

Wednesday 1 February Holy Communion at 11 am, followed by a light lunch  
 Saturday 4 February Churchyard working party  
 Monday 6 February Men's Fellowship: Flying for Life with David Greenwood  
 Wednesday 8 February Monthly Prayer Meeting in church  
 Friday 10-12 February Parish Weekend away at High Leigh  
 Tuesday 14-17 February Half Term Holiday Club: Space Quest  
 Monday 20 February Anchor: Brenda Rose on under-privileged families in Elmbridge  
 Saturday 25 February OCMS Celebrity concert: Nicola Benedetti (violin), 8 pm (£15)  
 Wednesday 1 March Ash Wednesday Holy Communion at 11 am, followed by lunch  
 Monday 6 March Men's Fellowship Ladies Night: Queen's Messengers  
 Wednesday 8 March Monthly Prayer meeting in church  
 Saturday 18-31 March Claygate Music Festival - more information on page 10  
 Thursday 27 April Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
 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 Ord 1
3rd Sunday	Holy Communion (trad)	All Age Service	Evening Prayer
4th Sunday	Holy Communion BCP	Holy Communion Ord 1	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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February 2006

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and lots more to keep you in touch with Holy Trinity's life and work

## A DEMONSTRATION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

There was an excellent attendance in Holy Trinity on 22nd January for the annual service marking the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Thoughtfully prepared and sensitively carried through, it enabled representatives of Churches Together in Esher and Claygate to celebrate the extent to which we are one in the Body of Christ and commit to work together for his kingdom.

The service was led by Monsignor Barry Wymes, Parish Priest of the Church of the Holy Name, with the help of the Revd William Allberry from Christ Church Esher and readers and pray-ers from other churches, as well as telling contributions from a good number of young people. There was a sparkling sermon from Asa on what it means to come to Jesus as little children (how does he do it? - knowing exactly what he wants to say, and saying it cogently, without hesitation and repetition, all without notes!). Oh, and there was also the opportunity to spot our new vicar in the congregation!

VICAR: (Vacancy)

CURATE: THE REVD DAVID KING

LAY ASSISTANT MINISTER: VALERIE BAGLEY

NON-STIPENDIARY MINISTER: THE REVD PROF LINDA MORGAN

COMMUNITY WORKER: STUART WRIGHT

YOUTH WORKER: ASA HUMPHREYS

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February feels like a dark month to many. Short days, cold and damp. Christmas far behind us and Summer holidays a long way off! The 'Winter blues' can sometimes loom over us. And yet, it has always been the same – Winters haven't got longer or darker, February hasn't changed over the years. One wonders why we haven't got used to it! After all, we know that lighter, longer days are definitely going to come in due course. We know that the plants and trees that look so depressingly brown and bare right now are not really dead, just gathering strength for their annual outburst of beauty and fruitfulness later on. We know that the earth is healing and restoring itself through its usual sleep, and that it will awake when the time is right. Already, in fact, there are signs of stirring to encourage us – daffodils pushing upwards, blue tits flitting about, considering the nest box on the wall. As one of our great poets wrote: 'If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?' And the answer is a resounding 'No!' And yet, it's true, every year we long impatiently for Winter to be truly over.

I wonder if there is something innate within us which yearns for light, and rebels against darkness, or half-light. Light means so much to us: the source of life, growth and health. It shows us the way, and guides us safely. It gives us warmth and reassurance. It reveals things, and enables us to see. In a metaphorical sense, it symbolises for us goodness and purity, understanding and insight. When one of the writers of the Bible – John – says that 'God is light', we can see that it says a lot about God's nature, and our need of Him! Our bodies long for physical light, it seems. Without it we die, and with a restricted amount, we droop and are miserable. What about our inner selves? Our spirits are made to flourish in the light that is Jesus – without Him we stumble, we lose our way, we die inwardly. In our Sunday talks and our Home Groups, we are looking at the first of John's letters. John, probably the last surviving member of Jesus' band of close friends, wrote to the Christian churches in his area, to encourage them and give them assurance that their lives were secure as they trusted in Christ. John speaks a lot about 'walking in the light', which is living in relationship with Jesus, living a life of faith in Him. Living according to the guidelines which He has set out for us, for our own good.

Spring is certainly not far off now, even though we might say we are in the depths of Winter. And God is not distant, but here and now. If God were not passionately concerned about us, would He have come to live among us in Jesus? It would have been so much easier for Him to stay aloof! As something in us finds it hard to be at peace in our knowledge of the coming Spring, so at times we find it hard to rely, in a total, joyous confidence, on God's love for us, and His forgiveness for all our sins, as we turn in repentance to Him. God's creatures, it seems, instinctively trust in His promise of the ever-renewing seasons. We need to use the wills that God has given us, to put our trust in His promises, fulfilled in Jesus. 'Why languish needlessly in the gloom?', God would say, 'turn to me, the source of all that is life!'

Then, even if all may look dark around us, we can walk confidently in the light!

*Valerie*



## From the Parish Registers

### *We welcome into the family of the Church:*

Noah Joseph Prickett  
(baptised on 15th January)

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

Elizabeth Smith  
(14th December)  
John Robert Pell  
(30th December)  
Catherine Fernley Spearing  
(31st December)  
Alistair Wade Fairbairn  
(7th January)



## Our best wishes

to Canon Maureen Palmer, Sub Dean of Guildford Cathedral, who retired from her post on 15th January. Canon Maureen had visited Holy Trinity twice at the invitation of the Men's Fellowship, and received a party of us who went for a guided tour of the Cathedral. Visitors to services at the Cathedral will miss the warm welcome which she was always at the door to give to those arriving.

### Insight

Contributions to the March magazine should reach the Editor by Wednesday 15th February.

## Parish Personalities

Julian Coy faces this month's Insight Inquisition.

*Where were you brought up?*

First in Hampshire and then near Bath.

*How long have you lived in Claygate?*

Having known Claygate all my life, I began living here in 2001. But after marrying Emma in July, I have crossed the A3 to Chessington.

*What do you like most about it?*

Having the countryside nearby; I have enjoyed running up Winey Hill and cycling in the commons.

*And if there was one thing you could change?*

Cheaper house prices, so we can live here.

*Where would you locate your ideal home?*

This area is hard to beat.

*What is the least welcome part of your daily round?*

Getting up and driving to school in the dark.

*Which personal trait do you struggle most to overcome?*

Untidiness!

*What food are you most partial to?*

Sunday roasts.

*And leave on the side of your plate?*

Clotted cream - everything else gets eaten!

*What do you watch on television?*

Top Gear and history programmes.

*What would your desert island book be?*

*The Complete Molesworth.*

*What is your favourite music?*

All sorts! - enjoying Joss Stone at the moment.

*And your favourite hymn?*

"Crown Him with many crowns".

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

Joshua chapter 1.

*Do you have an unfulfilled ambition?*

To write a book.

## A Christian at Westminster

The Anchor Group were fortunate enough to have Asa Humphreys talking to us at the opening meeting of the year. Before coming to Claygate to work with the young people of Holy Trinity, Asa worked as a researcher at the House of Commons.

Asa read geography and politics at university and then went on to do an MA in international law at Durham. He had always been interested and involved in student politics and the union.

Asa won a placement through CARE to work at the House of Commons, and during his time there worked for two different Members - one whose respect and friendship he gained and returned, and where his Christian beliefs were challenged but respected; and another where the placement was less satisfactory, without any underlying meeting of minds.

In response to a question, Asa told us that as he was working for Opposition Members, the breadth of his work was very much greater than it would have been had he been working for the party in power, where numerous civil servants exercised greater control.

## Tapping into in-house expertise

For the January meeting of the Men's Fellowship, we neither called on an outside speaker nor held the social evening that has been a feature of the last few New Years. Instead, Chairman Keith Havelock had convened a distinguished panel of our own members to discuss a series of personal or topical questions.

The panel brought to the evening an impressive range of experience and expertise, as well as a wide age range. They were Jonatham Wharram, Luke White, Gordon Burrett and Brian Mathew, respectively a General Practitioner, an investment banker, a senior civil servant and a botanist.

Each spoke about their working lives and the extent to which their Christian faith impinged on it (or even conflicted with it), ethical issues, international manufacturing and the local economy, the National Health Service and private medical treatment, and what aspects of modern life infuriated them, from 'chuggers' to the blame culture and 'human rights'.

It made for an interesting, enjoyable and worthwhile evening.

## Annual Church Meeting is on 27th April

This year's Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on Thursday 27th April, in the Church Hall as last year. This is an important occasion in the life of the church, so please note the date and do your best to be there.

Part of the function of the meeting is to elect those who are to represent us in the decision-making of the church. There are members of the PCC who are due to retire

this year, and you may wish to be considering whether you should put yourself forward for election to one of the vacancies.

Please do remember that the only people entitled to vote are those whose names are on Holy Trinity's Electoral Roll. If you are a new member of the church, or are otherwise not on the Roll, fill in one of the forms in the church foyer, or have a word with John Smith, our Electoral Roll Officer.

## PLANTS OF THE CHURCH GARDEN

No. 11  
*Cedars*

Although Holy Trinity churchyard does not actually host a cedar tree of its own there are several fine specimens around the village and the Cedar of Lebanon is a very familiar part of the flora of larger gardens and parks, including our local Claremont.

Apart from being a most graceful tree, and therefore valuable for aesthetic reasons, *Cedrus libani* is extremely useful, possessing very durable and long-lasting wood suitable for a range of purposes. Its conservation status in Lebanon has given cause for concern in the recent past although it is now protected.

In biblical times no doubt there would have been extensive forests, and these were well known to Solomon who apparently had a sound knowledge of everything including the botanical: "he described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls" (1 Kings 4: 33). In fact he appreciated their value to the extent that he ordered them to be cut for his extravagant Temple.

This extraordinary undertaking very much involved the king of Tyre, Hiram, who had the experts required for the job. Solomon's message to Hiram requested him to "give orders that cedars of Lebanon be cut for me. My men will work with yours, and I will pay you for your men whatever wages you set. You know that we have no-one so skilled in felling timber as the Sidonians" (1 Kings 5: 6).

Hiram's response was enthusiastic: "I...will do all you want in providing the cedar and pine logs. My men will haul

them down from Lebanon to the sea, and I will float them in rafts by sea to the place you specify". The pay-back was "by providing food for my royal household" in impressive quantities, including an estimated 97,000 gallons of olive oil!

Cedar was used in the building in various ways: "He lined its interior walls with cedar boards, panelling them from the floor of the temple to the ceiling" (here lies proof that tongue & groove cladding was not invented in the 1960s!). Also it was used decoratively: "The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with gourds and open flowers. Everything was cedar; no stone was to be seen". The fact that the temple stood for 300 years until it was destroyed in 586 BC is an indication of the longevity of the timber. No wonder that it was also used for shipbuilding and furniture making.

Fortunately, when we buy our attractive cedar summerhouses, conservatories and greenhouses they are not adding to the depletion of the Lebanese flora. These days the wood is more likely to have its origins in a North American native in the form of *Thuja plicata*, the western red cedar. This matures much more rapidly than true cedar and grows 'like a weed' in the damper parts of the UK.

Brian Mathew

(Note: Our front page reference is to another aspect of Solomon's appreciation of the cedar from the Song of

## Holiday Club is fully subscribed

There is no need for us to give a plug this month to Holy Trinity's "Space Quest" half-term Holiday Club, because it is already over-subscribed. Within a few days of details being given out at the two local primary schools, all 90 available places had been taken.

But there's no harm in our saying that even by the time this magazine reaches you, there might be scope for you to lend a helping hand. It needs a lot of people, in a variety of roles!

## Flying for Life

On Monday 6th February, the Men's Fellowship will be welcoming David Greenwood to speak about the work of the Mission Aviation Fellowship. The meeting is in the Church Hall as usual, at 7.45 for 8 pm.

## The Life of Christ at Wintershall

Peter Hutley writes that the demand from the public is so great that what was originally a Millennium celebration has become an annual event of praise and evangelisation, and will be performed again between 27th June and 2nd July. The Wintershall Estate is at Bramley, just south of Guildford, and details of this day-long open air play are contained in a leaflet you can pick up in the church foyer.

BBC Young Musician of the Year 2004, Nicola Benedetti, will be coming to Holy Trinity on Saturday 25th February, to give a violin recital at 8 pm. Tickets cost £15.

## CONCERTS IN HOLY TRINITY

### Claygate Music Festival

Next month sees the first ever music festival to be held in Claygate, an initiative of the Claygate Village Association. It runs for two weeks from 18th March, with events every day. Holy Trinity will be the venue for the following concerts:

**SATURDAY 18th MARCH at 7.30 pm**  
**CLAYGATE CHORAL SOCIETY**  
 conducted by Martyn Daldorph  
 Handel's Zadok the Priest  
 Vivaldi's Dixit Dominus  
 Bach's Magnificat & 5th Brandenburg  
 Tickets £12.50

**WEDNESDAY 22nd MARCH at 8 pm**  
**The CLAYGATE GOSPEL CHOIR**  
 A celebration of uplifting music. At last, the concert for which the choir was formed by Derek Huff last summer.  
 Tickets £8 (under 15s £2)

**SATURDAY 25th MARCH at 8 pm**  
 Oxshott and Cobham Music Society  
**The EMERALD ENSEMBLE**  
 a lively and exciting group from the South West, playing Vivaldi, Arvo Part, Mozart, Rossini and Haydn.  
 Tickets £10 (students with ID free)

**WEDNESDAY 29th MARCH at 8 pm**  
**MUSICA VIVA**  
 Favourite baroque concertos under the direction of Heather Tomala, including 'Spring' from Vivaldi's Four Seasons and Handel's Water Music  
 Tickets £10

**THURSDAY 30th MARCH at 7 pm**  
**RISING STARS**  
 Claygate Primary School Choir and St Paul's Primary School Choir with young individual talent and ensembles  
 Tickets £3

## NEWS FROM THE PCC

The January meeting of the Church Council was given an update on the Jigsaw Playgroup. Speaking on the theme 'Jigsaw - a playgroup to be proud of', Catherine Winchcombe, who chairs the Jigsaw Advisory Group, along with three other members of the group, Mike Benns, Jackie Burton and Tim Hurdle, explained the objectives, activities, finances and future plans of Holy Trinity's own playgroup, and answered members' questions. There are 40 children on the register, with the permitted maximum of 34 attending on any morning, up to two thirds of them being from non-churchgoing families.

Apart from reviewing the latest position in finding a new vicar, the PCC also considered its response to the latest consultation by the Diocese of Guildford about the future basis of parish share - the way money is to be raised, with greater fairness, simplicity and clarity, to fund collective Christian ministry throughout the Diocese. The PCC recognised that this would probably result in a strong church like Holy Trinity paying proportionately more.

## Church clock put right again

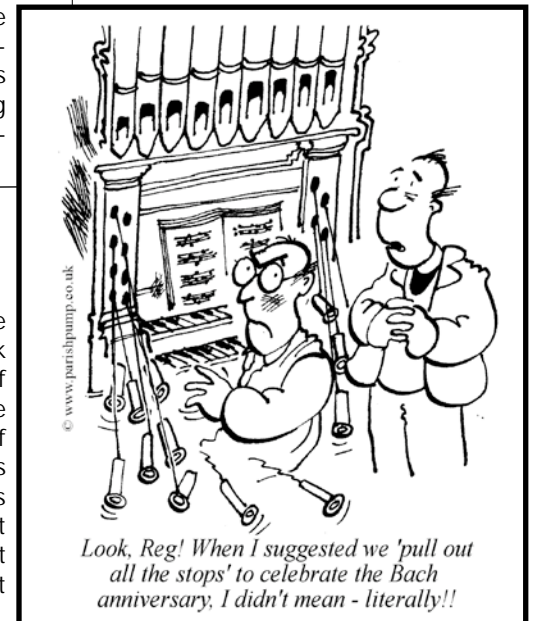
We're sorry if you were misled by the misplaced hands of the church clock after New Year. This was a result of vandalism, taking advantage of the scaffolding erected for the purpose of repointing brickwork. The clock has now been reset by the contractors who maintain it to show the correct time, following which we ensured that the scaffolding was removed without further delay.

## More people coming to church

The average Sunday in 2005 saw 414 people, including 82 children, attending services at Holy Trinity. This meant that, compared with 2004, there were an extra dozen adults at the 10 o'clock service and two more at each of the 8 o'clock and 6.30 services.

This increase is part of a healthy trend. Although the growth in congregations has not quite matched the increasing size of Holy Trinity's Electoral Roll - and last year does not compare with the first year after the church was redeveloped, when we welcomed many visitors - the level of church attendance now is about double what it was in the late 1980s.

So next time you hear about the decline in churchgoing.....



## Learning from the Bible

Occasionally in his letters, the Apostle Paul will say something like the words he uses in verse 11 of the second chapter of his second letter to Timothy: "Here is a trustworthy saying". It is clear that he is then quoting something that was in circulation among the early Christians, perhaps a hymn or a collection of valuable statements in a form readily memorised.

In this case there are four statements set out in what was the typical Hebrew style of poetic parallelism, each beginning with an "If we..." and concluding with the consequence. From his own precarious position as a prisoner in Rome awaiting what was almost certain execution, Paul was sending to his young protégé Timothy, whom he had left in charge of the church in Ephesus, a message of encouragement in his faith. He reminded him of four promises of God which could be relied upon.

The first was that God will deliver from death a new life; Paul had earlier explained to the Romans (6.4) that "We were buried with Jesus through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too may live a new life". The second was that by perseverance on our part in Jesus' name, we would reign with him; for Jesus said (Luke 22. 28-9) "You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me".

The third promise was that denial on our part would be to our loss; for Jesus himself

*"If we are faithless, he will remain faithful."*

2 Timothy chap. 2, verse 13.

said (Matthew 10.33) "Whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven". The fourth and last, as printed at the top of the page, was an assurance of God's continuing faithfulness.

But isn't there a difficulty in squaring the third and fourth promises? How come, when by disowning him we are disowned, that he remains faithful when we are faithless? But there is a difference, which the experts assure us is clearer in the original Greek. The word "faithless" here does not mean renouncing our faith, as in disowning him, but wavering in our faith.

Many of us hit low points from time to time, when doubts beset us. We go through difficult times, and we question in our weakness whether we can really trust the promises we have been given, whether we have the ability and strength to continue in obedience and maintain our fellowship with him.

But God understands. If we wobble, he never will. His faithfulness is eternal and unchanging. Having committed himself to us through his Son, disowning us at such a moment would be a denial of his own nature. His love and care will continue to envelop us, ready to relieve our uncertainties, answer our questions and ease our path back into a closeness with him, to the peace which passes all understanding.

*Scribatius*

*God cannot be grasped by the mind. If he could be grasped, he would not be God. (Evagrius of Pontus)*

## Young people today....

As Saints' days go Valentine's Day gets easily the most press and commercial coverage. So I shall not add to that plethora here, for February brings many other delights that are well worth focusing upon. Primarily there is the Parish Weekend which should be quite a lot of fun. I notice from the draft programme that there is a wide game and I know for a fact that some camouflage paint has already been purchased. I shall say no more, lest I find the head of a horse on my pillow.

But the Parish Weekend will provide warm echoes of the Haslemere CYFA reunion that 12 of our young people attended this New Year. We had a lot of fun, catching up with friends from the summer and making new friends as well, and it was great to see how many friendships had lasted and deepened over the intervening months. It continues to be a great privilege to see how the prayers of a dedicated few relentlessly bears fruit in the lives of those at YF. There are many at YF willingly choosing to go deeper in their faith and making their faith their own, using opportunities such as Haslemere to ask questions, to be stretched through the fellowship that is enjoyed there and inviting friends to come along and hear the Gospel.

A story from Haslemere CYFA Reunion may help to provide grist for that mill. After our Communion service two of our Youth Group were particularly struck by God's presence. The response from those around them, without prompting, was to go and pray with them and show them the love that only heartfelt fellowship can bring. All

of those from YF that were present acted in this way. It was just brilliant. Jon Hadden and I stood and watched as the Youth Group that we attend each week came alive as a true Youth Fellowship. They each exhibited love for each other that was just breathtaking to behold, and the care that they had for each other was beyond any that Jon and I could provide. It has been just wonderful to see the nascent buds of discipleship blossoming as the fellowship that we as a team of leaders have tried to model has caught on with those in YF. They continue to see love in action and as such are increasingly seeing how a life of faith works.

As we study 1 John in our three services this term the theme of love will reverberate loud, but will it be loud enough to affect our actions? Sarah, Lora, Jon and I are blessed indeed to see that actions speak louder than words each week and God's eternal truth in action is a powerful encouragement to go further with Christ by your side. It is this that is motivating a renaissance amongst many of Youth Fellowship and all of it is rooted in prayer; mine and ours but ever more theirs. Rejoice that more know now, than this time last year, that faith works and pray that that may be true again this time next year.

*Asa*

### Say after me...

*Said the parson at the wedding  
Don't be nervous, for you see,  
Everything that's said or done  
You say or do it after me.  
Wilt thou take and wed this woman  
And endeavour to be true?  
But the bridegroom much embarrassed  
Only stammered, "After you!"*

# The Christian church in facts and figures

## Latest figures from the Church of England

Last month, the Church of England reported its provisional statistics for 2004 (it's difficult for them to be quite as up-to-date as Holy Trinity!). In broad terms, they showed that the numbers on Electoral Rolls had increased in the year by two per cent, to 1.254 million, but that there was little change in attendance levels at Sunday services.

Just over a million people go to a Church of England church or cathedral every Sunday. The 2004 figure showed a drop of one per cent from 2003, but that was against a slightly larger rise over 2002 (2002: 1.005 million; 2004: 1.010 million). The average weekly attendance, including also those going to weekday services, held steady at 1.186 million, also a rise over 2002 (1.170 million).

The number of children and young people attending services showed a two per cent increase over the previous year, to 235,000.

The figures for the Guildford Diocese showed a small increase in the size of Electoral Rolls (from 30,300 to 30,500) but a small drop in average Sunday attendance (from 26,200 to 26,100), although Sunday attendance by children actually increased (from 5,100 to 5,200). The figures confirm the often-expressed supposition that church members increasingly have other commitments on Sundays which mean they come to church less frequently than they used to.

Despite the impression that modern society increasingly sees marriage as irrelevant, and also the expanding number of other venues available for a wedding ceremony, the figures show that the number of church weddings has increased by two per cent in each of the last two years. The number of funerals, however, has fallen; is that because we are living longer?

On the basis of surveys undertaken by opinion pollster ORB, the Church of England said that 43 per cent of Britain's adult population expected to attend church over Christmas. This figure has been steadily rising since the turn of the millennium, from 33 per cent in 2001 and 39 per cent in 2003.

The Church of England has more than 27,000 licensed ministers, including more than 9,000 paid clergy, more than 2,000 non-stipendiary ministers, more than 10,000 Readers, around 5,000 active retired clergy and 1,100 chaplains in colleges, universities, hospitals, prisons and the armed forces. It also has 16,000 buildings, of which 13,000 are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. 45 per cent of the country's Grade I listed buildings are maintained by the Church of England.

*In this month's magazine we have reported larger congregations at Holy Trinity in 2005. Here we put those figures into a wider context by looking at the church nationally and internationally.*

## Christianity in the world

The world Christian population continues to grow. It stood at 2,140 million people in the middle of 2005, the latest published figure, some 140 million more than five years earlier. This is one-third, 33%, of the world's population, which stood at 6,450 million in 2005.

Furthermore the increase in Christian numbers is growing slightly faster than the population generally, 1.3% per annum against 1.2%. This is because of the huge continuing growth in Asia and Africa (respectively growing at 2.6% and 2.4% per year). It is only in Europe where the numbers are decreasing. The charismatic independent churches are growing the fastest (2.4% per year), something which is also seen in the growth of the charismatic black churches in the UK.

However, Muslims and Hindus are growing faster than Christians. There were 1,310 million Muslims in 2005, growing at 1.9% per year, and 870 million Hindus, growing at 1.5% per year, but it will be many decades before these overtake the number of Christians!

From Dr Peter Brierley, Executive Director, Christian Research.

## Christianity in the United Kingdom

In the 2001 Census, 71.6 per cent of the population described themselves as Christian. For most of these, of course, it was a nominal Christianity to which they subscribed and they had little contact with churches.

The latest figures suggest that churchgoers on the average Sunday number about 3.3 million. The Church of England claim over a million of these, with the Roman Catholic Church nearly a million. The next biggest groupings are the Methodists (320,000), the New Churches (290,000), the Baptists (280,000) and the Pentecostals (220,000).

It is incontestable that church membership and attendance has been in decline in our country. The figures that have been collected in the past show, for example, that church membership in the UK fell from 7.53 million in 1980 to 5.7 million in 2003 (from 13.4% of the population to 9.6%).

But the decline is not uniform. Some churches are growing. This is particularly true for the Pentecostals, largely due to the black majority churches which are mostly around London, and for the New Churches whose growth is driven by the continued expansion of Newfrontiers and the Association of Vineyard Churches. The various overseas national churches here are also growing, doubling in size between 2000 and 2004, with Orthodox churches also seeing growth.

There is also growth in parts of the Church of England. In the main, this is happening within evangelical churches. In 2005 there were 160 Anglican churches with a usual Sunday attendance of more than 350, and most of these (including Holy Trinity) are growing, with only 18% of them reporting a decline during the 1990s.