

Tuesday 1 May	Confirmation service at Holy Trinity with Bishop Ian
Wednesday 2 May	Holy Communion at 11 am, followed by a light lunch
Tuesday 8 May	YF prayers and catch-up with Asa, Quiet Room, 9.30am & 7 pm
Wednesday 9 May	Monthly time of prayer in church, 8 pm
Sunday 13-19 May	Christian Aid Week
Monday 14 May	Men's Fellowship Service, AGM and closing supper
Tuesday 15-18 May	Christian Resources Exhibition at Sandown Park
Monday 21 May	Anchor: Simon Kateley on Met Police dog handling
Sunday 27 May	Pentecost / Whit Sunday
Sunday 17 June	The Next Chapter: hear back from the Vision process
Friday 22 June	Men's Fellowship outing to Canine Partners

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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MORE PEOPLE ATTEND ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

The decision to hold the Church Vision Meeting, incorporating the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, on a Sunday lunch-time yielded very positive results. 182 adults attended the meeting, far more than has been expected in the past when the APCM has been held on a weekday evening. Activities were provided for 45 children in order to allow their parents to participate in the meeting.

The atmosphere was also a positive one. The highlight was Philip's address describing where the Vision process has brought us to and putting forward the questions he saw facing us. The depth and breadth of his analysis was greeted by acclamation, and it was followed by discussions in small groups which revealed both excitement and some trepidation about the direction in which God might wish to take Holy Trinity in the future.

More details are inside.

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
 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COORDINATOR: ANDREW COWIE

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I was highly delighted that so many made the effort to come to the Church Vision Meeting on Sunday 22nd April. It was a real answer to prayer that there was such a sense of unity as we thought about the future of Holy Trinity and where God wants to take us in the years to come. I am excited about what the future holds and look forward to the Leadership Day Away when the PCC and others will work through the response from the Church Vision Meeting and suggest next steps which we can then bring back to the church on 17th June.

As we consider questions of evangelism, discipleship and life together I think we will be addressing areas of central importance in the life of the church, and enduring value for our shared future. Please continue to pray for God's guidance in this whole process and feel free to share your thoughts with me at any stage.

You will also have heard of the great news that we will be receiving a curate a year earlier than we had dared hope! Tom Darwent will be ordained at Guildford Cathedral on 1 July and we look forward to welcoming him to Claygate and Holy Trinity after then. Tom really enjoyed coming to look around Claygate for the weekend and is excited about starting ministry here; those who met him during his stay were agreed on the significant contribution he will make to the life and ministry at Holy Trinity. Praise God for these and other new opportunities opening up.

Of course, plans and people, splendid though they may be, only find their true value in the extent to which they point us to Jesus. As we continue in the Easter season it is wonderful to have the chance to reflect on the encounters people had with the risen Jesus. In our Sunday teaching we will be looking at how Jesus met Thomas, Peter, John; each of them had their life transformed. The challenge for us is not simply to witness their stories but experience it for ourselves.

In a broken world where pain and death are never far away, may it be the peace, forgiveness and power of the risen Jesus that fires our hearts and inspires us to follow him as his people in Claygate and the surrounding area.

With my love and prayers,

Philip



From the Parish Registers

*We offer congratulations
on the marriage of:*

Andrew James Pinks and
Victoria de Jonge
(married on 31st March)

Michael David Kevin Harvey and
Laura Melissa Linkson
(married on 7th April)

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

John Brunsdon Rapkins
(28th March)



Christian Aid Week

This year's Christian Aid Week begins on Sunday 13th May, and we shall want to ensure as always that as many of the roads in Claygate are covered by collectors. Do please sign up to distribute and collect in the roads of your choice, on the sheets in the church foyer. And if you feel able to take on the coordination of the collection, please speak as soon as possible to the Church Office.

Insight

Contributions for the June issue should reach the Editor please by Friday 18th May.

Parish Personalities

Angela Havelock occupies the hot seat for this month's Insight Inquisition.

Where were you brought up?
In Claygate.

How long have you lived in Claygate?
I was born in Stevens Lane in 1939.

What do you like most about it?

It is still a village in which I feel safe.

And if there was one thing you could change?

Every road to be resurfaced.

Where would you locate your ideal home?

In the country, either Sussex or Dorset.

What is the least welcome part of your daily round?

Washing up - there is always so much of it!

Which personal trait do you struggle most to overcome?

Talking too much.

What food are you most partial to?

Roast Welsh lamb.

And leave on the side of your plate?

Fat! Nothing else.

What do you watch on television?

Period drama and old films.

What would your desert island book be?

Green Dolphin Country by Elizabeth Goudge.

What is your favourite music?

Classical, hymns and opera.

And your favourite hymn?

"Lead us, Heavenly Father, lead us".

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

Matthew 25, verses 34 to 40.

Do you have an unfulfilled ambition?

To persuade my husband to get me a new shed!

News from the Annual Church Meeting

The Vision process

What Philip had to say about a new vision for Holy Trinity is summarised in our centre pages. It was enthusiastically greeted, and created a great buzz in which members discussed in small groups what they would hope and pray to see if they were to visit Holy Trinity in five years' time; what they found exciting about the questions posed by Philip; and what they found daunting. Each group compiled written comments which will be fed into the Leadership Day Away on 19th May. But from some of the comments heard at the meeting, there was considerable excitement about possible developments, and also a recognition that they contained elements which some would find challenging.

Election Results

Penny Alpass and Richard Gordon were re-elected as Holy Trinity's two Churchwardens.

For the Parochial Church Council, Andrew Forbes, Brian Howells and Michael Porter were elected as new members, and Barry Wakefield was re-elected,

having come to the end of his first term. Jem Salter, who has also completed a term, was coopted on to the PCC at a Council meeting immediately after the APCM, and continues as Church Treasurer.

Simon Botham and Michael Webb-Peploe retired from the PCC, having completed their maximum two consecutive terms.

Electoral Roll

The new Electoral Roll compiled this spring contains 483 names, 51 fewer than a year ago, including 9 who had died. This kind of reduction is the common experience throughout the Church of England every six years, when old Rolls are shredded and a list of members started again from scratch. A positive indication, however, was that no fewer than 103 names were new to this year's list. But the reduction added point to what Philip said in his address about the absence of room for complacency about the state of Holy Trinity.

Of this total adult membership, 359 are resident in the parish of Claygate and 124 live outside it. This leaves a higher proportion of our members being from Claygate (74%) than was the case last year (72%).

The Hub at Haslemere's Easter camp

Stu Wright tells us that six members of The Hub and three leaders had a great time at Easter Haslemere. "The camp had a great family atmosphere; there were about 45 of us so everyone got to know everyone. The teaching was challenging as we went through the basics of the gospel. The weather was fantastic and enabled us to have some fun activities - e.g. leaders vs members football (leaders won, of course), widegames in the nearby forest, tennis

tournament and the night walk, etc. We also made the most of the local swimming pool, bowling alley and laserquest.

It was great to see young people from completely different backgrounds getting on with each other and each discovering that Jesus Christ is the Lord and their Saviour too. I believe the camp really helped each young person to strengthen their faith and make some Christian friendships that will last the years."

Good Friday at Holy Trinity

What is Holy Trinity about? Good Friday was a good illustration of the range of activities which are part of the life of a Christian community.

PUBLIC WITNESS

At 10 o'clock, members of Holy Trinity took to the streets in a Walk of Witness, carrying the cross from Claygate Station to the Church as a reminder to the village of a worshipping community in its midst and of the crucial importance of Good Friday to us and to the world at large, when a sacrificial cross became a liberating triumph.

ALL AGE WORSHIP

Young and old gathered together for a service at 10.30 to celebrate what Jesus did for us on the cross. Movement around the church for different prayer stations in the course of the service added extra point and significance to this year's service. And then there was Christian fellowship afterwards, with hot cross buns on the day they were designed for, a tradition ignored by the supermarkets and seemingly lost by an uncomprehending population.

THREE HOUR MEDITATION

It is a long-standing tradition for Christians to spend the hours between noon and 3 pm, when Jesus was on the cross, in meditation and prayer on what he did and what it means for us. It can be a profoundly moving and spiritual occasion, one for deepening our faith and sharpening our experience of God.

Some people might fear its length and solemnity, but over 100 people attended Holy Trinity's Meditation, even if they did not all remain for a solid three hours. It was divided into six half-hour sections, each led by a different person and including hymns, a reading, a meditative talk, some relevant recorded music, prayers and a period of si-

lence for personal reflection and prayer. We followed the story of Good Friday through the account of Luke, reflecting in particular on the people whom Jesus encountered as he went through the day.

BACH'S PASSION STORY

In his church in Leipzig in the early eighteenth century, Johann Sebastian Bach saw it as his mission to instruct churchgoers about the Christian faith and to enhance its impact on them by means of the power of the music he composed to go with it. Its impact is equally powerful today, and we were fortunate on Good Friday evening to have Claygate Choral Society and the Arbrook Baroque Chamber Orchestra to perform Bach's setting of the Passion according to Matthew.

This was a concert rather than a service - Philip forbore to use the interval as the opportunity for a sermon! - and attracted many people from the community who would not normally come to our services. But it was for them and us a vivid and intense reminder of the Passion story, its poignancy and continuing relevance. And it was not just a passive occasion for the audience, for we were all invited, from the sheets handed out with our programmes, to join in singing five of the chorales which offer the congregation's response to the momentous events unfolding before them.

OUTWARD MISSION

Finally, we remembered the continuing need to spread the good news of Jesus Christ elsewhere, and made a Good Friday offering for the work of the Church's Ministry among Jewish People.

How Claygate got its railway line

We hear about the most recent meeting of the Men's Fellowship and its successful jazz concert, and contemplate the future

The April meeting of the Fellowship had a fascinating presentation from local author Howard Mallinson on the origins of the Guildford via Cobham railway - the "New Line", as railwaymen still call it after a mere 122 years. Howard's talk was based on the extensive research he had undertaken for his book *Guildford via Cobham*, published last year.

So what kind of feasibility study preceded the line, assessing the passenger demand for such a route and how soon the considerable investment could be recouped from the likely revenues? Well, things weren't like that, Howard explained. A line was promoted by landowners, most notably Lord Onslow, affected by the agricultural depression and the collapse of land values. Selling land to a railway company and then selling adjacent land for development was the most promising means of maintaining their wealth. Other considerations were the breaking of the existing monopoly and finding a new route into the City.

When, after many twists and turns (buy the book if you want to know more) a line was built - not quite the one which Lord Onslow had promoted - it made consistent losses for forty years, until it was electrified in 1925, and allowed a train from Claygate to reach Waterloo in 22 minutes (!!) for a return fare of 3s 6d.

For those of us living in a village which owes its expansion to the coming of the railway (the population of Claygate before the line was built was about 800), and in many cases being or having been regular commuters to London, it was a particularly interesting evening.

New Orleans evening

The Fellowship's second concert of traditional jazz with a spiritual flavour showed that support for this venture remains undiminished over the two years since the last one. An audience of 130 responded with enthusiasm to the music provided by Brian White and the French Quarter All-Stars, though perhaps the biggest cheer came when the bandleader had to confess that he did not know the words to one religious song and it would be played as an instrumental, whereupon organiser Keith Havelock stepped up to the microphone to provide a very accomplished vocal.

Canine Partners outing

The Fellowship has organised an outing to the charity Canine Partners in Heyshott, West Sussex, to see at first hand the training of assistance dogs for the disabled. This follows a presentation at Holy Trinity about how dogs are trained to respond to 100 different commands including loading and unloading washing machines, picking items off supermarket shelves etc. There are still some places left on the coach on Friday 22nd June, and if you are interested in going, please ring Rob Garner on 01372 464442.

But what of the future?

The Fellowship's season comes to an end on 14th May, with its Annual Service in the church, followed by the AGM and a supper in the Church Hall. This is a crisis point for the Fellowship, which has been looking for new leaders. As we went to press, no nominations had been received.

A new curate

Philip told the Church Vision Meeting on 22nd April that a new curate will be joining us in July. He is to be Tom Darwent, who is 33, single and currently completing his theological training at Wycliffe Hall Oxford. Tom read political science at Cambridge and then worked as a researcher for NOP.

It had previously been expected that we would receive a curate in the summer of 2008, following Claygate being selected as a training parish with Philip as training incumbent. But then events began to move more rapidly, and the diocese offered Holy Trinity a training post from this summer.

Chancellor hits Holy Trinity for £7,000

In this year's Budget statement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the standard rate of income tax would be reduced from 22% to 20%. This means that charities will be unable to recover as much from the Revenue on gifts received under the Gift Aid tax arrangements as they do now.

Church Treasurer Jem Salter says that although the tax rates do not actually change until 5th April 2008, the implications when they do are more serious than one might suppose. In 2006 the "tax efficient" giving to Holy Trinity was £223,017 on which we recovered £62,902 from the Revenue. On an identical level of giving in a full year at the new rates we could only recover £55,754, a loss to the church of £7,148.

In shuffling the way tax is collected, the Chancellor has in the process caught charities out. Jem comments that we shall all just have to be more generous!

Andrew Cowie becomes full time

Following our news last month of the impending departure of Asa Humphreys, the PCC meeting on 26th March agreed to expand Andrew Cowie's role and working hours from July until the end of the year in order to ensure that Asa's core responsibilities for our youth work were covered once he left.

This is an interim solution pending the outcome of our Vision process and the ability to take longer-term decisions about the scope, nature and organisation of our important work with children and young people and the staff it will require.



Learning from the Bible

Philip was one of the early Christian evangelists of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles. He was not the same Philip whom Jesus had chosen as one of the twelve apostles; we know this from the first verses of chapter 6 of Acts, where a distinction is drawn between the Twelve and those, including Philip, chosen as the seven deacons. So we can regard him as a second-generation Christian, one who had not known Jesus but who was converted as the early church spread and found himself called to service.

We next hear about Philip when he went north to Samaria, where his preaching and healing generated great joy in the city (Acts 8.8). Then, later in chapter 8, the Spirit led him south to Gaza, and we are told that he met on his journey an Ethiopian official who was also travelling south from Jerusalem back to his country, which was not the modern Ethiopia we know but the upper Nile region of Sudan - probably the end of the known world so far as the Jews and the Greeks were concerned.

The Ethiopian was what the Jews called a God-fearer, someone who was not a Jew but who accepted the principles of their religion. He had been to Jerusalem to worship and was reading the Scriptures as he travelled home in his chariot.

We might think it odd that Philip could hear what the Ethiopian was reading, but experts assure us that silent reading was very rare in antiquity. People who read, read aloud, even if sometimes under their breath, and

"Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.'

Acts, chap. 8, verse 30.

Philip, walking alongside the official's carriage, was able to recognise it as the prophecy of Isaiah. The Holy Spirit having led him to the side of the Ethiopian official, Philip was able to start a conversation based on what he could hear.

Philip asked the official if he understood what he was reading, and he replied "How can I unless someone explains it to me?" So Philip seized the opportunity. Invited to sit with the official in the carriage, he explained Isaiah's prophecy, linking it to the good news of Jesus as its fulfilment. The official was convinced, stopped the carriage and there and then asked Philip to baptise him in nearby water.

Although Luke, the author of Acts, does not make the point, we can see that this is the first example of the gospel being brought to a Gentile. This was well before Paul began his missionary journeys to the Gentiles, he having been mentioned, as Saul, in the first verse of chapter 8, still in his guise as a persecutor of the Christians and present at the stoning of Stephen.

The story illustrates how important it is that we know, and understand, what the Bible says as the basis for the faith we hold, so that we have answers for those who seek its meaning. We can never know when that opportunity will present itself to us, and how dreadful if we have to allow it to slip through our fingers. For how can they understand unless someone explains it to them?

Scribatius

He who has the Holy Spirit in his heart and the Scriptures in his hands has all he needs.

Young people today....

So, it came to pass that somewhere upwards of 600 people squeezed into Holy Trinity Claygate for a service of unusual proportions. Two vicars, several hundred young people and another hundred or so adults fitted two to a chair; add in two brass bands, two road closures, about 30 flags, a smattering of local dignitaries and you've got a celebration of centennial dimensions.

Yes, it was the Esher and District Scout St George's Day Parade, a quiet affair in no way apart from the fact that the unsung heroes of the day, all those who helped rearrange the church between the 10 am and 6.30 pm services so that no one even noticed the complete reordering of the church, worked so selflessly and stealthily. And we didn't even need permission from the diocese.

This was a service that had been a good while in the planning and was a celebration of the 100 years of Scouting since Robert Baden-Powell had taken the first group camping on Brownsea Island back in 1907. With a World Jamboree later this year in Chelmsford, at which David Shine, one of our YF members, has been awarded a place, this was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate all the service of others that Scouting has provided.

In my youth I was a Senior Patrol Leader at 7th Ashford Scouts and so it was with memories of past St George's Day parades that I was able to approach the great privilege of speaking at this service. Choosing the parable of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10, we looked together at the role Scouting has played in helping

other people and as we affirmed our promise together looked at how the parable taught us the importance of such a service. However, the Scout promise also encourages us to 'do our duty to God' and so we looked at exactly what that meant today.

It was lovely to be able to say that Jesus is the ultimate Good Samaritan and that when it comes to 'inheriting eternal life' we are akin to the man in the gutter. Jesus crosses the road by leaving heaven and coming to earth, he tends our wounds, walks beside us as we journey to rest, pays the price for our care; not with two denarii but with his life and death and life again, and then promises to return. I suggested that if we do our duty to God we should ask questions of what Jesus means for us, and if we do that we shall enjoy the greatest celebration of all time when we stand before our saviour and he says of us 'well done, good and faithful servant. With you I am well pleased'.

Please join with me in praying that the seeds sown on St George's Day may find root and grow and bear fruit in searching hearts and answered questions. Pray that others may see our good deeds and give praise to our Father in heaven.

Asa

A Sunday school teacher asked her class: "Do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?"

"No," replied one boy, "How could he, with just two worms?"

Identifying a vision for Holy Trinity's future

Philip began his address by saying what a privilege he counted it to serve as Holy Trinity's vicar. He was inspired by its past, which gave great cause for thanksgiving, and excited about its future. What he had to say represented his reflections since his arrival nine months ago, informed by initial discussions within the Church Council.

Where are we?

A place to be thankful. Philip saw many reasons to be thankful to God - for our growth over the last twenty years, with adult attendance having doubled and our having become the fifth largest church in the diocese; for the number of children (100 on Sunday mornings and 30 youth in the evening) and families who come to church; for wonderful buildings that were attractive and fit for purpose; for a staff team and a wider leadership with people using their own specialist gifts; for our profile and standing in the village; and for a clear theological direction sharing across services using different styles a commitment to an evangelical identity, with the Bible, the cross and mission at the centre of what we do.

No room for complacency. Philip said that realism meant there were factors which should make us think. One was that after a period of considerable growth, the last five years had seen the church more static. We could not pretend that our strong growth was continuing. Another was that we are not universally successful in helping people grow as Christians. By this Philip meant that although we were good at getting people to come to church on Sunday, we struggled more in encouraging growth in prayer, knowledge, obedience and service. Homegroups were crucial in this respect, and there were positive stories of homegroups helping people to grow in their faith; but only 44% of church members belonged to homegroups, and it was the younger half of the church who were most under-represented. Growth without depth was dangerous and, given that practising Christian faith was becoming more challenging, this was a concern for the church's long-term health. A third reason for caution was the way in which the size of the church made the sharing of a community life more complex. It was too easy for some to feel left out or to be unaware of what is going on.

At the Church Vision Meeting on 22nd April, Philip used his address to set out his assessment of where we are and his suggestions about the directions in which we might head, posing questions for further debate. This is a brief account of what he said.

A place of opportunity. We could be encouraged by the potential in our youth and children's work; by the possibilities afforded by a new projection system; by the growing usage of our website; by the way in which church members had been willing to provide generous funding whenever a clear and compelling need had arisen; and by the arrival sooner than expected of a new curate.

What is God's vision for the local church?

Philip said that it was good to remind ourselves what the church is for and what our priorities should be, based on the New Testament account of the early church in Acts 2. 41-47. He suggested that a local church had three purposes: bringing people to faith (evangelism), by encouraging everyone in the community to respond to God's forgiving love shown on the cross; growing people in faith (discipleship), by ensuring that people not only make an initial response but become faithful disciples; and modelling community of faith, making the church a loving and sharing community shining out God's love to the world.

What questions do we need to be asking?

Philip said that three questions (not necessarily the only ones to be asked) raised themselves from what he had so far said, and went on to offer possible answers. They were:

How can we create more space for growth at Holy Trinity? Philip said that this had been the stimulus for the redevelopment project of 1998-99, which had turned out to be a lever for growth. Now, however, the issue of our capacity could

be addressed through planting new congregations. This has not been done in the last twenty years, save for short-lived experiments with 20/20 and Eternal, but it appeared that the type of worship which we under-provide is of a more informal style accessible to families, new Christians and those from an unchurched background. Philip described how some other churches had approached this, by means of another morning congregation, a Sunday afternoon congregation, a youth congregation, a Holiday Club-style service in a different venue etc, but said that he did not know what would be right for Claygate. We should, however, examine carefully the possibilities. He went on to make the point that creating more space for growth also meant reviewing our leadership resources: gifted and specialised staff were vital.

How can we help people grow as disciples of Jesus? We needed to review how we can further the building up of Christian believers, perhaps in three different ways: first by reviewing the shape of, and investment in, small groups, which might include something additional to the homegroup structure, such as a working men's discipleship group on a Saturday morning; secondly, by creating new opportunities for in-depth teaching on issues facing Christians today, helping people with the knowledge which would assist the practical outworking of their faith, which could mean once a month on a Sunday evening or occasional teaching evenings which could be accessed online; thirdly, by encouraging more training for leadership and ministry, within the church and outside it, part of which might embrace a lay assistant scheme in which university leavers worked at Holy Trinity for a year.

How can we better model a community of faith? The size of Holy Trinity could not allow us to avoid the challenge of making the church not a club we go to but a family we belong to. In part, this went back to the issue of small groups, but we also needed to examine welcoming, social concern and joint social activities. But an important area to be addressed was our patterns of communication for sharing life together and prayer. In a healthy church community, members had to feel they knew what was going on, to be aware of and pray for others' needs and show love to one another.