

Saturday 1 December	Christmas Lights in the Parade, events from 4 pm
Saturday 1 December	Claygate Choral Society sing Mozart etc in church, 8 pm (£12)
Wednesday 5 December	Holy Communion at 11 am, followed by a festive lunch
Sunday 9 December	Breakfast at the Mains' for 8 am congregation
Saturday 8 December	Candlelight Christmas concert, for the Hospice, 7.30 pm
Sunday 9 December	Toy Service at 10 am (bring toys for Barnardo's)
Sunday 9 December	Carols on the Green at 4 pm
Wednesday 12 December	Jigsaw Nativity play in church at 11 am (all welcome)
Sunday 16 December	Carol service at 6.30 pm
Monday 17 December	Anchor Christmas Supper in the Church Hall
FOR CHRISTMAS SERVICES, SEE PAGE 10	
Thursday 10 January	Opening Supper for new Alpha course
Friday 25-27 April	Parish Weekend Away

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 Ord 1
3rd Sunday	Holy Communion (trad)	All Age Service	Evening Prayer with prayer for healing
4th Sunday	Holy Communion BCP	Holy Communion Ord 1	Evening Prayer
5th Sunday	Holy Communion BCP	Morning Praise	Evening Prayer

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Monthly on a Wednesday (see diary above): Holy Communion (Prayer Book)
 Alternate Wednesdays, at 10 am: Toddlers' Praise (in Church House)
 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

Insight is the Parish Magazine of Holy Trinity Claygate, published monthly.
 Editor: Jon Davey, 71 Hare Lane, Claygate, Esher, Surrey KT10 0QX
 Phone: 01372 810106 email: annandjon.davey@ntlworld.com
 Subscriptions and distribution: Merle Liddiard, 01372 465038
 Church Office Church Road, Claygate, Esher, Surrey KT10 0JP
 Phone 01372 463603 Fax: 01372 464894
 email: churchoffice@holytrinityclaygate.org.uk
 or for bookings: bookings@holytrinityclaygate.org.uk

December 2007

50p

INSIDE YOUR CHRISTMAS MAGAZINE

KEEPING OUR FOCUS
Philip's letter - page 2

"MESSY CHURCH"
What's it all about? - page 5

A TERCENTENARY
The writer of 6500 hymns
- in our centre pages

WHERE IS GOD WHEN
WE ARE BEREAVED?
Last of three articles - page 9



STU IS MOVING ON

Stuart Wright, our Community Worker, will be leaving Holy Trinity in January after eight years with us. He has been appointed Outreach Curate at St Mark's Tollington Park, in North London. He will be working there with Sandy Millar, who was for twenty years until his retirement in 2005 Vicar of Holy Trinity Brompton and is now not only Priest-in-Charge of St Mark's but "Bishop in Mission" in the Diocese of London.

In giving the news to congregations on 11th November, Philip said that although we would all be very sad to see Stuart and Suzie go, this was a tremendous opportunity for them and we recognised the Lord's hand in opening this door for them. He had the highest regard for the work that Stu had overseen in Claygate and would be discussing with the PCC how we could ensure it continued to develop.

Stuart will be continuing with his ordination training, and will be ordained in St Paul's Cathedral at the end of June next year.

VICAR: PHILIP PLYMING

CURATE: TOM DARWENT

ASSISTANT MINISTER: VALERIE BAGLEY

ASSISTANT MINISTER: LINDA MORGAN

COMMUNITY WORKER: STUART WRIGHT

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COORDINATOR: ANDREW COWIE

Phone 01372 463603 Fax 01372 464894

email: churchoffice@holytrinityclaygate.org.uk

www.holytrinityclaygate.org.uk



Within any large community there are comings and goings, and Holy Trinity is no exception. It has been good to welcome Maureen Webb onto the team as Vicar's PA, and I am glad to say she has settled down into the church office well and is already a great help to me. However, we have also said goodbye to one member of staff and announce the moving on of another in the New Year.

Doreen Griffiths retired on 9 November after twenty five years faithful service in the church office. Doreen has for that time been a crucial part of the friendly and welcoming face of the church, dealing with different enquiries and coping with much work and change. Her wisdom, support and discretion has been valued by three vicars of Holy Trinity, and I was delighted to welcome my two predecessors back to Claygate for a special thanksgiving meal on Doreen's last day at work. Bob Hyatt and Julian Henderson shared their memories of Doreen's ministry, and joined with me in thanking God for her service over so many years. With the churchwardens from the last twenty five years also in attendance, together with other past members of staff, it was a very special evening to celebrate a very special person.

The following Sunday I announced the news about Stuart Wright moving on at the end of January next year. We will be very sad to see Stuart go, but we are excited about the door that has opened for him and Suzie at St Mark's Tollington Park, and we know that working with Sandy Millar is the most wonderful opportunity that God has provided. We will have the chance to pay proper tribute in January, but I want to express here the thanks and respect I have for all the work that Stuart has overseen during his eight years here.

I am also clear that we want to see this work develop and grow in the future, and this will happen in a number of ways. At the PCC meeting in November we agreed to explore as a matter of first importance increasing our staff provision for youth ministry at HTC, working with young people from all parts of the village. A working group has been set up to make proposals for the December PCC meeting, and I look forward to having news to report at the Covenant Sunday on 6 January when I will also be giving an update on where we are in the vision process.

In all this transition, the coming of Christmas is a good reminder of where our focus should be. Throughout Advent we will be looking at how the prophet Isaiah promised the most wonderful work that God would do in the world. That first Christmas, it happened. Jesus was God's gift to change and save the world. He is our hope, our joy and song, and I look forward to celebrating with you over the Christmas period.

With my love and prayers

Philip



From the Parish Registers

*We offer sympathy to the
relatives and friends of:*

Carole Smith
(26th October)

Simon John Mountford
(27th October)

William Douglas Fleming
(3rd November)



The late Sydney Ernest Hall

When the 2008 Budget was presented to the November meeting of the PCC, Jem Salter was pleased to inform the Council that we had received £7021 as a beneficiary of the Estate of Sydney Ernest Hall. Mr Hall, formerly of Little Trystings, 8 Trystings Close, died in February 2006 and the Church is very grateful that, in his life-time, Mr Hall should wish the work of Holy Trinity to be recognised in this way.



Parish Personalities

Brenda Gibbs takes her place to face this month's Insight Inquisition.

Where were you brought up?

In Woking.

How long have you lived in Claygate?

I came as a child, over 50 years ago.

What do you like most about it?

The friendly community.

And if there was one thing you could change?

Cars parked on pavements.

Where would you locate your ideal home?

Sidmouth, in Devon.

What is the least welcome part of your daily round? Ironing.

Which personal trait do you struggle most to overcome? The biscuit tin.

What food are you most partial to?

Any roast with fresh vegetables from the allotment.

And leave on the side of your plate?

Beetroot.

What do you watch on television?

Antiques Roadshow (now it's on at 8 pm I don't need to record it!), Countdown and some documentaries.

What would your desert island book be?

"Three Men in a Boat", as I have never read it and I would be able to think of the Thames.

What is your favourite music?

I enjoy all music, especially children singing.

And your favourite hymn?

"Praise, my soul, the king of heaven" - it takes me back to schooldays and our Wedding Day.

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

Matthew 11, verses 28 to 30.

Do you have an unfulfilled ambition?

Not really; I have been fortunate in having done all the things I ever dreamed of. My only wish now is to watch my grandchildren growing up.

Living as a Christian in a material world

In the third of Holy Trinity's 'Christian FAQs' evenings last month, Andrew Cowie discussed the issue of how we live as Christians in a world where there are massive pressures to conform to a material society. He pointed to all the lifestyle choices we were expected to make, reinforced by enormous spending by advertisers not merely to encourage us to buy their products but to develop brand values that we would want to associate ourselves with.

It was a matter often addressed by Jesus ("Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"), and Andrew looked at the picture the Bible gave us of the relationship of God's people to the world - his world - in which we live. He considered what we tend to say by way of justification of our use of money and our desire for material security, and what we should be saying if we took seriously the Biblical teaching before us.

He went on to suggest the practical application of Biblical principles, where we would prefer simplicity, surround ourselves with less 'stuff', buy what we needed rather than what we desired, retreat from anything on which we developed a dependency, give things away, buy fair trade and ecologically sound produce and enjoy the things that we all have - walks, libraries, parks etc. We needed to recognise how rich we were by world standards, to be thankful for our good fortune and to help those less fortunate. We had to put God first and truly appreciate what he had done for us.

A church of small groups

At the Church Vision Meeting in April, Philip said, in the context of our aim to become deeper followers of Jesus, that growing small groups was regarded as vital for the long-term health of the church, and that we would be exploring ways by which this could be achieved.

Since then, Linda Morgan has been chairing a working group on the subject, and their report was put to the November meeting of the PCC. The present situation is that Holy Trinity has 22 home-groups comprising about 230 members. While this gives us much to thank God for, there is scope for further development.

The vision is to move from a church *with* small groups (where the small groups are optional extras to the main focus of the Sunday service) to a church *of* small groups (where the groups share an equal focus with the Sunday service and embrace most members of the church).

To do this means a greater flexibility in the kind of groups which exist, in order to make them more accessible and attractive to a broader range of members, including couples with small children and those with special common interests. This greater diversity and dynamism among groups, geared to growth in numbers and discipleship, may well, it is recognised, need more resources to implement.

Church logo

Readers may already have noted the less frequent use of Holy Trinity's old 'Building for Growth' logo on publications such as the weekly newsletter. It is likely to be used even less as we move forward.

Thoughts on bereavement

In this third and final article by a member of the church, we look at the question of where God is when we suffer through bereavement.

Three: Suffering for our sake

"Why did God let it happen? Didn't he hear our prayers? He said he would listen, well why didn't he? He's got healing power. Why didn't he use it? What's he punishing me for? If God is so almighty, why do such terrible, cruel things happen?"

I would contend that even the strongest in faith has thoughts like these as a result of the deep suffering that can follow bereavement - of a loved one, a child, the blameless. Jesus himself shouted from the cross "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?", as he sensed the separation from his Father which made his own suffering total.

Leading evangelist John Stott has said that "sometimes we picture God lounging, perhaps even dozing, in some celestial deckchair while millions starve to death". In this way, God (or those who represent him) can become the focus of bitterness and anger.

Yet, the life of his own son, Jesus, represents a shocking record at the hands of mortals: betrayal, false conviction, humiliation, torture, death at a young age, and separation from God. And he chose that course. He not only recognised that, in and through his creation, bad things happen, but he chose to experience them - on our behalf. Not merely as an act of empathy, but to show us that God loves you and me, whatever happens. And that if we accept that love, with our whole hearts, then our

suffering on earth can be overcome - even our physical death is no longer a barrier to the peace and glory that God graciously provides.

It seems to me that without God's incarnation in Jesus, our faith wouldn't have much to say to the bereaved parent or young Mum who has lost her husband. But that with the incarnation, we have that most precious of things, real Hope.

So, during the times that follow bereavement, we stand as we do at other times of personal suffering, at the crossroads of our lives. Our faith can collapse rather like a deckchair. We can become bitter or just plain disillusioned, and turn away from God - to somewhere else. I think in doing so we run the risk of also turning away from those that we have lost, and the chance of meaning emerging from the mess.

Or, we can recognise that Jesus' suffering has created Hope for us, and for all those we love. Hope that there can be a new chapter rather than a sad end. So, where should we imagine God to be while we suffer? Not on a deckchair after all - but nailed to his Cross.

- *If you would like to read more on this subject, you can try: "Where is God when it hurts?" (Phillip Yancey) or "The Cross of Christ (Ch 13)" (John Stott). If you would like to understand more about Jesus, look into the Alpha Course, starting again on 10th January 2008.*

Another Alpha course in January

The autumn Alpha course has now finished after 8 enjoyable and stimulating weeks. Twenty-five guests came regularly and enjoyed the mix of food, talk and discussions; we had a great day away at Reed's School, and enjoyed a wonderful afternoon walk in Oxshott woods.

Many described how the Alpha course had helped them move on in faith; one commented 'I thought I was going to stop after week two but I ended up completing the course and enjoying it more and more. I am not a committed Christian yet but am well on the way.' Others have come to a living faith for the first time, and still others had existing faith refreshed. Two post-Alpha groups will be forming and meeting regularly in the New Year.

A new course will be starting in the New Year. The Opening Supper is on 10th January and the course proper starts on 17th January. For details or to book a place, please contact the Church Office.

Learning the truth about Father Christmas

Of course, I had expected that by the age of seven it was inevitable for my son to begin to have serious thoughts about Father Christmas. Sure enough, one day he said, "Mum, I know something about Father Christmas, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy." Taking a deep breath, I asked him, "And what is that?" He replied, "They're all nocturnal."

CHRISTMAS AT HOLY TRINITY

Christmas shopping

A reminder that the Church Bookstall is a good place to find Christmas cards, Advent calendars and books as presents for your children, grandchildren and even other adults. It is open every weekday during office hours as well as after Sunday services.

SUNDAY 9th DECEMBER

Toy Service at 10 am

Carols on the Green at 4 pm

SUNDAY 16th DECEMBER

Carol Service at 6.30 pm

SUNDAY 23rd DECEMBER

Usual Services at 8 am, 10 am and 6.30 pm

CHRISTMAS EVE

Christingle Services at 3 pm and 5 pm

Midnight Holy Communion, at 11 pm

CHRISTMAS MORNING

Holy Communion at 8 am

Christmas All Age Service at 10 am

CONCERTS IN HOLY TRINITY

SATURDAY 1ST DECEMBER AT 8 PM

Claygate Choral Society sing Mozart's Mass in C minor and other works by Mozart & others
Tickets £12

SATURDAY 8th DECEMBER AT 7.30

The Princess Alice Hospice concert "CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS"
Hosted by Keith Barron with the Pegasus Choir and the British Airways Band
Tickets £15 from 01372 461853

Happy send-off for Doreen

All the clergy and churchwardens whom Doreen Griffiths has worked with over the past 25 years gathered for dinner in the Church Hall last month to mark her retirement. Those present included Bob and Helen Hyatt, Julian and Heather Henderson, Janice White and Barbara Breeze and David and Katy King. Tributes were paid to Doreen by the three incumbents she has served, and a series of presentations were made.

The Holy Trinity staff team presented Doreen with a digital camera and printer with confidence in her speedy mastery of the technology. From the wider church family came provision for a trip to Edinburgh, given family connections, together with a silver photo frame containing (for the time being at least!) a photograph of the three vicars she has known.

AV system proves its worth

The introduction of Holy Trinity's new audiovisual system has gone down well with the 10 o'clock congregation. Notable has been the way it has improved the singing, as heads can be held high rather than buried in a service sheet. It does however demand a feat of concentration by those operating it and ensuring the right words appear on the screens at the right time, and thanks are due to them. It also enhanced the effectiveness of our Remembrance service, enabling an extract from 'Blackadder Goes Forth' to make a powerful illustration.

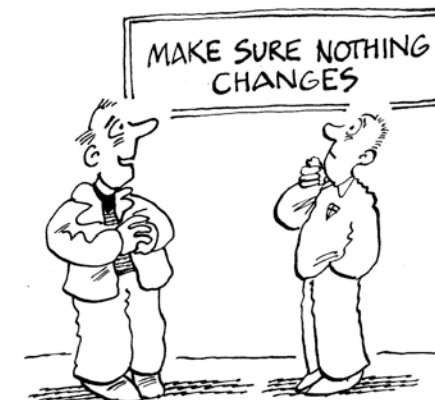
"Come home for lunch"

About 160 members of Holy Trinity were meeting for Sunday lunch in different homes on 18th November, as part of the church's aim to promote closer followers of Jesus.

Not the kind of Christmas magazine you were expecting?

This year Holy Trinity is not distributing the Christmas issue of *Insight* to every home in Claygate. So this magazine does not have the 'special issue' character you may have been used to. But your neighbours will still be hearing from the church with a special message and a welcome to join us over the Christmas season.

YOU MAY HAVE COME ACROSS CHURCHES (OR CHURCHGOERS) LIKE THIS...



...it's perhaps not the most dynamic of mission statements... but at least it received the unanimous approval of the Church Council!



Learning from the Bible

"She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger."

Luke, chapter 2, verse 7.

There can be few more familiar passages in our Bibles than the words at the head of this page. We will hear them read this Christmas, we will see them enacted in Nativity plays. They will give millions a warm glow, because it is always touching to see young children acting out for us the events of that first Christmas. And we will rejoice that in a material and cynical world, there is still a remembrance that, two thousand years ago, God entered the human world as a baby, and was recognised and greeted by the mighty, in the form of the three Wise Men, and the lowly, represented by the shepherds.

Even if accepting that awareness of what happened is better than ignorance, we can hardly overlook the extent to which a superficial sentimentality often overtakes the reality of the event and its meaning. The sheer familiarity of the story, and its annual retelling as if it is one for children, can very easily become a barrier to a proper appreciation of its significance.

The story could be presented in harsher terms, of a refugee family in an occupied country having to suffer childbirth in unsanitary conditions and with the baby having nowhere to sleep but an animal's feeding trough. It's a more gritty look at what happened, justified by what else we read in the gospels of Jesus' uncompromising robustness in the face of wrongdoing and self-righteousness, rather than the wishy-washy 'meek-and-mild' portrait that has

sometimes been painted.

We cannot appreciate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem without an awareness of his later life, his death and his resurrection. God's desire to reconcile a wayward people to himself was accomplished by his becoming human to live alongside us, and that could be achieved not by suddenly arriving on a white charger but by going through the human process of birth as a helpless baby.

Part of the wide appeal of the retelling of the Christmas story in the modern world is the reminder of innocence. It comes out in the participation of young children, but we need also to recognise that the innocent baby lying in the manger grew to be an innocent man. Yes, he was an awkward inconvenience to those whose way of life he sought to correct, but he remained guilt-free, without sin, an example to humankind of what it is to be godly, a beacon to all those who dream of innocence and yearn to escape from a life burdened by guilt.

As we come again to celebrate Jesus' birth, let us try to recapture the wonder of the love which brought about such an extraordinary event, and also to embrace the innocence he embodied, remembering that through his life and death, he held out to us the prospect of a new life of integrity and selflessness, in harmony with God.

Scribatus

"God became man to turn creatures into sons; not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man." - C S Lewis



"Messy Church"

In November Andrew Cowie and Jill Griffiths went to a one day hands-on Messy Church seminar. In this month's article Andrew reports back on what they found out.

Messy Church is a new style of service that a number of churches have been starting up in the UK in recent years. The service is primarily aimed at children of 11 or younger, but there are no age restrictions. The only requirement is that a child must bring an adult with them.

The 'service' starts in the church hall, where drinks, biscuits and cake are available, together with some board games and simple activities to keep the children amused. Once everyone has arrived, the real action starts, again in the church hall, where a series of arts and crafts activities are available for the children, together with their chaperons, to participate in. Usually there around six to eight different stations, each being manned with someone to guide the guests through the activity. Activities are varied, hands-on, and often messy, but always fun and engaging.

At a recent Messy Church day that Jill Griffiths and I went to, we tried our hand at painting Jesus' face using poster paints, using a wide selection of photos to help; making tombs out of bread dough with a marshmallow in the centre (when the bread is baked, the marshmallow has disappeared); dunking pieces of cut up apple into melted chocolate and then into hundreds and thousands (yummy!); making a snake on a stick; creating a cross and decorating it by dipping into oil paints (simple but effective); and making a picture using dried pasta

and pulses. Each activity takes around five to ten minutes to complete, and is fun for all ages. We found that as you relax into the activity, you engage in conversation with those around you about what you are doing, but talking about anything is OK.

After half an hour of arts and crafts, everyone moves into the church for an all age service that lasts for half an hour. The service contains a couple of songs, a story, and a short talk, which ties in with and makes sense of the activities that people were engaged in earlier, and ends in prayer and the grace. Everyone then moves back into the hall, and the service ends with a simple two course meal – favourites include shepherd's pie; jacket potatoes with a variety of fillings, fish fingers or spaghetti Bolognese followed by dessert (ice-cream, crumble & custard, etc.)

Messy Church services run once a month and last for two hours. Some churches have regular Messy Church congregations of up to 100 people, and have developed a church community of their own. People who attend are a mix of those who often attend Sunday services, but many who wouldn't normally go to church. It is also not uncommon for those who start by coming along to Messy Church to then migrate to Sunday services as they start to feel more comfortable with attending church, and as some of their fears are alleviated.

Some churches have also tried Messy Church baptisms. At Holy Trinity Claygate we are considering whether a Messy Church service might be a suitable addition to our offering for children and families here too, and providing something for those families who want to have their children attend Holiday Club, but don't feel that they can make the leap to going to a Sunday service.

Tercentenary of "the prince of hymnwriters"

Charles Wesley and his family

Charles Wesley was born in the Rectory at Epworth in Lincolnshire, the son of the Revd Samuel Wesley and his wife Susannah. He was a premature baby, who, according to an early biography, "appeared dead rather than alive when he was born; he did not cry, nor open his eyes, and was kept wrapt in soft wool until the time he should have been born". Charles was the Wesleys' eighteenth child (they had only one more after him!), being four years younger than his equally well-known brother John. He was educated at Westminster School and at Christ Church Oxford, where he became a tutor.

In 1749 he married Sarah Gwynne and they had eight children, though only three of them survived. His two sons, Charles and Samuel, both became organists and composers, though it was his grandson Samuel Sebastian Wesley who became best known as a composer.

The development of his faith

It seems to have been Susannah Wesley who had the stronger influence on her children's upbringing and teaching, even in the spiritual field, and what was described as her "serious godliness" clearly had an impact on them. It was while Charles was a young man at Oxford that he began in 1727 to lead a group of other Anglicans in a disciplined Christian life, leading them to be known as the "Holy Club" or - a name that stuck more securely - "Methodists".

Nevertheless, it was not until 1735, at the age of 27, that he was ordained as a minister of the Church of England. He went with his brother John as a minister in the new American colony of Georgia, but he did not get on with the Governor, General James Oglethorpe, to whom he was secretary, and returned home.

Suffering illness in America, on his journey home, and back in London, Charles felt there was something lacking in his faith, and on Whit Sunday 1738 he prayed for the gift of the Comforter. He heard a voice saying "Arise and believe, and thou shalt be healed of thine infirmities" and, sitting up in bed, he

Charles Wesley was born 300 years ago this month, on 18th December 1707. The anniversary of his birth has been celebrated in many ways, including a service in Westminster Abbey at which the Archbishop of Canterbury was the preacher. We look at Charles Wesley's life and work.

Charles Wesley's hymns

More of Charles Wesley's hymns are sung today than those of any other hymnwriter. Twenty-six of his hymns appear in Holy Trinity's hymnbook and, of the top 150 in the Penguin Book of Hymns, eleven are by Charles Wesley. But they represent a tiny fraction of his output: he is believed to have written about 6,500. Among the best known are:

"And Can It Be That I Should Gain?"
 "Christ from whom all blessings flow"
 "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"
 "Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies"
 "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"
 "Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go"
 "Hail the Day that Sees Him Rise"
 "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"
 "Jesu, Lover of My Soul"
 "Jesus, The Name High Over All"
 "Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending"
 "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"
 "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"
 "O Thou who camest from Above"
 "Rejoice, the Lord is King"
 "Soldiers of Christ, Arise"
 "Ye Servants of God"

found his Bible falling open at Psalm 40: "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God". This was the turning point for him. He was converted to what he called a "vital religion" as an Evangelical. He prayed that his brother John might also know this, and three days later John underwent a similar conversion.

Charles Wesley's life and work

Finding a "vital religion" meant that both Charles and John Wesley began to preach with a fervour that was generally unwelcome in the Church of England of the time. Appointed curate at St Mary's Islington, Charles found himself one day escorted out of the church by the churchwardens, but then continued to preach from a tombstone. He became an itinerant preacher, addressing crowds in the open air, but whereas John continued in this style for the rest of his life, Charles ceased his travelling in 1765.

Both Charles and John continued as Church of England ministers to the end of their days, but it was Charles who remained the more loyal Anglican. Neither brother wished to establish a new denomination but Charles became concerned that, by commissioning, and "ordaining", his own preachers and pastors, John was separating himself too much from Anglican order. It was a matter of disagreement between them.

It was after his conversion to "vital religion" that Charles began to write his hymns, finding a gift for expressing sublime truths in simple language, covering the whole range of Christian doctrine in a way that both educated and uplifted people to a Christian life. His total known output amounts to 8,989 religious poems, some in hymn form, others not, which makes him probably the most prolific poet in the English language. Many of the hymns we know are cut-down versions of the originals: for example, when we sing "O for a thousand tongues to sing", that is in fact the seventh verse of the eighteen that Charles wrote.

Charles Wesley died on 20th March 1788, at the age of 80. He is buried in Marylebone churchyard, and one of the events of this tercentenary year has been the dedication of a new memorial to him there.