

Wednesday 2 March Holy Communion at 11 am, followed by a light lunch  
 Thursday 3 March Prayer meeting for tsunami affected regions, 8.15 pm  
 Saturday 5 March 'Come and Sing' charity concert in church, £5  
 Sunday 6 March Mothering Sunday  
 Monday 7 March Men's Fellowship Ladies Night: Royal Yacht Britannia  
 Friday 25 March Good Friday: Bach's St John Passion at 7.30 pm

DETAILS OF EASTER SERVICES APPEAR ON PAGE 7

Monday 4 April Men's Fellowship: the Bridges of Surrey  
 Wednesday 6 April Holy Communion at 11 am, followed by a light lunch  
 Friday 8 April Taizé Hour at Holy Trinity, 8 pm  
 Tuesday 12 April New Marriage course begins (see page 14)  
 Monday 18 April Anchor: Penny Alpass on Uganda  
 Wednesday 20 April Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
 Saturday 23 April 'A Night in New Orleans' jazz concert in church, 8 pm  
 Monday 6-10 June Seniors House Party at Pilgrim Hall

### 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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March 2005

Free distribution

## YOUTH WORKER FOR NEW-STYLE ORDINATION

Stuart Wright, Holy Trinity's Community Youth Worker, announced to congregations on 30th January that he was going forward to a selection conference in June with a view to his training for ordination in the Church of England.

This would not be, however, the kind of ordination that we were used to, leading to becoming vicar of a parish. Building on the talents that Stuart has shown during his time with us, he will be one of the first people in the country to be considered for ordination as a 'pioneer missional leader'. This is a brand new concept which recognises how the church needs to adapt in the face of wide-ranging social change.

Happily, this does not mean that we are saying goodbye to Stuart: he will be remaining in his work at Holy Trinity during his training.

*More details on other pages.*

### INSIDE YOUR EASTER MAGAZINE

#### THE EASTER MAKEOVER

David's letter - page 2

#### SHIP AHOY!

Fun for children - page 6

#### EASTER SERVICES

Full details - page 7

#### WHAT IS CHURCH?

We look at new ways to meet Christ - centre pages

#### MIGHTY OAKS

Our churchyard - page 11

#### BETTER MARRIAGES

A course for you - page 14

and a great deal more

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Our bodies are an ever increasing obsession in our society and culture. Lotions and potions are available to "reduce the signs of ageing"; documentaries chart the repeated visits to plastic surgeons of those who desperately want to remould their bodies to look like their favourite star; gyms promise us the chance to hone our physique; numerous diet regimes promise to make us half the person we used to be. Make-over items on TV shows are still ratings winners as they hold out the promise of transformation now and hope in the future.

Easter is no less a time obsessed with the body and it too holds out the promise of transformation and hope. At the heart of Easter is the resurrection of a dead body broken by torture and beyond recognition. A friend once asked me why the physical resurrection of Jesus was so important. Why did he need to appear to his disciples? Why do the resurrection accounts mention his eating with them and their touching of his wounds? Would it not have been much easier to convince people that Jesus had risen in some mystical, spiritual but non-physical sense? Certainly St Paul found himself the object of ridicule and abuse when he told the people of Athens that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Part of the answer to my friend's question lies in the amazing truth that God cares about our bodies. Too often the church has appeared to say the opposite. That our bodies are incidental to us, that all that counts is our 'spiritual' life, where spiritual is used to refer to anything that is non-physical. We see this in the popular vision of heaven as a place where disembodied spirits float around, seemingly with little to do. Worse than this we have even gone so far as to say that this is what God thinks, that somehow our struggles with infirmity and illness or with the slow deterioration that is the lot of the over 30s (I am 31!) are irrelevant to him. The Resurrection reminds us that our bodies are important to the one who created them and no less to us.

If though, Easter shares with our society an obsession with our bodies, its message of hope could not be more different. Rather than the increasingly desperate measures that we are encouraged to take by cosmetic companies, Easter offers us a more certain, complete and eternal hope of a new body when we die. Because of Jesus and in him, our hope of the after-life is not of some insubstantial purely 'spiritual' existence, but one which is more gloriously physical than anything we know now. In this sense, at least, Easter represents the ultimate make-over.

*David*



## *From the Parish Registers*

*We offer congratulations  
on the marriage of:*

Christopher David Sykes and  
Faith Rebecca Havelock  
(married on 6th February)

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

Thomas Alfred Baker  
(15th January)  
John Arthur Beer  
(31st January)



## *Insight*

At Easter and Christmas we deliver a copy of this Parish Magazine to every home in the parish of Claygate. But we would be happy to deliver a copy to you every month so that you can keep more closely in touch with things that are going on. The annual subscription is only £3.50. If you are interested, please contact Merle Liddiard on 01372 465038.

Insight also welcomes contributions, news, views and letters, and any material intended for inclusion in the April issue should reach the Editor by Sunday 20th March.

## **Parish Personalities**

Facing the Insight Inquisition this month is Ted Lambe.

*Where were you brought up?*

In the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames. How? - by the scruff of the neck.

*How long have you lived in Claygate?*

For 26 years.

*What do you like most about it?*

The view from our back garden.

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

All parking charges and restrictions.

*Where would you locate your ideal home?*

By a trout stream.

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

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

I don't do "struggle".

*What food are you most partial to?*

Steak and kidney pie, chips, peas and a pint.

*And leave on the side of your plate?*

I wouldn't dare (it would imply criticism of Ann's catering skills!).

*What do you watch on television?*

Anything that's on.

*What would your desert island book be?*

Robert Ruark's *Dixie Deer Hunt* (if only I could locate a copy...).

*What is your favourite music?*

The theme tune from *The Great Escape*.

*And your favourite hymn?*

"O Lord my God (when I in awesome wonder...)"

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

Matthew 6. 34.

*Do you have an unfulfilled ambition?*

To strangle the person who originated political correctness.

## Buying fairly traded goods at Holy Trinity

Holy Trinity's Fairtrade stall operates after the monthly All Age service at 10 am on Sunday morning. It sells Traidcraft products ranging from tea, coffee and preserves to pasta, rice and chocolates. Traidcraft handicrafts and wine can be ordered from the catalogues on display.

Traidcraft buys from poor people, helping them build better lives through fair trade. Through selling their products and providing support, Traidcraft enables farmers and craft workers across Africa, Asia and Latin America to build a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.

Many of the products are sourced from countries affected by the recent tsunami, so by buying Fairtrade products you will be helping these people rebuild their lives.

## "Women are from Selfridge's...."

Neil Riley came to the Claygate Men's Fellowship last month to explain the innate differences between men and women. How is it, for example, that men can never find a pair of socks but have all their CDs in alphabetical order, while women can always find the missing set of car keys but rarely the most direct route to their destination? Or that men will have their heads turned by the pretty girl walking past, whereas their wives will take in every detail while looking straight ahead? It all goes back to the distinction

## Credit Union membership is growing

The Credit Union in Claygate has seen membership increase over the last three months. The Credit Union, a bank owned and run by local volunteers, now has three collection sessions - every Friday at Claygate Village Club from 7 till 8 pm, every other Thursday at the Firs from 2 till 3 pm, and for the DV8 youth group every Thursday at 8 pm.

Credit Union offers everyone who lives or works in Elmbridge the opportunity to save with and borrow from a locally run financial cooperative. It is regulated by the Government, which has also set the maximum interest rate for any borrowing at 1 % per month.

The Credit Union was an initiative of Churches Together in Esher and Claygate. If you would like further information, please contact Valerie Bagley on 01372 464243.

between lunch-gatherers and nest protectors, Neil explained, and to the different ways in which our brains developed for the tasks in hand.

It was, he confessed, the first time ever that he had expounded his thesis to a wholly male audience. What he made of us is not recorded, though he expressed some surprise that the proportion of Screwfix Catalogue owners among us was not higher - it made the perfect companion for men taken shopping and killing time while their wives tried on clothes.

## A sideways look at the Bible

Q. What excuse did Adam give to his children as to why they no longer lived in Eden?

A. Your mother ate us out of house and home.

Q. Who was the greatest financier in the Bible?

A. Noah: he was floating his stock when everyone else was in liquidation.

Q. Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?

A. Samson: he brought the house down.

Q. Who was the most flagrant lawbreaker in the Bible?

A. Moses: he broke all 10 commandments at once.

Q. What cars are mentioned in the Bible?

A. God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden in a Fury; David's Triumph was heard throughout the land; Oh, and Honda, because the apostles were all in one Accord.

## A good deed

A man arrived at the Pearly Gates one day but St Peter looked at his clipboard and told him that his name didn't appear.

"How up-to-date is your copy?". the man asked.

"I get a download every ten minutes", St Peter replied, "Why do you ask?"

Well," said the man, "I've always been a bit stubborn and it was only when my death was imminent that I cried out to God, so perhaps I'm in the next update".

"While we're waiting", said St Peter, "can you tell me of any really good deed you have performed in your life?"

The man thought. "Well, there was one time when I spotted a girl being harassed by a band of nasty thugs. So I jumped out of my car and intervened. They told me to get lost but I waded in to rescue her, telling them what deranged animals they were and that I could teach them a lesson in pain that they would never forget."

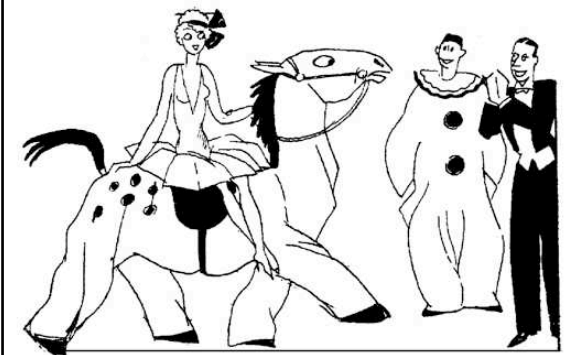
"My!" said St Peter, "When did that happen?"

"About three minutes ago."

## A Speaker writes...

*I sometimes give talks to local church women's groups on my hobby, which is visiting the great Cathedrals of Europe. One night after I spoke to a group, the lady who ran it thanked me profusely and gave me a cheque for £20.*

*I felt very embarrassed, and ventured: "Could I donate the money to one of your causes?" "That would be wonderful," she gushed. "Our programme could use the help. We're trying to raise money so we can afford better speakers."*



Although it was a memorable service, the new showbiz couple in the parish hadn't quite got the idea of a donkey for the Palm Sunday.

## The Marriage Course, designed for all

The second Marriage Course to be held at Holy Trinity starts next month. It is for any married couple who wants to build a strong and lasting relationship, and covers such topics as recognising each others' needs, learning to communicate effectively, resolving conflict, healing past hurt, knowing how to make each other feel loved, relating to parents and in-laws, good sex, making time for each other and having fun together.

The course will run on eight Tuesday evenings (not all consecutive), starting on

12th April at 7.30, and each evening will begin with a meal together. It is not just for church members, and should be very helpful for any couple with or without a Christian faith or church background.

The cost is just £60 per couple, and this includes supper and materials. It is not too soon to sign up, and you can collect a leaflet and registration form from the church foyer, which is open during office hours. Or you can email [marriagecourse@holytrinityclaygate.org.uk](mailto:marriagecourse@holytrinityclaygate.org.uk).

## Christian Aid Week

15th - 21st May 2005

The next time someone from Holy Trinity makes a delivery to your door, it is likely to be a Christian Aid envelope. Last year's door-to-door collection in Claygate to help the poorest people in the world raised £4,389, and we will be very grateful this year for your continuing generosity.

## Come for a walk!

Once a month, on the morning of every third Saturday, a group sets out from the Torrington Lodge Car park to head for the countryside for a 5 mile or so walk. Everyone is welcome to join us, non-church-going villagers as much as church members. If you are interested and would like more information, call John and Maureen Amos on 01372 466047.

## CONTRASTING CONCERTS IN HOLY TRINITY

On Good Friday,  
25th March at 7.30 pm

### Bach's St John Passion

Claygate Choral Society  
Musica Academica and soloists  
conducted by Martyn Daldorph

Tickets £12.50, or £10 when  
bought in advance

On Saturday 23rd April  
at 8 pm

The French Quarter All-Stars  
present

### A NIGHT IN NEW ORLEANS

A concert of Traditional jazz  
with a spiritual flavour

Tickets £6

in aid of Macmillan Cancer Care  
Organised by Claygate Men's Fellowship

## Vicar's study leave takes him to Africa

Julian Henderson is currently enjoying the opportunity of extended study leave, part of which will see him spending some time in Africa.

He will be visiting Martin and Lucie Brown in Niger to see at first hand the work they are undertaking as mission partners there. Martin, who was brought up in Claygate, is attached to the *Centre Biblique* in Niamey and is partly supported by funding from Holy Trinity.

Julian will also be visiting Nigeria to see Bishop William Diya, who stayed in Claygate while attending the 1998 Lambeth Conference, and whom many of us recall with affection, and also Bishop Jonathan Edewor of the Diocese of Oleh in southern Nigeria, with which the Emly Deanery, of which Holy Trinity is a part, is linked.

## PCC gives Stuart enthusiastic support

At its January meeting, Holy Trinity's Church Council unanimously agreed that the church should give its strong support to Stuart Wright's attendance at the Selection Conference for ordinands in June and, if he were accepted, should employ him on a full-time basis for the duration of his training and until his ordination as priest.

The details of the new kind of training to prepare 'pioneer missional leaders' is still being worked out. It would be based on an action/reflection model, involving Stuart continuing his work in the parish while spending one or two days a week in formal study at a training institution not too far away. The 3-4 year course would also include some periods of residential study there or at another institution.

**Welcome to this  
issue of Claygate's  
Parish Magazine  
from Holy Trinity  
Church.**

**We wish you a  
Happy Easter and  
hope that the  
magazine will  
highlight some-  
thing you will want  
to join us for.**



"...<link href='/sermons.css' type='text/css' rel='stylesheet'> I should like to make it quite clear there is no truth in the rumours that I am simply downloading my sermons from the internet!! <script language='JavaScript' src='/includes/general.js'></script>..."

## The 23rd Psalm - a concept in every line

The best known of all the Psalms can be seen to hold a multitude of meanings.

The Lord is my Shepherd  
*That's Relationship.*

I shall not want  
*That's Provision.*

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures  
*That's Rest.*

He leadeth me beside the still waters  
*That's Refreshment.*

He restoreth my soul  
*That's Healing.*

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness  
*That's Guidance.*

For His name's sake  
*That's Purpose.*

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death  
*That's Testing.*

I will fear no evil  
*That's Protection.*

For Thou art with me  
*That's Faithfulness.*

Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me  
*That's Discipline.*

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies  
*That's Hope.*

Thou anointest my head with oil  
*That's Consecration.*

My cup runneth over  
*That's Abundance.*

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life  
*That's Blessing.*

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord  
*That's Security.*

Forever  
*That's Eternity!*

## Maundy Thursday

The day before Good Friday is called Maundy Thursday. This rather strange word comes from Middle English, originating in the Latin word *mandatum*, meaning *commandment*.

The significance of that is that it was at the Last Supper, which we commemorate on Maundy Thursday, that Jesus said to his disciples, we are told by John's Gospel, "A new commandment I give you: Love one another". That followed Jesus' act of washing his disciples' feet, a humbling of himself which took them aback.

Jesus' act inspired one of our national traditions, the Royal Maundy, a centuries-old act of service by Her Majesty The Queen towards her subjects. By tradition, the Queen makes gifts to as many men and women as the years she has lived.

This year, her 79th, will see her meeting 79 men and 79 women to give them the traditional white purses of specially minted silver coins. The coins will add up to a face value of 79p. In addition, the recipients will receive a red leather purse containing a £5 coin commemorating the Trafalgar victory and a 50 pence piece celebrating, on its 250th anniversary, Johnson's Dictionary of 1755.

The annual ceremony moves around the cathedrals, and this year it will be at Wakefield. According to tradition, the Maundy gifts will be carried by the Yeomen of the Guard, and the choir of the Chapel Royal and the Royal Wandsmen will also be taking part.

The local recipients are all retired pensioners recommended by clergy and ministers of all denominations, in recognition of service to the Church and to the community.

## Young people today....

With the Cream Eggs having gone on sale from Boxing Day onwards at some stores, you would be forgiven for having Easter fatigue already, despite the fact that it is so early this year. The young people here at Holy Trinity though are generally quite pleased that this term is as short as it has been. Full of exams and sorting out schools, colleges and universities for September, this term has been a blur for most of them and the two week holiday at the end of it is something to treasure.

Yet, for the young people here, Easter is not just an 'Eggfest' or a chance to visit Gabon or Bhutan on a school exchange trip: it is something more significant.

Now when I was growing up in Ashford, Kent, all those years ago, my church used to meet with all the others from the town on the hill overlooking Ashford. Having watched the sunrise, we would sing to the Easter songs played by the Salvation Army band and then all go and enjoy a fried breakfast together afterwards. I looked forward to this every year because it was special, all those people coming together to celebrate something, and I loved singing at the top of my voice. My dentist says it is a medical fact that I have a big mouth, which goes some way to explain this.

And yet, I knew that I was missing something. The songs were songs of praise about Jesus being raised from the dead. I knew that was what the Bible taught and what Christians believed, but I had never really thought about it myself before. It was not until seven years ago that I finally set to thinking about Jesus being raised from the

dead and whether it was true or not. It is a sobering exercise and if you have not tried to fathom it out, give it a go this Easter.

Recently, at Youth Fellowship, we set about thinking of the Easter story in a Cluedo / Agatha Christie style. Whodunit? was the question we posed to the young people here, and having logically gone through all the motives and the historical evidence together I left the young people to draw their own conclusions. As a result of having really thought about it all there has been a sea change in attitude amongst our young people.

Whereas before I was often asked questions like, if God and his Son Jesus played a game of chess; who would win? Putting aside the Seventh Seal references I would always politely do my best to answer. Now in the run up to this Easter I find myself fielding questions of a different nature, heartfelt long considered questions of real importance; How do I know that God loves me? I want to follow Jesus but I do not feel good enough, what can I do? Why does Easter matter so much?

And it is this last question that makes Easter special. Easter gives each of us the chance for a fresh start. It reminds us that we can have eternal life, starting today if we want it. This idea of forgiveness and life has huge resonance for young people today in a world where so much is expected of them and where they have to do so much; to discover that Jesus has done it all already and all they have to do is believe and follow is massively liberating. That it can be for anyone is truly something to celebrate whatever your age. It is certainly better than a Cream Egg anyway.

Asa

## Learning from the Bible

We can all imagine the frustration - indeed, for some of us imagination might not be needed - of spending the night fishing but having nothing to show for it. The fish have gone elsewhere. We haven't caught a thing.

It probably doesn't ease our frustration to hear a voice from the shore calling out to comment on the fact that we appear to have no fish. We can perhaps feel for the disciples of Jesus on the Sea of Galilee early that morning. Seven of them had gone out in a boat at the suggestion of Simon Peter, and were coming back without a catch. And then to cap it, there is a stranger to pass comment.

But the early morning figure on the shore is clearly not an irritating busybody, because there is a touch of authority in his voice when he suggests to the disciples that they should cast their net again on the right hand side of the boat. They follow his advice, and are rewarded with a netful of fish - 153, we are told later - too heavy to haul in.

It is John who is perceptive enough to realise that the man on the shore is not after all a stranger, but the risen Jesus. This was not the first appearance of Jesus after his resurrection - he had come twice to the disciples in Jerusalem - but they had returned to their Galilean home and it is now in those more mundane surroundings that Jesus appears.

*"The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter 'It is the Lord!'"*

John, chap. 21, verse 7

The always impetuous Peter jumps into the water to greet his master as soon as John points out his identity. And soon all eight of them are reunited on the beach enjoying a breakfast of bread and fish cooked on a fire which Jesus has kindled.

It is a very ordinary occasion, except that it is not long since Jesus died on the cross and was buried in the tomb. It had been unbelievable when he was said to have arisen and then made his first appearance to those gathered together behind locked doors; and even then unbelievable to Thomas, one of those on the beach, until he saw Jesus with his own eyes. Now those who had been lost in grief could rejoice in the presence of the risen Lord and in the transformed future for mankind which that heralded.

We too can rejoice in the meaning of those events, now so distant in time, but brought vividly to life for us in the gospels. Jesus had broken through that barrier of death, and had shown the way to eternal salvation for those who believe in him. It is the good news which is at the heart of the Christian message. If some of us struggle to recognise Jesus and his claim on us, let us rely on the perceptiveness of John on that fishing boat. "It is the Lord!", he could say with confidence and, verse 24 tells us, "we know his testimony is true".

- Scribatius

*Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection,  
not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.  
- Martin Luther*

## EASTER AT HOLY TRINITY

### MAUNDY THURSDAY, 24th MARCH

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. Supper tickets will be available from the Church Office in due course.

### GOOD FRIDAY, 25th MARCH

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 half-hour sections, so that you may come for one or more sections if not the full three hours.

At 7.30 pm, Claygate Choral Society will help us experience anew the first Good Friday with a performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's *St John Passion*.

### EASTER DAY, 27th MARCH

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 others in a Sunrise Service on Telegraph Hill.

At 8 am there is Easter Holy Communion in Holy Trinity, according to the Book of Common Prayer.

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 this year)

## Pirates on the starboard beam!

As this magazine was going to press, 90 children from local primary schools were enjoying Holy Trinity's half-term Holiday Club. The theme was Pirates and the centre-piece was this magnificent ship, built across the front of the church by a team of 18 working into the night. It may have been still awaiting its certificate of seaworthiness, but it certainly gave the children a great deal of excitement!



"Suffer little children to come to me" - & not just at half term

Holy Trinity puts a lot of effort into its work with children. Much of this is for the several different children's groups covering the full range of ages which meet on Sunday mornings. But there is more...

### Jigsaw Playgroup

Holy Trinity has its own playgroup for 3-5 year olds, providing a happy, safe and stimulating environment. It meets every weekday morning in the Church Hall. Children can be registered for the waiting list from the age of 18 months. You can collect a brochure from the church foyer during office hours, or contact the Manager, Jan Winsler.

### Toddlers' Praise

On the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month, at 2 pm in the Church Hall, pre-school children and their parents and carers meet for a programme of action songs and a story, followed by refreshments. If you are at home with a young child or children on Wednesday afternoons, why not make a date to join us?

## PLANTS OF THE CHURCH GARDEN

No. 10  
Oaks

Surrey is a good county for oak trees generally and our churchyard is particularly well endowed with eight sizeable trees, one of them a particularly fine specimen near the Garden of Remembrance. These are all examples of the deciduous English oak, *Quercus robur*, just one of around 600 species world-wide some of which are evergreen. In the Holy Land there are about nine and, being such familiar and very serviceable trees, no doubt some of the species equate to the oaks mentioned in the Bible. Apart from the obvious feature of having acorns, one notable characteristic of oak trees is that they are slow-growing, thus producing a very durable wood which is, or has been, valuable for shipbuilding, flooring, furniture, railway sleepers, supporting beams in houses, etc. It is therefore no great surprise that the oak has been used as a symbol of strength: "heart of oak are our ships, heart of oak are our men", and all that.

We read of our English forests being cleared centuries ago to supply the navy with ships but the use for this purpose is greatly predated at least to Old Testament times, although which species is difficult to say. The Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*) and Tabor oak (*Quercus macrolepis*), widespread natives of the Middle East, would do the job well as both form large trees with stout trunks. There is a specimen of the former in the garden near the entrance to the recreation ground in Church Road, easily recognised in the autumn by its large acorn cups with long bristle-like scales all over the outside.

Tabor or Valonia oak is the species much-used in the Mediterranean area as a rich source of tannin from the even larger large acorn cups covered in long, reflexed scales.

The acorns from oaks, much loved by squirrels here in the churchyard, have also been used as a human food source after being ground to a pulp, leached to remove the bitter tasting substances and then cooked.

One of the evergreen species, the common Mediterranean spiny-leaved kermes oak (*Q. coccifera*) is the host of a parasitic scale insect the females of which contain a scarlet dye, much valued in ancient times for dyeing wool, silk and skins; the English word crimson is derived from kermes. The esteem in which it was held is evident from Exodus 35: 23 where we read that the Israelites brought offerings of "scarlet yarn and fine linen [and] ram skins dyed red..." to the Tabernacle. Although often seen as spiky, goat-chewed shrubs these can, if allowed, make magnificent trees providing a very hard, valuable timber.

One place noted for its forests is mentioned in the Bible at least three times: the 'oaks of Bashan' (a region east of the Jordan river) were specifically referred to in Ezekiel 27:6 and Isaiah 2:13. Hopefully our Surrey oak woodlands will survive earthly adversities such as the changing climate, diseases and the advances of suburbia but what about wrath from above? Those in the land of Israel's enemies fared much worse: "Wail, oaks of Bashan; the dense forest has been cut down" (Zechariah 11:2).

We are taking care of our oaks at Holy Trinity Church and we call in an expert arboriculturist when any fancy aerial surgery is needed. Soon each of the trees will have a numbered tag so that we can refer to them individually when any remedial work is required.

Brian Mathew

# What do we expect church to be like? And why?

People who don't go to church probably have just as firm a view of what church is as those who are regular church attenders. Except that they think it is something they don't like, or don't want or feel no need to be involved with.

In an address last year, Archbishop Rowan Williams made the point that although we all think we know straightaway what a church is, no one at the beginning of the Christian era did. The early Christians were simply responding to something extraordinary that had happened, having to work out for themselves what the kind of difference was that Jesus had made, and how that difference was to be expressed in the lives they led.

Jesus did not found a church in the way that anyone today might establish a new institution, drawing up a constitution and an organisational structure and laying down modes of proceeding. He did however gather around him and forge relationships with a band of followers, called the disciples, who became the nucleus of the assembly of believers which was the church.

But church as we know it has evolved over twenty centuries. If we think of local people every Sunday walking (OK, more often nowadays driving) to that large building with a tower or spire at the centre of their community, where they sit in rows of seats facing the front, sing hymns, listen to readings from the Bible and to the vicar preaching to them, we should remember that it hasn't always been like that.

Moreover, few of us would argue that a particular form of 'church' is essential to an encounter with Jesus and to building a relationship with him and with others who share the belief. As Western society has been transformed in the last half-century, and the institutional church has faced the implications not only of greater pressure on people's time, but of the truth that, as magnets do not attract non-ferrous metals, many churches are not attractive to post-Christian people, efforts have been made to find ways in which that encounter can still happen, and that relationship nurtured.

*Our news that Stuart Wright is going forward for a new form of ordination in the Church of England prompts the question of what 'church' is, or could be. We examine some of the fresh thinking that is being pursued.*

The result has been a variety of what have been called 'fresh expressions of church'. This started with the idea of church planting, where some of the members of a healthy church move to establish and build a congregation in a different location, sometimes where an old church is in need of regeneration or where new development has created a community not adequately served for Christian worship and witness.

But church planting was rapidly overtaken by more radical ways of redefining the nature of church. Examples of this fall under such headings as:

alternative worship communities, where a desire to close the gap between church and the rest of life, and to connect with popular culture, is important. This means that there is usually a determination to be different from what those involved have experienced as 'church', and this may be manifested in ways that vary from place to place.

café churches, where people typically sit around small tables with drinks and nibbles, in secular premises, and interact rather than spectate.

base ecclesial communities, a Latin American concept which aims at getting alongside the poor and disadvantaged, concentrating on small groups in which the members and their needs and potential can be known well, and help, hope, acceptance and empowerment can most effectively be offered and shared.

cell church, which sees small groups as a basis for assisting individuals to explore faith and discipleship, each cell representing a building block of a larger church community.

midweek congregations, getting away from the idea that church is just for Sundays, and to cater more flexibly for the needs of a busy population.

network-focused churches, which relate not to the geographical location of people but the networks with which they are associated, whether work, leisure or other forms of relationships.

A frequent feature of these developments is that they get away from the customary Sunday morning meeting, and are 'post-denominational', in that they cross or have only slender links to existing denominations.

In the light of these and other developments, the Church of England set up a working party chaired by the Bishop of Maidstone to review what was happening and to see how the church's mission could be progressed. Its report, entitled *Mission-shaped Church*, was published just over a year ago, and was commended to the church at diocesan, deanery and parish level for study and the shaping of future strategy.

The report recognised that fresh expressions of church called for a different kind of leadership from that of the traditional church. That in turn required new ways of selecting potential church leaders and giving them appropriate training. Whereas a traditional vicar was seen primarily as a pastor and teacher, fresh expressions of church needed unorthodox pioneers.

As a result of the report, work has been undertaken to develop new routes to ordination and an entirely new type of degree-level course which would lead to ordination as a 'pioneer missional leader'. The Guildford diocese is at the forefront of exploring this new opportunity, and Stuart Wright is one of four young leaders being considered for it.