



March 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

'Lent – A Time of Preparation for Easter'

Revd. Michael Shrubsole

Minister of Trinity United Reformed Church

Lent begins as usual on Ash Wednesday, 25th February, and starts a season of 40 days (excluding Sundays) to lead us up to Easter Sunday. The intention of the season of Lent is to encourage Christians to prepare themselves anew for the challenge of the Easter message of the resurrected Lord Jesus. Many of us do this through a practice of self-denial and the use of the time and money so released to be used in prayer and charity and social good. (It is not about dieting or self inflicted suffering!) Some of us join in with ecumenical home groups, or undertake a course of private reading and study for the season. But this year something new is on offer.

Mel Gibson has produced a new film 'The Passion of the Christ' with exactly this purpose in mind. It is being launched in America on Ash Wednesday. Here in the UK we will have to wait until 26th March before it is launched here, but that is still time for those who are keen to see this film before Easter 2004.

Why should you see this film? Why go and see a harsh, challenging re-enactment of the torturous death of Jesus? Why watch a grim recitation of the last day of this rejected man? Why pay to sit through an ancient-language film in Aramaic, Latin, Hebrew and Greek with English subtitles? Why go to a film which some scholars claim does not follow accurately enough modern archaeological and theological knowledge? Why see a film which some Jewish groups claim is anti-Semitic?

Perhaps because James Caviezel, the Catholic actor who plays the part of Jesus when asked if playing Christ deepened his faith, replied: "I love him more than I ever knew possible. I love him more than my wife, my family. There were times when I was up there (on the cross) and I could barely speak. Continual hypothermia is so excruciating. I connected to a place I could have never, ever gone. I don't want people to see me. All I want them to see is Jesus Christ." When he was asked why Mel Gibson wanted to make this film, he replied: "He told me that he went through a rough stretch in his life, and that he rediscovered the Gospels about 12 years ago. He began meditating on the passion and death of Jesus. In doing so, he said the wounds of Christ healed his wounds. And I think the film expresses that." So, perhaps you might want to try a film of which Mel Gibson says: "The Holy Ghost was working through me on this film." Unusually this film also has a papal endorsement, Pope John Paul II says: "It is as it was." And from quite a different Christian elder statesman, Billy Graham says of the film: "The Passion of the Christ is a lifetime of sermons in one movie."

But to get back to the particular value of this film to anyone who sees it during Lent; Mel Gibson himself says: "This film collectively blames humanity for the death of Jesus. Now there are no exemptions there. All right? I'm the first on the line for culpability. I did it. Christ died for all men for all times." And despite the horror of the story, it is all about love: "It is my deepest belief, as I am sure it is yours, that all who ever breathe life on this earth are children of God, and my most binding obligation to them, as a brother in this waking world is to love them." God bless you in your Lent season activities whatever they are.

Mike

Minister :
Rev Michael Shrubsole,

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

Church Secretary:
Mrs Margaret Lewis,

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

March 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.

7th March - Morning Worship with Communion. Luke 13:31-35; Genesis 15:1-17;
Philippians 3:17-4:1

14th March - Morning Worship. Fair Trade Sunday Luke 13:1-9; Isaiah 55:1-9;
1 Corinthians 10:1-13

21st March - All-age Worship. Mothering Sunday. Luke 15:1-32; Joshua 5:9-12;
2 Corinthians 5:16-21



28th March - Morning Worship. John 12:1-8; Isaiah 43:16-21; Philippians 3:4b-14

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.

21st March - Evening Communion

Rotas for March

Not included in this version

What's on in March



Monday 15th March - Theatre outing - "About Alice"
Meet at the Swan at 7.30pm

Monday 29th March - Rev Mike Shrubsole - "Easter theme"
(8pm. Hostess - Louise Shrubsole)

WOMEN'S MEETING

Tuesday 2nd March

Panama and the Womens' World Day of Prayer

Tuesday 9th March

Favourite Hymns

Tuesday 16th March

Video - The Isle of Man

Tuesday 23rd March

Poems & Readings for Spring.

Bring & Buy

Tuesday 30th March

Communion Service - Rev Mike Shrubsole



All meetings start at 2.30 in the Lower Schoolroom

12th & 26th March

Scrabble

The "What's on" scriptwriter is short of words this month.
Don't you be like that - get your thinking caps on!



Church Walk

Saturday 27th March

I am leading an easy-paced 3 - 3½ mile walk from Bradenham Manor NT car park (Grid ref 828970) at 10.30am.. I am sorry this is on the same day as the Trinity Concert, but it was arranged long ago and you have the afternoon to recover, if you like to join us. Details from Olive Shepherd.

Not included in this version

Diary dates

Elders Meeting - Tuesday 2nd March, 7.30pm. in the Schoolroom

Steering Group - Wednesday 3rd March, 7.30pm in the Schoolroom

Property Management Committee - Tuesday 9th March, 8.00pm in the Schoolroom

District Council Meeting - Wednesday 10th March at Holtspur Church

Thames North Synod Meeting - Saturday 13th March, Friends House, London

Church Annual General Meeting - Tuesday 16th March, 8.00pm. in the Sanctuary.

This is our annual meeting to receive reports, approve the finances for 2003 and elect officers, post holders and Elders for the coming year. A lot of business to do and it is very important that this meeting is WELL SUPPORTED BY EVERYONE as we encourage and support each other for the coming year. Please make every effort to attend your AGM. You will be missed if absent! See February's Recorder for a reminder of what to do to prepare for this meeting.

The Children Act (1989)

Good Practice Guide – Safeguarding Children

MEETING

Wednesday 17th March, 7.30pm in the Schoolroom
With Stephen Collins, Youth and Children's Work Officer



Come to a meeting to hear about the Children Act, the URC Good Practice Guide, what it means to our church, and how we are going to put it into practice.

For 1) Elders, 2) Youth and Children's Workers, and specially, 3) all others interested in helping make the church a safe place in matters of child protection.

Further details from Mike Shrubsole, 637592.

Open All Hours - Nurturing the Open Church. Discipleship & Evangelism

Saturday 27th March
St James URC, Buckhurst Hill
9.30am to 12.30pm

Guest speakers:- Laurence Gamlen (CMS), John Hardaker, Peter Hurter, Alan Kirkcaldy and Rod Woods

Pre-booking is essential - contact Mike for more information.



A taste for justice: Fairtrade as Mission

January 2004

Fair dealing in trade and employment goes to the heart of the Gospel. We cannot claim to love God, whom we have not seen, if we are exploiting His poorer or more vulnerable children (even if they do live far away).

We do not, of course, intend to exploit anyone. We pray for Christian Aid and others engaged in emergency and long term development work, and no doubt support them sacrificially. Yet unfair trading in the 'international market' means that, overall, wealth flows from the very poor to the comparatively rich. Unfair trading increasingly undermines both the efforts of poor peoples to help themselves and our practical support.

The Fairtrade movement was started by people who recognised that such international trading is unjust, biased and inequitable. Fairtrade organisations work with producers right across the 'Two-Thirds World*' ensuring that they truly gain from taking part in trade, rather than suffer from it.

There are four pillars to 'fair trade*': a guaranteed fair price for the product, credit available in advance of the receipt of goods, a direct relationship and a long term partnership with the producer.

We may not be aware of it in our super-markets, but the prices of coffee, tea and other 'commodities' on the international market fluctuate widely - **and** can often go below the costs of production. Coffee prices reached a thirty-year low in 2002, affecting thousands of coffee growers world wide, while tea producers are currently hit hard by 44% drop in tea prices in real terms between 1970 and 2001. (The cost of production is generally more than 70 US cents/lb, but prices are currently about 49 cents/lb.) In India, for example, hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost due to a 22% price plunge. Only a Fairtrade agreement offers those producers stability and some protection from violent fluctuations in price in commodity markets.

*Ugandan tea-grower, **Jossiah Kinanga**, owns a small share in the Kayonza Collective. Since the Collective has been registered as a Fairtrade supplier, things have started changing. Guaranteed better prices and the security of long-term contracts mean better working conditions, fairer wages and improved health and safety (these are requirements for Fairtrade producer groups). The community decides how to invest the Fairtrade premium paid: they've used it for things we might take for granted like a maternity unit, road repairs (picked tea has to be transported quickly), schools - even that window on to the world, an e-mail facility.*

***Edgar**, a Fairtrade coffee farmer from Costa Rica, hopes that his children will complete their schooling. He did not go to school himself. Two of his children have received financial support for their education from his co-operative, Coopeldos through a scheme funded by the Fairtrade premium. The farmers of Coopeldos sell 30-40% of their coffee to the Fairtrade market, for which they are guaranteed a price that covers costs of production and living expenses. The rest they have to sell at the world market price, which for the last few years has been below the cost of production. Edgar fears that without Fairtrade things would go downhill and he would not be able to pay his debts.*

If all our churches served Fairtrade coffee and tea, more families like Edgar's and Jossiah's could escape poverty. While we may not *feel* particularly wealthy, there is no question about our responsibility to all those who cannot even afford the basics of life - especially when they are our trading partners

Becoming a Fairtrade Church

This is something that we all can do. The criteria are that you should: i. use only Fairtrade tea and coffee for all meetings for which you have responsibility. ii. move towards using other Fairtrade products (such as sugar, biscuits, and fruit) iii. promote Fairtrade during Fairtrade Fortnight - and through other activities whenever possible.

Trade justice

If you've been following the Trade justice campaign, you'll know that subsidies to European producers are also destroying livelihoods in poor countries. The world sugar market, for example, is chronically over-supplied but the E.C. *still* produces far more than it needs and then exports the surplus at prices well below the cost of production. This has depressed world sugar prices by as much as 30% and ruined the markets for Mozambique, South Africa and poor sugar-producing countries in the Caribbean. If we buy cane sugar through Traidcraft, or their biscuits, small-scale cane sugar farmers in Paraguay receive a fair price plus the Fair-trade premium to fund organisational development and social projects.



Saul Garcia is a farmer in Belize. After Hurricane Iris, Fairtrade enabled him to replant his cocoa trees

Fairtrade and Christian Mission. By the Revd Dr Chris Sugden, *chair of the Traidcraft Foundation Trustees*

Jesus' mission was summarised as announcing that the Kingdom of God has drawn near. The Kingdom fulfils God's purposes in creation. Jesus announced that the reality (but not the full extent) of the Kingdom had come to earth through his ministry. His mission is therefore about more than personal relationships. It is also about enabling God's will to be done in all areas of human activity. Jesus' ministry was 'to bring good news to the poor'.

One of God's purposes in creation that the Kingdom fulfils is that men and women together steward this creation. The corruption of the relationships between different people, and between people and the environment, is an expression of the corruption of their relationship with God. Therefore, part of our expression of salvation in this world is to demonstrate the recovery of our responsibility for creation and to enable people to recover their position as stewards of creation. Christian mission throughout the Two-Thirds World has been a response to the needs of the whole person to be treated with dignity, to exercise stewardship and to be able to support a family.

As Jesus met different groups of people, he sought the 'frontier' of the good news of the Kingdom with their situation. For each group

of people, we could imagine Jesus asking, 'If the Kingdom of God came tomorrow morning, what would change most significantly for them?' Seeking justice through trade is a frontier of the Kingdom with the current economic order. Working for justice through trade demonstrates what the Kingdom looks like when it encounters the injustice of the world economic trading systems.

Poor and non-poor in partnership

Fair Trade also opens a relationship between the poor and the non-poor. Christian organisations engaged in ministry with the poor can be signs of the new identity that God gives poor and non-poor as they serve as partners that express the new sharing in one community between people divided by one of the major causes of division in society - Mammon.

Christian organisations engaged in Fair Trade activities, such as Traidcraft, Tearcraft, and Shared Interest, provide a mechanism by which resources are channelled to assist poor producers to fulfil their human potential. By paying the premium price of fairtrade products we are linked in a partnership that gives poor producers a market, and provides them with a way of climbing out of poverty, while also questioning many of the assumptions of their own culture and ours.

Why Christian?

Assisting poor people to fulfil their calling to be stewards, through a mechanism of trade conducted in accord with the principles of justice, depends on a particular view of humanity. This view sees human beings as more than objects of charity; human relations as defined by more than economics.

Christians view the cross of Christ as the one place where we **see** evil overcome in the world. Therefore, any activity that expresses the victory of good over evil. and takes forward the forces of life over against the forces of darkness is ultimately attributable to Christ's victory over evil on the cross. Those who work to forward the well being of humanity without consciously acknowledging the source or goal of life are yet able to make their contribution because of what the Christ achieved on the cross. The witness of Christian partnership is to point everyone involved to the source, empowerment and goal of such a process, which more often than not will become a relevant issue somewhere along the line.

*Abbreviated from **Fair Trade as Christian Mission**, by Chris Sugden, Grove booklets on Ethics, and article in Transformation Vol. 17 No 3 July 2000. Please ask for more information on Traidcraft, Tearcraft or Shared Interest*

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HIGH WYCOMBE CENTRAL AID SOCIETY

Central Aid held its annual Get Together in January at the Guildhall and the purpose of this event is to thank voluntary workers, supporters and well wishers for their help. It was as usual a friendly and informal affair as office staff and guests talked to each other about what they all do to help the less fortunate among us. Such needy people are usually referred to Central Aid by Citizens bureau or the social services and the help is through Care in the Community, the Furniture Warehouse or the Pop-In for the over 50s in the Reggie Goves Centre where they also now have a pension service.

So if you have some time or the inclination to give some Voluntary help (badly needed) phone 01494 555890. Central Aid is also willing to speak at meetings about what they do so if there are amongst you any programme organisers looking for a local speaker talking about a local organisation, here is an idea!

Olivia Price

PS: Trinity URC makes an annual donation to this charity - usually in the region of £100.

A challenge to us all?

“Then I heard the Lord say,” “Whom shall I send?, Who will be our messenger?” “ I answered,” “I will go! Send me!”

I write this on the evening of 8th February, following Mike’s sermon today, although I had been thinking of writing it since attending the Elders meeting last Tuesday night.

By the time you read this you will all know that we are looking for five Elders, at the March AGM. You will also know that we have, for some time, been missing key workers in Junior Church and key post holders in other areas of our church life.

The calling to these ministries is critical to the lifeblood of any congregation – in our present condition it could be critical to our very existence in the medium term.

Elders provide the pastoral support which keeps the church fellowship alive in its faith and commitment; Junior Church Leaders inspire the young in the faith and reach out through their ministry to parents and uninvolved families; Key Post Holders bring talents which invigorate church life in other areas.

I confess that I have experienced times, in the past, when I felt alienated from our community at Trinity, but then, there were many able church folk, who sustained and built our fellowship, during my “sabbatical”. Not so now! We have many elderly people who need the “church’s” care in the twilight of their lives. We have a few committed young families, who represent our hope for the future, who need to be sustained by the “church”. We have hardly any people of teenage age. And many who have served in the past are no longer to the fore, for whatever reason!

And, yet good things are happening – witness the work of Friday Café, our embryonic plans for building renewal and our sustained excellent Giving.

But we are (in my view) at the brink and the challenge of ministry – Elder, Junior Church Leader, Key Post Holder – demands a response from each of us who has the capacity and can reply, “Send me Lord”!

I B

2003 Christmas Appeals

I am pleased to let you know that the following amounts were raised and paid to our nominated charities:

Crisis	£115.83
Christian Aid	£297.23
Children in Distress	<u>£204.80</u>
Total	£617.86

I am also pleased to confirm that the Christmas Card Post Box raised £25 for the Restoration Fund.

Treasurer



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

Prepared by the Christian Women of Panama

In faith - Women shape the future

The following services have been arranged:

10.30am Trinity URC. Speaker- Rev Julie Cartwright (Creche available)

1.30pm St Anne's, Wycombe Marsh. Speaker - Rev Gerry Foster

7.30 pm The Pastures Free Methodist Church, Downley. Speaker - Miss Sarah Armitage

There is a choir practice at 10.30 am on Monday 1st March at Trinity
(Note the change of venue).

Thank you to all the people who have volunteered to help. We look forward to seeing as many people from Trinity as possible at the morning service. It is not exclusively for women - men are invited as well.

OS & SS



It is "Summer time" again. Remember to put your clocks forward before you go to bed on Saturday 27th March.

Easter Services and Events for Holy Week



Palm Sunday, 10.30am. 4th April

Communion Service

Maundy Thursday, 8.00pm. 8th April

Communion Service

We welcome friends from Wesley Methodist Church to share with us.

Good Friday, 10.15am. 9th April

A meditative service.

We welcome friends from Union Baptist Church to share with us.

Good Friday Walk of Witness, 11.00am 9th April, Assemble in the Railway Station forecourt for a 30 minute silent walk with hymns and readings with Christians from other town centre churches.

Easter Sunday Sunrise Worship, (Sunrise 06.27 BST) Meet by Coates Lane playground at 05.45am for a walk up to Disraeli monument for a short act of worship at sunrise. Back to the Schoolroom for breakfast, in good time for morning worship in the church. Come and join us. Book breakfast with Margaret Lewis.

Easter Sunday, 10.30am. 11th April

Communion Service

Elders Elections 2004

A reminder that nominations for Elders for the coming year are required. See February Recorder for details. Please ensure your nomination is with the Church Secretary on or before Sunday 7th March so that a complete list of nominations may be announced on Sundays 7th and 14th.

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

Christian Humour?

You need to be able to laugh at yourself in order to have a healthy attitude towards life. I'm sure that's true. Satire and humour helps to deflate the pompous, and rattles the pedestals we build, on which we stand our heroes and ourselves. Christians need to be reminded to keep thinking critically about what our faith in Jesus Christ as the one we call Lord means to us. Well meant humour can be very powerful, not in a destructive sense, but in a liberating and loosening manner which frees us to go forward into new endeavours and build new enterprises in our lives and society.

This is just a preamble to let you know that one of my much liked authors, Adrian Plass, has had a long (too long to reprint here) and worthwhile interview published on the web. You can view it at: www.thedoormagazine.com/adrianplass.html. The whole of www.thedoormagazine.com/home.html is an affectionate, satirical Christian site based in America and is well worth a browse. In the UK a similar site is www.shipoffools.com which is currently promoting the 11th Commandment text message competition which you may have heard about in the news. What would your 11th commandment be? (M.S.)

Humour - or wisdom?

What I've Learned Over The Years

I've learned that I like my teacher because she cries when we sing "Silent Night". --Age 7

I've learned that you can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk. --Age 7

I've learned that when I wave to people in the country, they stop what they are doing and wave back. --Age 9

I've learned that just when I get my room the way I like it, Mom makes me clean it up.--Age 13

I've learned that if you want to cheer yourself up, you should try cheering someone else up.--Age 13

I've learned that silent company is often more healing than words of advice. --Age 24

I've learned that brushing my child's hair is one of life's great pleasures. --Age 29

I've learned that wherever I go, the worlds' worst drivers have followed me there. --Age 29

I've learned...that if someone says something unkind about me, I must live so that no one will believe it. --Age 39

I've learned that there are people who love you dearly but just don't know how to show it.--Age 41

I've learned that you can make someone's day by simply sending them a little card. --Age 44

I've learned that children and grandparents are natural allies. --Age 46

I've learned that singing "Amazing Grace" can lift my spirits for hours. --Age 49

I've learned that motel mattresses are better on the side away from the phone. --Age 50

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a man by the way he handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights. --Age 52

I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you miss them terribly after they die. --Age 53

I've learned that making a living is not the same thing as making a life. --Age 58

I've learned that if you want to do something positive for your children, try to improve your marriage. --Age 61

I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance. --Age 62

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catchers mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back. --Age 64

I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But if you focus on your family, the needs of others, your work, meeting new people, and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you. --Age 65

I've learned that whenever I decide something with kindness, I usually make the right decision. --Age 66

I've learned that everyone can use a prayer. --Age 72

I've learned that it pays to believe in miracles. And to tell the truth, I've seen several. --Age 73

I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one. --Age 82

I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love that humans touch--holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back.--Age 85

I've learned that I still have a lot to learn.--Age 92



Dear friends

Congratulations

In the last three years it has been my pleasure at this time of year to write to United Reformed Churches to congratulate them on the success of Commitment for Life. This year is no different as once again you have raised a record total of £564,000.

At a time when Commitment for Life partners are facing difficult situations, most especially in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and in Zimbabwe, such a generous financial contribution is of vital importance. On behalf of your partners and Christian Aid I would like to thank you again for your selfless generosity throughout 2003. It really does make a difference.

Commitment for Life is about much more than just money. I am aware that over the last year United Reformed Churches have been at the forefront of the Trade Justice campaign, have been deeply involved in Fairtrade Fortnight and have been outspoken on issues such as the situation in the Occupied Territories. This tireless campaigning for justice is just as vital as the financial contribution you make and I have no doubt that over the next twelve months you will be working just as hard to make justice central to the lives of your local churches.

All of us at Christian Aid value the relationship we have with the United Reformed Church. This year we look forward to working with you and praying with you, and with our partners so that together we may bring good news to the poor, release to captives and freedom to the oppressed.

Thank you.

Daleep Mukarji

Director

Christian Aid has arranged a series of inspiring evenings. To find out more, and to book your place, call 01865 246818 or e-mail to oxford@christian-aid.org

Reading: Wesley Methodist Church - Tuesday 30 March
Oxford: Lime Walk Methodist Church, Headington - Wednesday 31 March
Slough: St Andrew's Methodist Church - Thursday 1st April

Hear first hand from Christian Aid partner, **Abate Desale** of the **Ethiopian Orthodox Church**.

There will be the chance to discover what life is really like in the **Occupied Palestinian Territories** and to take a closer look at Christian Aid's **Trade Justice Campaign**.

The evenings will begin at 7pm and finish by 9.30pm.

Thank you

A big thank you from the B Clan to everyone involved in making Sunday 25th January such a special day for us. To hear "The Lord bless you and keep you", sung in the presence of so many people, as it was at Andrew's Baptism in Scotland, was particularly moving. Our thanks go to Margaret for inviting other fellowships to join us for the Moderator's

visit, to Nancy for baking the cake and preparing the flowers, to Anne H and Linda C for organising coffee for so many people, to Louise for all her help with the day and to Mike and Alasdair for a truly memorable act of worship, which, from the feedback we have received, was appreciated by both the "captives" and the "committed".

It was a day which will hold a special place in our memories for the rest of our lives.

Maureen and I an

SOCIAL DATES

Church Coffee Morning - Saturday **March 13th** 10.30am till 12 noon in the Lower Schoolroom. Come along and enjoy a chat and a cup of tea or coffee with friends. Everyone welcome.

An Evening of Variety - Saturday **March 27th** - in Crendon Hall 7. 0 pm

Have you been practising your party piece for this evening of entertainment? I hope so. The programme is beginning to take shape with singing and instrumental pieces, monologues and other comedy items, but there is room for more. Tickets are now on sale at £3 each, £2 for concessions. So if you are too shy to get up on the stage, relax in the audience and enjoy the evening that way.

Caribbean Evening - Friday Evening **April 30th** - with Silent Auction of Items and Promises. Just a reminder to keep this date free for this evening with a difference.

United Reformed Church - Silence & Retreats Network

A retreat is a chance to step outside the routine of daily life and centre ourselves on God. Retreats and quiet days are held at centres throughout the country. They include prayer with the bible, or music, or art. They might last a day, a week-end, a week or a month.

For more information, contact our Synod's link - Rev Bridget Powell. 01494 784786

*The next edition of the Recorder will be published on 28th March
Closing date for contributions is Friday 19th March.*

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Prayer Page
(Prepared by the Womens' Meeting)

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2004

A thought for the Morning

There is no place where God is not, wherever I go, there God is.
Now and always he upholds me with his power and keeps me safe in his love.

March 5th is Women's World Day of Prayer.

Pray for the services being held all over the world that day and for the Christian women of Panama who wrote this year's service.
Their theme is "IN FAITH - WOMEN SHAPE THE FUTURE"

A Prayer for Lent which runs through March

Almighty God, who see-est that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves, keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Mothering Sunday is on March 21st.

It is a time when we remember our mothers and our mother church.

Thank you, Lord, for our mothers. We remember today their loving care and their ceaseless love for us. May we show them by our gifts, our words and our actions that we love them and care about them too.

Father, we thank you for the family of the church. Thank you for those who are true mothers within our Christian family. May they know your blessing and strength as they care for others.

Families and friends are often scattered over the world today. In the following verses Isobel Stevenson remembers them prayerfully.

Holy Father, in your mercy
Hear our earnest prayer
Keep our loved ones now far distant
Neath your care
When in sorrow, when in danger
When in loneliness
In your love look down and comfort
Their distress.
May the Joy of your salvation
Be their strength and stay
May they love and may they praise you
Day by day.



Finally a prayer for the Night Watches

Watch, dear Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend to your sick ones, O Lord Christ, rest your weary ones, bless your dying ones, soothe your suffering ones, pity your afflicted ones, shield your joyous ones and all for your love's sake. Amen.
[St Augustine 354-450]