

Thursday 1 March	Family Time course for parents begins
Friday 2 March	Women's World Day of Prayer, Christ Church Esher, 8 pm
Monday 5 March	Men's Fellowship Ladies Night: Mary Waller on birds
Wednesday 7 March	Holy Communion at 11 am, followed by a light lunch
Wednesday 14 March	Monthly Prayer Meeting in church, 8 pm
Monday 19 March	Anchor: Protecting your home from fire
Thursday 22 March	Riding Lights present Calvary, Guildford Cathedral 7.30 pm (£6)
Saturday 24 March	Tough Talk at Holy Trinity, 8 pm
Monday 2 April	Men's Fellowship: Howard Mallinson on Guildford via Cobham
Wednesday 4 April	Holy Communion at 11 am followed by a light lunch
Thursday 5 April	Maundy Thursday Passover Supper in Church Hall, 7 pm
Friday 6 April	Good Friday: Bach's St Matthew Passion in church, 7 pm
Sunday 8 April	Easter Day
Saturday 21 April	Another Night in New Orleans, concert in church, 8 pm
Sunday 22 April	Church Vision Meeting and APCM

### 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 with baptisms	Evening Prayer with prayer for healing
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 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

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Trinity's life and work

## TOUGH TALKING IN CLAYGATE

We might normally be alarmed to see a group of East End hard men descending on our village. But the group coming this month are all reformed characters - ex-bouncers, ex-debt collectors, ex-drug abusers, ex-violent men - who, having let God into their lives, have turned their backs on their past.

Tough Talk comprises a group of men who now feel an urgent need to share their experiences with the hope of helping others. They are all involved in powerlifting, and they will be performing powerlifting demonstrations as a backdrop to telling their amazing stories. They have found that the message of hope in Jesus Christ can reach people from all backgrounds and age groups, and their way of doing it appeals to those who would not normally go to a church meeting and therefore rarely come into contact with the Word of God.

The Tough Talk team travel Britain, Europe and the world, and their trip to Claygate takes place on Saturday 24th March. More details are on page 10.

VICAR: THE REVD PHILIP PLYMING  
 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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I hope by now you have seen my letter to the church membership to mark the beginning of Lent. As well as inviting you to the Church Vision Meeting on Sunday 22nd April, which will be a crucial time as we look to the future at Holy Trinity, I am also encouraging us all to give particular focus this Lent to praying for God to guide us and speak to us. The temporary 'prayer wall' at the back of church, the Lent prayer booklet and other initiatives, are all designed to aid our commitment to pray over the coming weeks leading up to Easter. I hope that they will be well used and that we will know God's blessing among us.

This commitment to prayer has been one of the main learning points for me from the book of Daniel. The first chapters of the book have a number of recurring themes, including the courage of Daniel and his friends to stand up for their faith in a changing world (see Joel Edwards in this month's centre pages for hints on doing this). But this commitment to steadfast faith takes place against two great truths: first, that God has his sovereign hand over all that takes place in the world, despite the apparently immense power of a monarch like Nebuchadnezzar; and second, that because God is sovereign, seeking his will, guidance and blessing in prayer is the most important activity a faithful believer can do. Daniel 6:10 tells us that it was that man of God's settled practice to pray three times a day; coupled to this rhythm there were times when Daniel particularly sought God's guidance in prayer. As a high-ranking civil servant Daniel had every reason to be confident in himself but instead turned to the Lord for counsel and help.

I don't want to labour the point, but our commitment to prayer, however or whenever that takes place, reveals a lot about how much we really believe God has our lives and our church in His hands. Praying does not mean we stop our human efforts, but it does mean they take place in the right context, and with a healthy awareness of our earthly limitations.

Our main opportunity to pray together as a church is our monthly prayer meeting. We had a really encouraging time in February as we prayed for our mission partners in China and Africa, for the Holiday Club which was going on at the time, for pastoral and other needs within the church, and all that the future holds. If you have never made it along to a prayer meeting, Wednesday 14 March is the next one, and it is always a very positive time.

So the message for Lent 2007 is 'together in prayer'. I look forward to the journey together.

With my love and prayers

*Philip*



## From the Parish Registers

*We welcome into the family of the Church:*

Barnaby Russell Maisey  
Libbi Jessica Anna Ball  
(both baptised on 4th February)

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

Roy Yorke  
(11th January)  
Olive Maud Fleet  
(31st January)  
May Marguerita Copeland  
(4th February)



## The Life of Christ

The Wintershall Estate's dramatisation of the life of Christ, from annunciation to ascension, is being presented again this summer, from 26th June to 1st July. It is in the open air, with the audience following the action around, and lasts five hours with a break for lunch. Anyone who has been in the past will recommend it. Booking forms are in the church foyer.

### Insight

Contributions for the Easter issue should reach the Editor please by Friday 16th March.

## Parish Personalities

Stuart Sadler faces this month's Insight Inquisition.

*Where were you brought up?*

In Oswestry in Shropshire.

*How long have you lived in Claygate?*

We moved from Esher in September 2001.

*What do you like most about it?*

The sense of community.

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

Affordable housing for first time buyers.

*Where would you locate your ideal home?*

Really quite happy in Foley Road, but if pushed closer to some very big hills I could walk up.

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

*Which personal trait do you struggle most to overcome?* Being last minute dot com man.

*What food are you most partial to?*

Chocolate, cake and, oh, did I mention chocolate. Ideally my daughter's chocolate cake.

*And leave on the side of your plate?*

Egg, especially the white.

*What do you watch on television?*

Natural history, preferably something with sharks.

*What would your desert island book be?*

Complete set of 1:15,000 maps of the world. I can read maps all day long.

*What is your favourite music?*

Eclectic, but definitely nothing by Phil Collins, and my personal torture would be Disney's "It's a small small world".

*And your favourite hymn?*

Traditional: "Thine be the glory"; modern: "Here I am to worship".

*Which passage of the Bible is most telling for you personally?* Philipians 2. 1 - 4.

*Do you have an unfulfilled ambition?*

To climb all 15 of Snowdonia's 3000ft peaks in a day.

## NEWS FROM THE PCC

At its January meeting the Church Council considered the process by which a new vision for Holy Trinity could be discerned. The discussion was led by a presentation by Philip who explained that the vision we were seeking was about the future, not the present, and about the next step, not the whole show. The process, involving further discussion at this month's PCC meeting, a Vision Meeting for the whole church in April, a Leadership Day Away in May and a 'next chapter' church meeting in June, has since been shared with the church membership, and Philip has written a letter to every member inviting their participation, especially by using Lent to surround the process in prayer.

The meeting also considered the pastoral care undertaken by Holy Trinity, based on a report by Valerie bringing up to date the presentation she had made on the subject early last year. She drew particular attention to the value of our Crisis Support scheme which after a slow gestation and establishment was now working in the way envisaged.

Other matters on the Council's agenda included two which were featured in last month's issue of *Insight*. Michael Webb-Peploe made a presentation on the subject of assisted dying as an aid to the church leadership's understanding the moral and ethical issues involved in a field where public attitudes are changing and moving away from those held by Christians. Then both Stuart Wright and Asa Humphreys reported, with enthusiasm and gratitude for the church's support, on the courses they are currently attending.

The PCC was due to meet again on 26th February, after this issue of *Insight* had gone to press.

## Making people whole

The February meeting of the Men's Fellowship heard a thoughtful and thought-provoking talk by Michael Webb-Peploe on the subject of health and healthcare. Those who had come along to ask what to do about their back pain found themselves reflecting on the subject at a rather deeper level.

Michael's starting point was a Biblical one, looking to the approach taken by Jesus as a means of informing the meaning of healthcare. The objective, Michael suggested, should be in terms of making people whole rather than curing their physical ills, and he told stories from his experience which illustrated the importance of this.

Many in the medical profession saw their role in terms of offering cures, but the corollary of this was that they would turn away from anyone for whom a cure was not possible; doctors tended to spend less time with those who were dying than with other patients. But we all needed to be cared about as well as cared for, and Michael discussed what care ought to involve, from having a concern for someone to not only providing for their needs but holding them in esteem and showing love for them.

Human needs went so much deeper than their physical condition. Michael reported an intensive care specialist saying that patients were frequently much less concerned about their dying than about guilt from their past and opportunities lost. But the pressures on healthcare professionals meant that meeting needs on such a broad front was rarely attempted. We were left wondering what our health service could be like if more took such a rounded view of healthcare.

## The Charles family on the move

*Michael Webb-Peploe shares the latest news about Gerard and Sarah Charles and their life and work in China.*

Gerard Charles, our link with Friends of China (FOC), spent 24 hours with us in Claygate on his way back to China via Thailand. Sarah and their two children (Anna who will be 6 in August, and Matthew now 2½ years old) were due to fly from London to Beijing on 22nd February, meeting up with Gerard there before travelling on to their new home in Xining ('Shee-Ning') in north-west China.

Their flat is in the Chinese-speaking Hui Muslim quarter. Their belongings all arrived safely by rail from their previous home in Xian, and Gerard, in freezing cold weather, eventually managed to get them safely delivered and stored in one room of the new apartment. Gerard has a work visa from FOC which is not a salaried position, but means he will spend some time acting as a consultant in Forestry for those involved in development projects in the province of Qinghai. An agriculturalist, a water engineer, and a civil engineer are the other

members of this FOC consultancy team.

Sarah will initially be looking after Matthew at home, and hoping to get to know some of the new neighbours, but may teach at the International School (which Anna will attend in the mornings) in the future.

Anna and Matthew will need someone who can come and play with them one afternoon a week and teach them some Chinese, and both Gerard and Sarah need to find a tutor to keep on with their language studies part time. As they hope to invite Muslim neighbours to meals, they have had to buy an entire new set of kitchenware and crockery, so as to be able to say that nothing they cook with or eat off has been in contact with pork!

New routines, new friends, in a new and different environment with new opportunities to share spiritual values, this is what they ask us to remember when we think of them.

## When we pray....

I asked for strength and  
God gave me difficulties to confront.

I asked for wisdom and  
God gave me problems to solve.

I asked for prosperity and  
God gave me brawn and brain to work.

I asked for courage and  
God gave me dangers to overcome.

I asked for love and  
God gave me troubled people to help...

My prayers were answered.



Patch dreaded the twins playing baptisms.

## Tough Talk

The Tough Talk team will be performing in Holy Trinity on Saturday 24th March at 8 pm. They were in Dusseldorf in February, with other recent sessions in Moscow, France, Ireland and Spain. They were invited to participate in a meeting at Alton Towers last year and regularly go into prisons around the country in addition to the shows organised by churches.

Like all their events, their coming to Claygate is primarily for the sake of those who have been untouched by the gospel, so the evening is aimed generally at the local community, including the Claygate Saints, The Hub, Old DV8 kids and the youth club rather than committed church members. Stu Wright hopes, however, that a good number from the church will want to come and - even better - use it as an evangelistic event to which they can invite people they know.

It is open to all at £1 for non-wage earners and £3 for those on a wage. It should be an interesting and worthwhile evening.

## A great big read for free

A 500-page Christian book is available free (while stocks last) from *re:fresh books and christian resources* at 23 Tolworth Broadway.

"A great big read" is a sampler offering a mouth-watering taste of what is on offer from Christian publishers this year. From John Stott on *Understanding the Bible* to Andrew Wilson on Richard Dawkins, it also contains extracts from books by authors such as John Eldredge, Selwyn Hughes, Bill Hybels, Max Lucado, David Pawson, Mike Pilavachi, and Adrian Plass. And if you want to buy any of the books, they are all on offer until 16th March.

## Still waiting to be confirmed?

Holy Trinity will be hosting a confirmation service on Tuesday 1st May at which candidates from this and neighbouring churches will be confirmed by Bishop Christopher. If you have not been confirmed, as a way of affirming publicly the promises made on your behalf when you were baptised, and think that it might be time that you were, please speak to Philip. If you have not been baptised either, and are interested in making that move, please also have a word.

## CONCERTS IN HOLY TRINITY

Oxshott & Cobham Music Society present  
THE ACADEMIA WIND QUINTET  
OF PRAGUE

playing music by Mozart, Tchaikovsky etc  
Saturday 17th March at 8 pm (£10)

\* \* \* \* \*

BACH'S ST MATTHEW PASSION  
Claygate Choral Society and  
Arbrook Baroque Chamber Orchestra  
conducted by Martyn Daldorph

Good Friday 6th April at 7 pm (£12)

\* \* \* \* \*

The Men's Fellowship presents  
ANOTHER NIGHT IN  
NEW ORLEANS

with the French Quarter All-Stars  
Traditional jazz with a spiritual flavour  
Saturday 21st April at 8 pm (£10)

## Claygate Castle Capers a big hit with children

Holy Trinity's Holiday Club gave a capacity 90 children four great mornings of excitement, fun and good teaching during the February half term. Church members who at the previous Sunday services saw the marvellous castle constructed across the front of the church would have appreciated not only the sense of anticipation it generated in the children as they arrived, but something of the work and effort that so many people put in to make the week a resounding success.

Even the church foyer was transformed, with a castle gateway as the entrance to what was billed as the Home of Medieval Merriment. With the church cleared of chairs, gazebos served as camp for each of the groups of children - the Eager Eagles, Brave Bears, Daring Dragons etc.

## Prayer Wall

The wood paneling in the church foyer has had a temporary covering to focus on our prayers as we move towards capturing a new vision for Holy Trinity's future. It caters not only for drawing attention to prayer events, but for members to add their own assurances that they will be praying.

## Electoral Roll from scratch

This year, Holy Trinity, along with every other Church of England parish, is obliged not simply to update its Electoral Roll - our membership list, effectively - but to tear it up and start again. This means that there is no automatic carry-over from the old list, and every member of the church must reapply to be included in the new one. If you have not already received an individual letter about this, there are forms in the church foyer which you can use to enrol.

If you were not on the old list, this is your opportunity to join the new one. Living outside the parish or having a background in a different denomination is no bar on your eligibility: the application form spells out the conditions you must satisfy. Do pick one up and return it to John Smith, our Electoral Roll Officer, via the Church Office by Monday 26th March.



*I'd love to help dear - but I really must finish this sermon...  
...my theme's the '200th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery!'*

## Learning from the Bible

*"Now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions...."*

Romans, chap. 15, verse 23.

Paul's letter to the Romans is unique among his writings. Most of his letters are to the churches he founded and which he wished to see staying on the right lines. They are to people he knew and loved but who might have started to stray or to experience problems, and to whom he was offering encouragement or correction.

The letter to the Romans is the only one to a church he did not found and that he had never visited, and for which he cannot have felt responsible in the same way. This does not mean that they were people he did not know: the final chapter is of greetings to a good many individuals he was clearly familiar with. But the letter is of a different character from the others, both longer and more important in its theological breadth.

The letter tells us a lot about Paul himself, and in chapter 15 he discusses his future plans in a way that throws interesting light on the way he viewed his task. Take, for example, his reference in verse 23 to there being "no more place for me to work in these regions". What can he have meant? Considering the expanse of Asia Minor which had been his particular missionary territory, and the continuing needs of all the churches he had founded, could there really have been nothing left for him to do?

There was plenty to do, certainly, in ministering to these young Christian communities but Paul saw his chief priority in different terms. He was the groundbreaker, the one who was always looking for new audiences for the good news. Paul's own life had

been dramatically changed when, as he wrote to the Philippians (3.12), Christ Jesus "took hold of me", and he felt powerfully driven to tell others about the life-changing love he had discovered. But, he had already written to the Romans (10.14-15), "how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" He wrote in verse 20 of chapter 15 "It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known".

In more modern times, for generation after generation, the role of the church seemed to be to nurture and minister to the faithful. Our current sermon series on Daniel forces us to confront the extent to which the world has changed around us, and to strengthen our resolve to live faithfully in what is a foreign land. But it also opens our eyes to the challenge that Paul was so determined to take up and to devote all his efforts to. For we are moving back into an environment of ignorance, where we have to ask, with Paul, "how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?"

It will not be for all of us to be groundbreakers in preaching the gospel where Christ is not known. But we all as his disciples must have a role to play in recognising both the need and the ways in which we must adapt to meet it, encouraging and resourcing those who accept the challenge of seeking new audiences but also daring to witness to our own faith.

*Scribatus*

*It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless we preach as we walk. (Francis of Assisi)*

## Young people today....

Every week in the younger boys' cell group it is always 'Any Questions', with yours truly on hand to try and answer as best as possible, or more often than not go away and find the answer. This week we had why is the Book of Job in the Bible? But a few weeks ago we had a very productive time of questions about the difference between the Church in Zambia and the Church here.

This was provoked by David Shine who had spent the New Year kayaking on the Zambezi, (a talented lot our YF), and when asked what his most treasured memory was he said it was when he went to church there. He said that they were all really happy and joyful and even though he didn't understand all that was being said (it being sometimes in a different language) he felt welcomed and part of something special.

We then spent an hour talking about whether that was the case here; whether someone would walk into church or YF and would feel welcomed and part of something special even if they didn't understand everything that was going on. The boys came up with some very encouraging insights for YF and some valuable comments for the wider church.

However, it was most fascinating when we spent time contrasting Elbridge life with that in Zambia; the abundance of joy there and its rarity here. As we discussed the pressures of school and achieving good grades and then going to a good university and marrying the right person and doing a worthy job with good career prospects and stock options, we compared

that to the fact that Zambia has about 17% HIV infection rates in adults and a life expectancy of 40, with 86% of the population below the UN poverty line.

Yet they had a joy that was apparent in a way that our younger boys' cell group found difficult to find examples of here. Why? Well, we agreed that they were content with what little they had and were pleased when something went right, whereas we are not content with all we do have, striving for more all the time and are always angry when just one thing is not right.

I asked if there was a Bible verse that they could think of that related to this and together we found Luke 9 v 25, "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his own soul?" We agreed that Jesus was indeed the difference in the appearance of joy between Zambia and Claygate, but then one of the Bible study group said, "Sometimes I think that we make things complicated, just as an excuse to be sad." He is 14 and has stumbled on a truth that affects us all.

Let us be praying that we can keep it simple, love the Lord God with our all and love our neighbour as we love ourselves, that we may uncover more of the joy that David brought back from Zambia.

*Asa*

*The small boy playing on the beach with his father found a dead seagull on the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?" he asked.*

*His father replied: "He died and went to heaven."*

*The boy thought for a moment and then observed: "He can't have been very good - God's thrown him out again."*

# Culture wars and where they haven't got us

You have spoken about the current cultural landscape. How do you feel we have failed to properly engage with society?

We now live in what is essentially a post-Christian society. By that I mean that even though our heritage has been shaped by Christian values, a lot of public thinking and discussion seeks to marginalise any current Christian voices. As a result, our influence in shaping public morality is not as strong as it once was. That presents us with new challenges. We get into troubles when we fail to face up to the reality of our new status.

What sort of troubles?

Well, because we feel attacked, some of us have gone to war - culture war. A culture war is typified by antagonism: fighting the culture, always resisting, always being against things. In much popular opinion, evangelicals are as welcome as undertakers at a birthday party. There is a perception that we spoil the fun.

For example?

The obvious example is *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, a theatre production that received critical acclaim, but which was also offensive to many, especially Christians. Then the state-funded BBC decided to broadcast it, resulting in a huge and highly vocal protest from some Christians. In many ways I was concerned at our response, because I was hearing voices saying, "We're going to show them. The Muslims have flexed their muscles, the Hindus stopped the play in Birmingham, now it's our turn." I can't tell you how many reporters rang me about *Jerry* and said, "Rev Edwards, is this a new day for evangelical fundamentalism?" The press and public were seeing anger, hostility and aggression. Nobody was seeing any grace. I was left asking: "Has this episode done the perception of the Gospel any favours?" I'm not sure it did.

You are talking about a blasphemous piece of theatre. Surely we have to stand up and say no to something so offensive to our faith?

*Our current studies in the book of Daniel direct our thinking to how we live faithfully in what is becoming, from the Christian point of view, a foreign land. This is also the background to this contribution by the Revd Joel Edwards, General Director of the Evangelical Alliance, who talks about ways evangelicals try to engage with contemporary culture and often end up doing more harm than good.*

I am not saying that we should not comment or even actively protest. Our recent Faith and Nation report is very clear that strident protest - even peaceful civil disobedience - sometimes has its place. What I am saying is that we have to think very carefully about how we comment and protest. To begin with, we have to be more media savvy. The media love conflict; conflict is drama; drama sells papers. Too often we play right into their hands with our antics, further feeding their caricature of the "evangelical Christian". Second, every time we speak we have to do so from love and with love, from grace and with grace. Anger and aggression simply have no place in our protest. Anguish and compassion do.

How could we take a more positive approach?

A better way was exemplified by our protest surrounding the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill. Christians formed a broad coalition with many others and stood up against a piece of legislation, exercising Christian citizenship. We worked behind the scenes in a measured but assertive way and we won. A piece of legislation that was potentially damaging to the preaching of the Gospel was defeated.

So how would you apply that to a future *Jerry*-type scenario?

I feel that behind-the-scenes diplomacy is usually effective in getting things done. On its own, strident protest (particularly if it is ugly or aggressive) can just end up communicating to the outside world that Christians are insecure about their position in society, that their God cannot fight His own battles and that they are defined by what they are opposed to - be that *Jerry Springer* or gay marriage.

We need to stop using so much energy telling the darkness how dark it is and use a little more to create some light. *Jerry Springer* examined the more depraved sides of human nature and was, unsurprisingly, offensive to us. It treated our God with no respect whatsoever. But whether we like it or not, it was also entertaining to a lot of people. It made them laugh and it made them think.

So let's have Christian writers and performers creating work that celebrates the good, the wholesome and the divine. Not work which is twee, cheesy and unrealistically optimistic, but gutsy, truthful work with hope and love at its heart. Bach managed it with music and was arguably the greatest composer who ever lived. Where are the modern-day equivalents in all the art forms?

Let's support those in our congregations who work in these difficult industries, because we recognise the huge influence that arts and media have on our culture. Let's produce some light and produce it in works of art that are more entertaining, more thought-provoking and funnier than *Jerry* ever was.

More carrot than stick then?

Yes. Let's be typified by grace rather than militancy and aggression. Let's be a bit more secure in the power of the Gospel. Let's be a little less obsessed with being defenders of the faith, to the extent that we actually end up as offenders for the faith. Let's put greater imagination into lifting up Jesus than putting down *Jerry*.

*Reprinted with permission from the January/February 2007 issue of Idea magazine*