

Monday 3 April	Men's Fellowship: Eric Fowler's Life in Show Business
Wednesday 5 April	Holy Communion at 11 am followed by a light lunch
Wednesday 12 April	Monthly Prayer Meeting in church, 8 pm
Thursday 13 April	Maundy Thursday Supper in the Church Hall, 8 pm
Friday 14 April	Good Friday <i>Full details of Easter events appear on page 7</i>
Sunday 16 April	Easter Day
Tuesday 25 April	Confirmation Service at Christ Church Esher
Tuesday 25 April	New Marriage Course begins
Thursday 27 April	Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Wednesday 3 May	Holy Communion at 11 am, followed by a light lunch
Monday 8 May	Men's Fellowship Annual Service, AGM and Closing Supper
Wednesday 10 May	Monthly Prayer Meeting in church, 8 pm
Monday 15 May	Anchor: Jeneen Thomson on the Rainbow Trust
Monday 15 May	New Baptism course begins, 8.15 pm
Friday 28 July-7 August	Summer Mission to Ukraine

REGULAR SUNDAY SERVICES

	8 am	10 am	6.30 pm
1st Sunday	Holy Communion (trad)	Morning Praise	Evening Prayer
2nd Sunday	Holy Communion (trad)	Morning Praise	Holy Communion
3rd Sunday	Holy Communion (trad)	All Age Service with baptisms	Evening Prayer with prayer for healing
4th Sunday	Holy Communion BCP	Holy Communion	Evening Prayer
5th Sunday	Holy Communion (trad)	Morning Praise	Evening Prayer

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Monthly on a Wednesday (see diary above): Holy Communion (Prayer Book)
 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, at 2 pm: Toddlers' Praise (in the Church Hall)
 Every Wednesday, at 7 am: Prayers for 30 minutes (in the Quiet Room)
 Every Thursday, at 3.45 pm: Intercessions (in the Quiet Room)
 Monthly on a Thursday, at 11.45 am at Wingham Court: Holy Communion
 4th Thursday in month, at 11.30 am at the Day Centre: Holy Communion

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April 2006

Free distribution

INSIDE YOUR EASTER MAGAZINE



CLAYGATE'S NEW VICAR
 Philip Plyming introduces
 himself - pages 8 & 9

RELIGION AND WAR
 David King investigates
 the link - pages 12 & 13
 and a great deal more!

We extend a warm
 invitation to you to

Join us in
 celebrating
 Easter at
 Holy Trinity

Full details of our services are
 inside, and we look forward
 to welcoming you to share
 the joy of this season with us.

VICAR: (Vacancy)

CURATE: THE REVD DAVID KING

LAY ASSISTANT MINISTER: VALERIE BAGLEY

NON-STIPENDIARY MINISTER: THE REVD PROF LINDA MORGAN

COMMUNITY WORKER: STUART WRIGHT

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Was the referee wrong to award Ireland their first try in the match against England? Some might think that it is rather late to be still talking about the Six Nations Championship. However for me, so traumatised was I by England's appalling record that I have only just managed to bring myself to recall those grim memories. So back to my original question. One of the great things about sport is the debate which follows any match as to what really happened. Often the arguments presented will be passionate, articulate and well-informed - at least those of the England supporters. And yet even the most ardent fan reading this letter will admit that whatever the decision as to what really happened it makes little difference to their lives.

What does this have to do with Easter? Whilst some events which we might debate have little impact on our lives, some have a huge impact. For those trying to clear the name of a loved one from wrongful conviction, the truth is all-important. For those who seek reconciliation after long periods of conflict, it is often an agreement about what really happened that is the main sticking point. For those with a disease previously thought to be incurable, the news of a possible cure has huge significance. Sometimes the truth of something has all the significance in the world.

At times in all of the talk about Easter, the significance of whether or not Jesus actually rose has been lost. As so often, doubting Thomas is the one who brings us back to the heart of Easter. I wonder what we might have said on meeting Jesus risen from the dead. Some of us would still have refused to believe. Others would have been left speechless (quite a feat for me.) Perhaps we would have immediately started wondering how this was possible and start asking what this meant for a hope of life after death. Thomas does none of these, he simply says "my Lord and my God."

Faced with the risen Jesus, Thomas realised something about Jesus. He realised that Jesus had risen because God would not let the one who had lived a life of perfect faithful obedience to Him to remain in the grip of death. In some way he recognised that God was giving all authority to His son, that Jesus was Lord over all. More than that, he realised that Jesus was God. As a result, Thomas also knew that Jesus was his lord and his God.

The resurrection of Jesus has not changed. It is still the event in history which defines us more than any other. If it is false then all Christians are wasting their time; if it is true then we must answer to the one who is Lord over all, lord over us.

David

From the Parish Registers

We offer congratulations on the marriage of:

Tim Blair and
Judith Gordon

(Blessing of marriage on 11th March)

We offer sympathy to the relatives and friends of:

Sidney Ernest Hall
(1st February)

Aidan Keith Buley
(8th February)

Joyce Margaret Hurren
(13th February)

Lucy Clarke
(24th February)

Gilbert Harold Frederick Vincent
(28th February)

Brenda Gibbs

Congratulations to Brenda who at a ceremony in County Hall on 6th March received a Surrey County Council Award for Volunteering. The award recognised Brenda's 27 years of work with Claygate Care, most of that time as the organisation's Telephone Coordinator, for which we all thank her.

Contributions to the May issue of Insight are welcomed and, please, should reach the Editor by Wednesday 19th April.

Parish Personalities

Katy King, who runs Toddlers' Praise on Wednesdays and is married to Holy Trinity's Curate, is the subject of this month's Insight Inquisition.

Where were you brought up?

In Pinner, Middlesex.

How long have you lived in Claygate?

Nearly three years (since David became Curate).

What do you like most about it?

Bumping into people, when out and about.

And if there was one thing you could change?

Horse poo on the roads!

Where would you locate your ideal home?

By the sea.

What is the least welcome part of your daily round?

Housework.

Which personal trait do you struggle most to overcome?

Impatience.

What food are you most partial to?

Crispy aromatic duck.

And leave on the side of your plate?

Shellfish.

What do you watch on television?

The West Wing.

What would your desert island book be?

'The Hiding Place' by Corrie Ten Boon.

What is your favourite music?

Worship music.

And your favourite hymn?

"And can it be".

Which passage of the Bible is most telling for you personally?

Deuteronomy chapter 6, verses 4 to 7.

Do you have an unfulfilled ambition?

To keep chickens.

In business since the year 1199

Lt Col John Kimmins was the speaker at the March meeting of the Claygate Men's Fellowship, and he had an audience of around 70 to hear from him about the Queen's Messengers. Speaking of his own experiences as a Queen's Messenger from 1979 till 1997, John also gave us an account of the history of the corp of King's Messengers, from their first being mentioned in the accounts of King John.

From the personal confidential messengers of the king, the shift in power to Parliament meant that they were brought within the Foreign Office by George Canning in 1824 (and it was his poor handwriting which sent a King's Messenger to Madrid rather than Madras!).

As a diplomatic courier carrying the most secret material - and sometimes getting into hairy situations - John expected to travel 250,000 miles, visiting 60 countries, every year. Every Queen's Messenger had at some time put his life on the line in the service of his country, and John was proud to have been of their number.

Ignored or let down by High Street banks?

A report last month said that the less well off feel let down by Britain's banking system. If that includes you, did you know that Claygate has an answer?

The Elmbridge Credit Union was set up by Churches Together in Esher and Claygate and is run by local volunteers.

Home Start's work in Elmbridge

Brenda Rose and her assistant Jackie Lawrence came to Claygate to talk to Anchor's February meeting about their work with the charity Home Start Elmbridge. Brenda, who has been working for Home Start for six years, is the Senior Organiser and in charge of the general running of the charity locally and its training programme.

Home Start works with families with young children (there must be a child under the age of five years before Home Start's involvement can be requested) who are in need of support and assistance in their own homes. There are many reasons why help is needed - poverty, isolation, bereavement, disability - and Home Start is an effective way of supporting many vulnerable families.

Trained volunteers are very carefully matched with suitable families and give a certain amount of time every week to support them in numerous ways. It is a vital channel of local assistance to vulnerable families - but their work will have to be cut back now their budget from the local council has been almost halved.

CREDIT UNION

A free financial service helping people to avoid the problems that come with increasing debts and high rates of interest.

At the Claygate Village Club every Friday evening and at The Firs on alternate Thursday afternoons.

**Want to know more?
- ring Valerie Bagley on 464243**

there would be no wars"

reality of course, we know that the causes of wars are hugely complex affairs. Many wars termed religious have their roots in much less obvious causes and are then dressed up in religious terms to win support.

What really causes conflict?

So if war is not the result of religion or Christianity, is there a single cause? I believe that it is the willingness of human beings to put themselves first, to be prepared to sacrifice someone else for their own purposes, to covet what others have. Or in one word - sin.

It is this fundamental selfishness which leads to the aggression that lies at the heart of conflict - both local and international. It also leads to the fear of others that makes us want to group together with people like us and exclude others. It dresses itself up in different guises - sometimes religious - but the cause is the same. It is this fault in the heart of each one of us that leads to war and leads many to have to sacrifice their lives for much more noble ideals of protection of the defenceless and justice.

Is a solution possible?

What response can we make to this sin? Secularism I believe leaves us hoping that things will be all right, just so long as we are basically good people. And yet many people who would have been thought to be basically good supported Nazism in WW2. Easter however, reminds us that we are all basically bad - we all have the potential for aggression and hatred - even if the accident of our birth means that we have some

measure of control over it. It is for this reason that Jesus died - not as a reward for people who were basically good, but as a hope of forgiveness and transformation for us who are basically bad.

Having highlighted some of the conflicts of the nineteenth century, let me finish with four people from that century whom Easter transformed, who in turn transformed for good the world in which they lived: William Wilberforce, who struggled for the abolition of slavery in the British Empire; Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose book "Uncle Tom's Cabin" contributed to the abolition of slavery in USA; Florence Nightingale, who has inspired many who care for the sick; and Lord Shaftesbury, who brought about legislation to alleviate the appalling working conditions of factory and mine workers.

It is the example of these, but most of all the resurrection of Jesus, which convince me that faith in the risen Jesus is not the cause of conflict in our world, but its only hope.



When the boiler burst that cold winter, church attendance became a little more active.

Building a healthy marriage

The third of Holy Trinity's annual Marriage Courses will start on Tuesday 25th April. It consists of eight Tuesday evening meetings, each starting with supper at 7.30 pm.

The course is not limited to church members. It is open to any married couple from the community, with or without a Christian faith or church background, who wants to build a strong and lasting relationship, especially

- those who want to enhance their marriage
- those in the first five years of marriage
- those at a challenging stage in their marriage, eg, the birth of a child, a career change, teenagers at home, the 'empty nest'
- those struggling with issues in their marriage.

The full course will cost £60 per couple, and this includes supper and materials. If you think you might like to take advantage of this opportunity, there are leaflets in the church foyer giving more information about the dates (the Tuesdays are not all consecutive) and the topics covered, and including a booking form. Alternatively, you can telephone the Church Office or email marriagecourse@holyltrinityclaygate.org.uk.

Prayer for healing

Prayer for healing is now offered by Holy Trinity every month, at the 6.30 pm service on the third Sunday of each month. If you have a need for prayer of this kind, for yourself or someone else, you will be able as the service ends to join people from our experienced prayer team in individual prayer for the issue of concern.

Annual Church Meeting

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in the Church Hall on Thursday 27th April. It is the opportunity to review the activities of the church - a volume of reports will be available shortly - and the annual accounts - of which a 'user-friendly' version will also be available, and to elect those who are to represent us on the Deanery Synod and the Parochial Church Council.

Please consider whether you should offer your name for election, but whether or not you do that, do make a point of coming to the meeting, as a representative attendance is important. Remember, however, that your right to vote depends on your name being on Holy Trinity's Electoral Roll.

If it is not, note that the last day for joining the Roll before it closes in preparation for the Annual Meeting is Sunday 2nd April. Application forms are in the church foyer, and need to be returned to John Smith before the deadline.

Alpha courses

Holy Trinity's latest Alpha course, an introduction to the basics of Christianity, is just concluding. There will be another course starting in September, however, so remember that it is never too soon to get your name down for it.

Men's Fellowship

On Monday 3rd April, Eric Fowler will be giving a nostalgic and light-hearted look at Life in Show Business. We invite all men to join us in the Church Hall at 7.45 for 8 pm.

Church Council reviews pastoral care

It is the practice of Holy Trinity's Church Council to use each of its meetings to focus in detail on one aspect of the Church's work. At the Council's March meeting, it was the turn of the pastoral care that is undertaken through the church, on the basis of a report by Valerie Bagley. This issue of *Insight* contains references to a number of the areas under this heading.

Following up the previous meeting's focus on the Jigsaw Playgroup, the Council noted that Jenny Wilkinson, Jigsaw's Supervisor, had been appointed Manager to succeed Jan Winsler, and that Val Richards had been appointed the new Supervisor.

The Council also considered the financial accounts which are to be presented to this month's Annual Church Meeting, and thanked members of the Council who will be standing down at that meeting.

Institution of our new vicar

Philip Plyming will be formally instituted as vicar of Holy Trinity Claygate by the Bishop of Guildford, the Rt Revd Christopher Hill, at a service in Holy Trinity on Wednesday 19th July. Look out for more details nearer the time. And we're sure you'll want to come to church on Sunday 23rd July for what will be Philip's first services as our vicar.

Philip's appointment was announced on 5th February, simultaneously in Holy Trinity and in Christ Church Chineham, near Basingstoke, where he is currently Assistant Minister. His appointment followed a process in which the five short-listed applicants for the post were interviewed in January, by a panel comprising two representatives of Holy Trinity, two representatives of the Church Patronage Trust, the Bishop of Guildford and the Archdeacon of Surrey.

New to Claygate?

We should be very happy to see you at church, or at one of the other activities which are part of life at Holy Trinity.

If you would like to find out more about Claygate's parish church, there is a welcome pack which you can pick up in the church foyer - which is always open during office hours (normally from 9 am till 3 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and till 5 pm on Monday and Friday) - or you can log on to the church website - www.holytrinityclaygate.org.uk



...between you and me, it's the only way I can remember my PIN number!

"If it were not for religion,

David King reflects on the oft-quoted assertion that it is religion which is frequently at the root of conflict

One morning I was listening to my shower radio (without a doubt one of my best ever Christmas presents) when they started to discuss Tony Blair's interview on the Parkinson Show. As listeners called in to offer their view of the reports of the interview, one person's comment stuck in my mind. Not because it was original, nor because it was about the Iraq war. No it was precisely because it was a remark so often made, namely that religion is responsible for conflict in the world. As I remember it, the person went so far as to suggest that if it were not for religion, there would be no war.

This comment struck me for two reasons. The first is that it seemed to imply that there was an inevitable link between religious belief and conflict. More than that it was the basis for that particular individual's rejection of religion (or at least formal religion). The second reason it caught my attention was because it struck me as running counter to the record of history.

The Crusades, and....

Without a doubt there have been and are dreadful conflicts inspired by religion. When asked, those who denounce religion in this way will cite, amongst others, the Crusades and perhaps the wars of religion of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed at this time religion was the prime stated reason for conflict. When pressed to suggest other more recent examples from the last two centuries though,

my experience is that significant examples become more difficult to find. Perhaps mention is made of the Middle East and Pakistan and India or of some internal conflicts, such as Ireland.

And yet over the same period there were huge and world shaping conflicts, in which religion played a very minor role if one at all, namely: the Napoleonic wars, the wars of imperial conquest, the Franco-Prussian war, the Crimean war, World War 1 and World War 2 and the Cold War. Certainly in each of these examples one or more of the protagonists have a clear religious belief, but religion plays almost no part. According to any criteria of scale, these collections of conflict must call into question the thought that religion is a key cause of war.

Secular rationalism has a role

Indeed, the Second World War was started by two countries - Germany and the USSR - both of whose ideology was primarily rationalist, scientific and secular: Soviet Russia based on the theories of Marx and Nazi Germany on the principles of social Darwinism (an offshoot of Darwin's theories popular in the mid-Twentieth century). Few would suggest that rationalism, science or secularism should be held predominantly accountable for WW2. Instead we would say that both the Soviet and Nazi state were a gross distortion of them.

My concern is, why is it then so difficult to accept the same argument that so-called religious wars, such as the Crusades, are in the same way a gross distortion of Christianity. In

Young people today....

The Young People at our parish church have patented a game called 'Resurrection Cluedo.' The question is not who killed Dr Black, but where is Jesus' body? If you are curious about this then I am giving a sermon on this subject on Easter Sunday morning, but if you can't wait till then the foreshortened version of the game follows!

History tells us that Jesus existed. Jewish, Roman & Arabic sources confirm this & they tell us that he was famous. The gospels, a pretty excellent written record as far as that period goes, tell us why. So if he lived, therefore he must have died or else we would all know about it as he would be the oldest person alive & on every talk show going: even Davina. So, where is his grave?

If it were well known there would be pilgrimages, but there are none. So why is it not well known? Well, perhaps the body is hidden & its location lost. So let us look briefly at the people with the opportunity to take it, if indeed they did. First the disciples; maybe they took it? Well, when you consider that nine of them were killed for saying publicly that they were Christians, had they hidden the body you'd have thought that they might have mentioned it under threat of death. Plus, when you read the gospels you can see quite how gormless & scared the disciples were. Master criminals they are not.

So maybe the women got the wrong tomb. Well, if they had, all they would have needed to do would be to check with Joseph of Arimathea if they had made a mistake. After all, it was his tomb that Jesus had been buried in. But perhaps he had

moved it already in a game of ecclesiastical hide & seek? Well, again this seems highly unlikely as he had requested the body from Pontius Pilate to be buried with due care & attention. The idea that having buried the body in his own tomb, he then went back, nicked it and pretended he never had it, has an air of hilarity about it.

Perchance it was the Romans what took it; after all Pilate *had* ordered him to be killed. Maybe they wanted to be doubly sure. Well, we know that Pilate was under orders from Rome to keep the peace & that he had already blotted his copybook quite spectacularly. Upsetting Rome was not the way to long life, and so when all the Christians went around upsetting the authorities saying that Jesus had come back to life, Pilate would have just produced the body & that would have been that. Ditto for the Jewish authorities.

But neither could because neither had the body.

So where was it? Putting aside the arguments that he had an identical twin, or found an escape tunnel in the tomb or, most bizarrely, that the professional executioners of Rome had failed to actually kill him, and that having had his wrists, elbows & shoulders dislocated and then been embalmed, the cool of the tomb somehow revived him allowing him to open the tomb from the inside, we come to the only conclusion logically left.

Namely that he really did come back to life. Think through this argument for yourself again this Easter and find out whether you think it is true or not; for this is the simple good news of Easter and well worth a second thought.

Asa

Learning from the Bible

What do you make of Pontius Pilate? He was the Roman Governor of the province of Judea before whom Jesus was brought for trial. It was he who examined Jesus and had difficulty finding anything in his actions which warranted punishment, but who nevertheless ended up handing him over to be executed.

So, a weak man, a ruthless man or a wily politician? So far as the Romans were concerned, Pilate must have been well thought of because he occupied his position as Prefect of Judea for an unusually long time. We know that the Jews reviled him, because their records of the time represent him as insensitive to their religious traditions and brutal in suppressing any sign of dissent. The accounts we have in Christian literature leave us with ambiguous feelings about him. All in all, one work of reference suggests that it is best to reserve judgment on his character.

When we read the accounts of Jesus' appearance before Pilate, it is clear that Pilate saw no reason to condemn him. Each of the four gospels has its own way of telling the story, but let us today use John's version (it's the last part of chapter 18 and the first part of chapter 19). He tells us that Pilate said to Jesus' accusers no fewer than three times that he could find no case for Jesus to answer. Even after that, we are told that Pilate tried to set Jesus free. But although he was the man in charge, Pilate did not stick to his guns. The trial ended with Pilate giving in to those who

"Pilate said, 'As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him'."

John, chap. 19, verse 6

wanted to see Jesus dead.

In Pilate's actions, we see mirrored the way that many people today approach the figure of Jesus. First of all, he didn't really want to bother: Pilate's first answer to Jesus' accusers was that they should deal with the matter themselves. In modern times, too, there are people we know who simply can't be bothered to make their own judgment about Jesus. They might watch from a distance, but they avoid applying their minds to the claims that Jesus makes.

Secondly, Pilate strove to remain neutral. He put the issue before other people. He offered them a choice of Jesus or Barabbar, and was surprised by their choice. He gave Jesus a chance to recant, but ended up going with the flow. Many people today find no fault with Jesus, but go no further; they go along with others' opinions, shrug and turn their backs.

Thirdly, Pilate eventually examined Jesus, and evidently recognised him as someone special; but he stopped short of any commitment to him. In the same way, there are today those who accept the truth about Jesus, but still don't let it affect their lives. But the reality is that to consider Jesus seriously, to recognise his extraordinary specialness, and to accept the logic by following the path he points to is, as many people are able to confirm, a liberating and life-enhancing experience.

- *Scribatus*

Spring bursts today, for Christ is risen and all the earth's at play. (Christina Rossetti's Easter Carol)

EASTER AT HOLY TRINITY

MAUNDY THURSDAY, 13th APRIL

We commemorate the Last Supper, at which Jesus and his disciples ate a meal together in the evening before his arrest and crucifixion. It was then that he linked the bread and wine to his body and blood, and instructed his disciples to continue to share bread and wine in remembrance of him, until he comes again.

At 8 pm in the Church Hall, we will join in a simple meal together, breaking bread and sharing wine as he commanded us. You may obtain tickets for the Supper from the Church Office.

GOOD FRIDAY, 14th APRIL

On this most solemn day of the church year, we remember the death of Jesus on the cross.

At 10 am, members of Holy Trinity will join in a Walk of Witness from the station car park to the church.

At 10.30 am there is an All Age Service in the church (no crèche available on this occasion) with Hot Cross Buns afterwards.

At 12 noon until 3 pm, the hours during which darkness descended as Jesus died, there is a three hour meditation in church. This will be divided into sections, so that you need not feel you have to commit to the full three hours.

EASTER DAY, 16th APRIL

On this day on which Jesus rose from the dead, we celebrate the extraordinary event on which the Christian faith was founded.

At 6.30 am, we shall join in a Sunrise Service on Telegraph Hill, and this will be followed by egg rolling.

At 8 am, there is Easter Holy Communion in Holy Trinity, a said service (without music) and using traditional language.

At 10 am, there is All Age Holy Communion in the church, in a modern language version.

At 6.30 pm, there is a service of Evening Prayer for Easter, with Prayer for Healing.

(NB: there is no service at 11.30 am)

Support for the bereaved

Next month, Holy Trinity's Bereavement Support Group will move its regular meetings to Tuesday evenings. Sarah Collins explains more.

The Bereavement Support Group has been meeting at Holy Trinity for two and a half years and has supported 30 people in that time. Church member Barrie Railton and Counsellor Sarah Collins believe the timing is now right for a move to an evening slot on alternate Tuesdays from 7pm - 8.30pm. Barrie explains:

"There are many people facing the challenge of bereavement whilst having to cope with a job and/or family commitments – for them, accessing support is complicated. By moving the Bereavement Support Group meetings from the afternoon to the evening we hope to enable these people to join".

The aim of the Group is to provide an opportunity to meet others who have suffered a loss and to share experiences. This is at a time when venturing out into normal society can sometimes be too much of a strain. For those who have to continue going to work, there can be a tendency to push grief away simply in order to keep going. We know only too well that this strategy may seem to help in the short term but requires considerable energy and tends to delay the process of mourning.

"There is no way round grief, only through it". Bringing together those who do not leave home to go out to work and those who have little time at home will bring into the Group useful insights on the different obstacles faced by each in the struggle to cope with bereavement.

So what happens at the meetings? The first hour of each meeting is spent exploring what is affecting Group members and

supporting those wrestling with difficult and painful feelings. There is sadness and sometimes anger coupled with laughter and optimism. There is no pressure put on members to speak although over time they will be encouraged to make full use of the support available from others present.

The last half hour is spent chatting over a cup of tea or coffee, exchanging anecdotes and tips on how to handle all manner of things from putting oil in the car to how to put up an ironing board, plus the more serious challenges of facing life without the presence of a loved one.

The Group is open to all ages, all faiths or none and there is no charge for attending. Evening meetings will start on Tuesday 23rd May and will be held in Church House at the rear of Holy Trinity Church. Car parking is available.

Anyone wishing to join should, in the first instance, telephone Sarah (01932 336576) or Barrie (01932 851158). If you would prefer, leave your details at the Church Office (01372 463603) and one of us will contact you.

Caring for others

Holy Trinity recognises that it is not just the bereaved among whom there is a need for support. The Care Team aims to provide friendship and support to those, especially the elderly, who have difficulty leaving home. If you would like a visit, or know someone who might, please get in touch with Valerie Bagley (464243) or Margaret Mathew (462538).

The Devil and the duck

When Jamie was staying with his sister Sally at their grandparents' farm, he made himself a catapult and spent some time around the farm trying to hit targets, but without much success. As he was heading back to the farmhouse for supper, he loosed his catapult in the direction of his grandmother's pet duck, only to find to his horror that he hit it square on the head and killed it. In a panic, he hid the dead duck in the woods.

After supper, Grandma asked Sally if she would like to help with the washing up, but she replied "Jamie said that he would like to help you tonight". As Jamie was about to protest, Sally whispered "I saw what you did to the duck", and Jamie meekly went off to help. Next morning, Grandad suggested they went off to the river, but Sally, whispering to Jamie "Remember the duck", said that she knew Jamie wanted to spend the morning weeding the garden. And so it went on all week, with Jamie working while Sally enjoyed herself. Jamie could bear it no longer, and finally cracked. He went to Grandma in tears to confess what he had done to her duck.

His grandmother knelt down and took him in her arms and comforted him. "Darling," she said, "I know. I saw the whole thing through the window. But because I love you, I forgave you. I was just wondering how long you would let Sally make a slave of you."

The story has a moral. Are there things in your past that keep coming back to haunt you? That somehow get repeatedly thrown back at you? Might it be the Devil reinforcing your guilt and holding you back from moving on to better things?

For God already knows everything about us and in his love for mankind is ready to meet our repentance with his forgiveness. He might even now be wondering how long we will allow the Devil to make a slave of us.

Three beers please

A fable for the season

A man walked into the pub one day and ordered three beers. The barman expected friends to follow him in, but the man drank all three glasses himself. The same thing happened the next day, and the day after that. "The man who orders three beers" began to be talked about.

After a week, the barman plucked up courage to ask him about his practice of ordering three beers. "Well," he replied, "I've got two brothers and one emigrated to America and the other to Australia. We agreed that wherever we were we would always order drinks for the others, as a way of maintaining the family bond".

One day, however, the man came into the bar and ordered only two beers. The barman and other customers exchanged glances, but felt awkward about mentioning what must have been a family tragedy. When the same thing happened the next day, the barman felt he ought to say something, and offered his condolences.

"Oh no," the man replied, "my brothers are fine. It's me - I've decided to give up beer for Lent".

Parking space prayers

The man desperately looking for a parking place looked up to heaven, and said: "Lord, take pity on me. If you find me a parking place I promise to go to church every Sunday."

Miraculously, a parking place appeared. The man gulped hard, and prayed again: "Never mind, Lord. I found one."

Claygate's next vicar introduces himself

I am very pleased to write to you as the recently appointed Vicar of Holy Trinity. Ever since I first saw the advert for the post back in November, read the parish profile and talked to others, I was excited by the idea that God may be calling me to serve in Claygate. It was, therefore, a joy when this was the result of the interview process and all our prayers. Holy Trinity has clearly been through some very exciting times in recent years, and it will be a privilege to lead the church as we live out our calling as followers of Jesus in the years to come.

It is still a little while until I take up the post, and so I thought you might like to know a bit about me and those who make up my family. I was born and brought up in Sussex and went to the local school in my home town, Burgess Hill, before going to Cambridge to read German and Russian. I came to faith in Jesus while there, and after graduating worked for a church in Cambridge as a pastoral worker among students, before moving to Edin-

The Reverend Philip Plyming has been appointed as vicar of Holy Trinity Claygate and will be taking up his post in the village in July. He writes here about himself and his family.

burgh to work for a bank. The other very good reason for relocating to Scotland was to get married to Annabelle! She had just completed her medical training at Edinburgh and was doing her house jobs in hospital when we married.

After three years theological training in Durham I was ordained in 2001 and have been serving as assistant minister at Christ Church, Chineham, near Basingstoke, since then. During my time there I oversaw the planting of a youth congregation at the church and also handled an interregnum of almost a year – so I know a bit how David feels! Annabelle completed her training as a GP, and has worked part-time since, apart from a break when Sam came along two years ago – (and number two is on its way...)

In my free time I enjoy spending time with my family and watching cricket whenever possible (sometimes I manage to combine the two!). Out and about you will recognise me by my height (6'4") and by my riding a rather old-fashioned bike with a basket; I look forward to using the latter to get to know what is evidently a very vibrant village.

Annabelle, Sam and I look forward to moving to Claygate at the end of June and being part of the church

Left: Philip Plyming visits Holy Trinity.

Right: Philip at home with Annabelle and Sam

family and local community. Before that happens and I am licensed in the third week of July, I will be taking a month's study leave in Cambridge to work on (and hopefully complete) my PhD, which I have been pursuing part-time for the last three years.

In the meantime I want to express my deep thanks to David, together with the entire staff team (Valerie, Linda, Stuart, Asa, Janet, Chris and Doreen), the church wardens Richard and Penny and everyone who is helping ministry and church life flourish during the interregnum. It has been great to hear of such good things as the Holiday Club and the parish weekend away, but I know these things only happen after a lot of work by many people. I want to thank you all, and assure you of my prayers over the coming months.

God bless

Philip

