like ours. Churches in the UK have been wrestling with these problems for a longer time. We seem to have failed for the most part to discover the right answers. And we have suffered numerically and financially for our failure. Or perhaps we have discovered the right answers, but have been too timid and too conservative, to boldly act out the changes necessary. So our prayers and our wishes are that the new united Protestant Church might discover a way forward to a bright and vibrant expression of Christ's Kingdom in the Netherlands. And perhaps it's still not too late for us to learn from our larger neighbour.

Mike

*The next edition of the Recorder will be published on 27th June
Closing date for contributions is Friday 18th June.*

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

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

Prayer Page

(Prepared by the choir)

We give thanks for the beauty all around us – for the explosion of colour everywhere, the scent of the blossom, the song of the birds, and the joy of long summer days.

*To God who makes all lovely things,
How happy must our praises be!
Each day a new surprise he brings
To make us glad his world to see.*

As we celebrate Trinity Sunday and our own Church Gift Day, we remember the simplicity of the early Celtic faith as expressed in “St Patrick’s breastplate”.

*“I bind unto myself the name,
The strong name of the Trinity,
By invocation of the same,
The three in One, and One in Three.
Of whom all nature hath creation;
Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:
Praise to the Lord of my salvation,
Salvation is of Christ the Lord.”*

Eternal God and Father, by whose power we are created and by whose love we are redeemed: Guide and strengthen us by Your Spirit, that we may give ourselves to Your service and live in love to one another and to you – through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

On Father’s Day we give thanks for family love and caring relationships – but we remember also, fathers struggling to bring up children on their own, fathers in Third World countries who have to watch their children die through poverty and disease, and children to whom the name of father means violence and cruelty.

Loving Heavenly Father, give us understanding that we may rejoice and be glad with those who are happy, yet weep with those who suffer. Give us grace not to pass by suffering without eyes to see. Give us for our hallowing thoughts which pass into prayer, prayers which pass into love, and love which passes into life with you for ever.

Amen

