

Friday 29 September	Youth Fellowship weekend away at Dalesdown, till Sunday
Monday 2 October	Men's Fellowship opening supper, 7.45 for 8 pm
Tuesday 3 October	Monthly youth update and time of prayer, 9.30 am & 7 pm
Wednesday 4 October	Holy Communion at 11 am, followed by a light lunch
Thursday 5 October	Royal Marines Band concert for Seafarers UK, Cathedral (£14)
Saturday 7 October	World Hospice and Palliative Care Day
Wednesday 11 October	Monthly Prayer meeting for all members in church, 8 pm
Thursday 12 October	First meeting of 'The Hub' (see page 10)
Monday 16 October	Anchor: Pat Price-Tomes on Palestine and Israel
Sunday 22 October	Breakfast for 8 am congregation at the Mains' home
Tuesday 31 October	All Hallows Eve: Shine parties
Wednesday 1 November	Holy Communion at 11 am, followed by a light lunch
Monday 6 November	Men's Fellowship: William Sarrit's experiences of Iraq
Sunday 10 December	David King's last Sunday as Holy Trinity's Curate

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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INSIDE THIS MONTH'S MAGAZINE

A REAL COMMUNITY

Philip's letter - page 2

STU STARTS TRAINING

What and where - page 3

FREEDOM AND CHOICE

Young people today - page 5

A YEAR IN CHINA

A report from the Cowies
- in our centre pages

LAUNCH OF THE HUB

Holy Trinity's latest commu-
nity outreach - page 10

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

A HARVEST FOR WATERAID

This year's beneficiary of Holy Trinity's Harvest Appeal is the charity WaterAid, which is celebrating its silver jubilee this year.

Set up in 1981 as an initiative of the UK water industry in response to the United Nations' Decade of Drinking Water and Sanitation, WaterAid is the international organisation dedicated exclusively to the provision of safe domestic water, sanitation and hygiene education to the world's poorest people. These basic services are essential to life; without them, vulnerable communities are trapped in the stranglehold of disease and poverty.

One sixth of the world's population, 1.1 billion people, have no access to safe water; over twice as many lack access to adequate sanitation. 2.2 million people, most of them children, die every year from diseases associated with lack of safe water or adequate sanitation. WaterAid works by helping local organisations set up low cost, sustainable projects using appropriate technology that can be managed by the community itself.

VICAR: THE REVD PHILIP PLYMING

CURATE: THE REVD DAVID KING

LAY ASSISTANT MINISTER: VALERIE BAGLEY

NON-STIPENDIARY MINISTER: THE REVD PROF LINDA MORGAN

COMMUNITY WORKER: STUART WRIGHT

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You may have seen the research from Halifax Home Insurance which found that residents of Elmbridge enjoy the best quality of life in the country. Employment, earnings, housing quality and prices, traffic flows, crime, education and health were all taken into consideration as our borough came out above Hart, Wokingham and Chiltern in the national survey.

You will have your own views on such a survey (and may disagree when you are queuing to get over Hampton Court bridge!). One of the things that struck me as I read it was that there is little account taken of the value of community in assessing quality of life. Real community – people sharing their lives together, in both good and bad times – is something increasingly rare in a rapidly fragmenting society, and yet I would argue it is more important than some of the other measures used. You can tick all the 'quality of life' boxes listed by Halifax and still feel unfulfilled and unhappy.

Of course, in Claygate we are fortunate to have a village which is more than a community in name only; I noticed as much soon after arriving here. Nevertheless, at Holy Trinity Church we have a particular responsibility to model and build community; as a body of Christian believers it is our task to witness to the God who created us to live in community with one another, not simply as isolated members of the human race. We don't just 'come to church'; we are part of a real and living Christian community in which joys and sorrows are equally shared.

One of the ways the church can live out its community life is by building bridges between ages and across social barriers, and I know Holy Trinity takes this challenge seriously. I was really delighted after an evening service recently when the people having coffee after the 6.30 service mingled happily with the adults and young people arriving for START. These were residents of Claygate who would probably not otherwise meet and mix, and I was really glad at the atmosphere of Christian fellowship that prevailed.

This feeling of community was also present in the day away which the PCC recently spent together. I was very struck by how members from different parts of the church family could show such unity in working together to hear from God and listen to each other. For more, see page 4.

Finally, Annabelle and I have sensed this heart for community in all the love and support we have received after the birth of James. So many people have helped in practical ways, taken on work that I would otherwise have had to do, cooked meals and sent cards, and we are so grateful to God for you all.

As we continue our studies of 1 Corinthians there will be more to discover about the hallmarks of being a community focussed on, and determined by, the cross of Christ. I hope you are finding the series and its associated resources helpful in your own walk with the Lord Jesus.

With my love and prayers

Philip



From the Parish Registers

We welcome into the family of the Church:

Abigail Elizabeth Paterson
Jessica Georgina McKenzie Ayres
Poppy Eloise Sheppard
Lottie Honeysuckle Sheppard
(all baptised on 3rd September)

We offer congratulations on the marriage of:

Jonathan Richard Ellison and
Jennifer Nardia Saunders
(married on 9th September)

We offer sympathy to the relatives and friends of:

Terence Edmund Ford
(9th August)
Margaret Joan Scholey
(26th August)
Marion Patricia Carruthers
(28th August)
Mary Gwenoline Ryan
(7th September)
Robert Henry Norris
(7th September)



Vicar's day off

Church members may like to note that Philip will normally be taking every Friday as a day off from church duties.

Parish Personalities

Ann Davey is the subject of this month's Insight Inquisition.

Where were you brought up?

My formative years (from age 9) were in Leyton, but I was born in Palestine and went from there to South Africa and other destinations.

How long have you lived in Claygate?

For 41 years.

What do you like most about it?

Its friendly village atmosphere.

And if there was one thing you could change?

I'd remove the speed humps.

Where would you locate your ideal home?

Claygate suits me.

What is the least welcome part of your daily round?

Trying to dispose of my clutter.

Which personal trait do you struggle most to overcome?

Being too fussy and too talkative (as my school report noted!).

What food are you most partial to?

Home-made soups and pavlova.

And leave on the side of your plate?

Squid and marzipan.

What do you watch on television?

Joyce Meyer, Countdown, good old films and the news.

What would your desert island book be?

A good hymn book with tunes.

What is your favourite music?

Trad jazz, choral music, Bach and much more.

And your favourite hymn?

"My song is love unknown".

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

Romans chapter 12.

Do you have an unfulfilled ambition?

To visit the land of my birth in an atmosphere of peace and harmony.

The Church Council has a day away

On Saturday 9th September twenty members of the PCC spent half a day meeting at St Columba's House in Woking. Normally the PCC takes its day away in May, but this year it was delayed until after my arrival. We had a productive and enjoyable session together, spending time in worship, Bible study, prayer, fellowship – and food!

There were two main items for focussed discussion. First, we looked in small groups at our vision statement as currently expressed, and in particular the four phrases: mature disciples, effective witnesses, caring neighbours and committed church family members. Members of the council reflected on what these values mean, how they are encouraged in the life of the church at the moment, and how they might develop in the future. It was a very useful discussion and helped me understand some of the realities of where the church is on its journey of faith.

We also looked at the role of the PCC in the life of the church, and thought about its legal role as well as its task to oversee the

strategy and vision of Holy Trinity. We recognised that while the PCC retains a responsibility for certain legal areas in the life of the church it also has a responsibility to look at matters of long-term importance, and the structure of future meetings would reflect this. We took as a special focus Ephesians 4: 1-7, 11-16 where Paul speaks of unity in purpose, diversity in gifts and effectiveness in ministry, and recognised the spiritual challenge this gave to each one of us.

We also managed to undertake some routine business before sharing in lunch together and concluding in worship and prayer.

All in all, it was a very positive and thought-provoking day. I for one came away struck by how blessed we are to have such a gifted and spiritually-aware PCC and I hope you will join me in upholding them in prayer as they discharge this important ministry at Holy Trinity.

Philip

Toddlers' Praise enjoys a relaunch

Toddlers' Praise has recommenced at the new time of 10 – 11.30 am and at the new venue of Church House. It will take place every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month during school term time.

It kicked off with a flying start and there was quite a party atmosphere throughout the morning. This was helped by fun praise music to dance to, bubbles, a wonderfully told Bible story, snacks and drinks for the children and a great Thomas the Tank Engine ball pool to play in! (Oh and coffee and yummy chocolate cake for the mummies!).

We're hoping that the group will provide a wonderful opportunity for the little ones to get to know Jesus more in a relaxed, informal setting, and we're particularly keen for the mums to feel welcomed and supported in a Christian group that's a bit different from the usual mother and toddler groups.

If you are interested, or if you know anyone who may like to come along, we would love to see you! For more information, please contact Pippa Cramer on 479867 or Katie Hicks on 465619.

More churches are growing, says Church Census

It was in May last year that Holy Trinity joined churches around the country in collecting information about its congregations (remember filling in a small form?) and sending it in as part of the 2005 English Church Census. The results were finally published on 18th September by Christian Research, who conducted the census.

Over a third (34%) of churches are growing, compared with only 21% at the time of the last Census in 1998. A quarter of those churches which were in decline in the 1990s have not only stemmed their losses but have turned their church round and are now growing. This includes churches of all denominations and sizes.

Overall, the picture is not so positive, with declining churches losing more members than the growing ones are adding. Across the country, this means that 6.3% of the population are in church on the average Sunday. But the rate of decline has slowed significantly, as more churches have found ways to stimulate growth and with the growing influence of Caribbean and African Christians. In London, for example, only 42% of churchgoers are white. In the country as a whole, black people now represent 10% of churchgoers, as opposed to only 7% in 1998.

Holy Trinity's own figures for Census Day (8th May 2005) saw 312 adults and 80 children in church. Ten people came to church more than once on that day. 25% of attendees here were over 65 years, compared with an average of 29% throughout England.

Celebrating and supporting the hospice movement

Saturday 7th October has been designated World Hospice and Palliative Care Day. It is a unified day of action to celebrate and support hospice and palliative care around the world. The day has been inspired by and developed in association with Voices for Hospices, which brings together singers to raise money every other year (last year and next year, but not this).

As readers may or may not be aware, Voices for Hospices had its origins in our own area, as an initiative of the Princess Alice Hospice in 1988. From those small beginnings, the coordination of simultaneous concerts has grown to become a hugely successful global event. Last year's project, involving 550 performances taking place in 60 countries, raised over £1 million.

Hospice and palliative care aims to give the best quality of care at the end of life and support the needs of families, friends and their carers. It offers a holistic approach of physical, emotional and spiritual care to alleviate suffering. More than 50 million people die every year around the world and it is estimated that 60% of these would benefit from hospice and palliative care, but the majority are not able to access these services.

The Princess Alice Hospice, its patients and its staff are regularly in our prayers at Holy Trinity. With their redeveloped buildings recently opened, we shall be remembering them especially in our prayers on Sunday 8th October, the day following World Hospice and Palliative Care Day.

Diamond Jubilee for Men's Fellowship

Philip Plyming will be the speaker at the Opening Supper of the Men's Fellowship's Diamond Jubilee season on Monday 2nd October.

Ken Hibberd has stepped back into the role of Chairman for this season, after the AGM in May had failed to identify a candidate for the role. Existing members should by now have received this year's programme and been invited to buy a supper ticket.

But it would be good to emphasise that the Fellowship is open not only to all men, young and old, at Holy Trinity, but to others of different or no church allegiance. It seeks to offer an interesting programme to men in the area, and has always been seen as a means by which the church can reach out to the community. So new members are always welcome, and any enquiries can be addressed to Jon Davey on 01372 810106.

Palestinian focus for Anchor

The Anchor group will welcome Pat Price-Tomes as its speaker on Monday 16th October. Pat is what is called an 'Ecumenical Accompanier' in Palestine and Israel. The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is a World Council of Churches (WCC) initiative which was established in 2002 in response to a call made by the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, and Palestinian and Israeli NGOs. The mission of the EAPPI is to accompany Palestinians and Israelis in their nonviolent actions and concerted advocacy efforts to end what they call the occupation.

Launch of The Hub

The Hub is a youth Alpha course with big screen computer game action and burgers and chips!

The Hub is for young people in the community between the ages of 11 and 15 who are not part of church and who wouldn't ordinarily come along.

In the past DV8 has reached out to young people in the community who are slightly older, around 15 - 20 years. The Hub has been created to help reach out to a younger age group who are growing up in Claygate with little or no knowledge of God.

The Hub will start on 12th October and run every Thursday night in Church House until March. We are hoping and praying for 12 committed young people who will attend every week.

If you know of a young person within the age group, who is not linked into church, perhaps a neighbour, or a child of a friend, do let Stu know on 020 8408 7866.

Halloween - a better way

The Bishop of Bolton has hit the headlines by writing to supermarkets urging them to think again about their promotion of the occult through the goods they sell to do with Halloween celebrations. He has suggested that they should stock the new Church of England book by Nick Harding called *Better than Halloween: Bright Alternatives for Churches and Children*.

Holy Trinity has for some years offered its own bright alternatives, through the Shine parties organised for children. So do please look out for details of this year's events on 31st October.

Stuart begins his ordination training

As this issue of *Insight* was going to press, Stuart Wright was starting his theological training leading to ordination as a pioneer missional leader, the new brand of church leader focussed on the challenge of an un-churched population. Stu writes:

"I will spend each Monday at St Paul's Theological Centre (SPTC) based at Holy Trinity Brompton, South Kensington. Tuesdays will be my study day dedicated to assignments and reading. In addition, I will spend 5 weeks per year at Ridley Hall Cambridge, following in the footsteps of the great, Julian, Sami and David!

"I am so pleased that I will continue to be based at Holy Trinity Claygate as my placement church during my training and I look forward to developing the Community Work during this time.

"I would value your prayers as I commence this training as it will mean a change of gear once again. My key prayer requests are:

- a. that I will grow as a disciple of Christ through this study and be equipped for the ministry God has for me now and in the future;
- b. for good time management for family and friends, HTC work and study;
- c. for the necessary skills needed for study;
- d. for the 10 other students on this training route - that they will be a blessing to the church and truly serve the mission of God;
- e. for God to bless the Community Work at HTC during this time, by strengthening and developing the START team, so that all in the community of Claygate will know that Jesus is Lord."

Vicarage gains new resident

Just six weeks after Philip's induction as Holy Trinity's vicar, the Vicarage family grew with Annabelle giving birth to baby James on Monday 28th August. He weighed in at 9 lb 4 oz. We hesitate before saying that a new baby in our vicarage is a unique event, but living memory seems unable to recall a previous example. If anyone out there can offer more information, please let us know!

Ken Habershon retires

The Revd Kenneth Habershon, Secretary of the Church Patronage Trust, Holy Trinity's patrons, retired on 1st September. He has been a good friend to Holy Trinity and most recently was the preacher at Philip's induction service.

Ken is succeeded by Canon Roger Salisbury, who is combining the appointment with that of Senior Associate Minister at All Souls Langham Place.



...er; I seem to have made a mess of this sermon.
Is there a spin-doctor in the house!?

Learning from the Bible

It is clear that Paul was concerned about the tendency of some of the Thessalonians to idleness. This was not a new concern. It was something he had spoken about when he had been in Thessalonica: verse 10 says "For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: 'If a man will not work, he shall not eat.'" When he sent them his first letter, he had felt obliged to stress the message: "Make it your ambition ... to mind your own business and to work with your hands..." (4.11) and "We urge you brothers, warn those who are idle..." (5.14). And here he is in his second letter turning up the heat a notch.

There might have been a special background to this, which was related to one of the other issues Paul took up with them, the coming return of Jesus. It was not long since Jesus had departed, and his assurance that he would return led the early church to assume, perhaps naturally, that he was likely to come back any time soon. We see Paul's own expectations of the imminence of this moderating over time if we read his letters in the order in which they were written. There was a separate school of thought, which Paul was trying to contest among the Thessalonians, that in fact the day of the Lord had dawned and therefore that the followers of Jesus were already as good as saved to eternal life.

Whichever of these positions they took, there were some early Christians for whom it meant that there was no point getting on with the daily grind. "Let's just sit here and

"We hear that some among you are idle..."

2 Thessalonians, chap. 3, verse 11.

wait for Jesus", some might have said. After all, he might return tomorrow or next week. Others were resting on the laurels they thought they had won. If the present order of things was on the point of ending, making plans or devoting a lot of effort to temporal concerns, like worldly work, seemed like a waste of time.

Of course, the problem may have been a simpler, more basic one, of ordinary human nature. Perhaps nowadays, when we no longer have the same immediate expectation of Jesus' return in glory, that is generally the more likely explanation of idleness. We do so often have an ambiguous attitude to work, typified by the sign over the desks of some people: "Work fascinates me. I can sit and watch it for hours."

Paul emphasised that the priorities for the Christian were different. The Thessalonians knew, he said, that they should be following his example. He had worked hard in order to pay his way and not be a burden on any of them, and his purpose was to make himself a model for them. No one had a right to expect others to feed them.

But it went beyond that. Those who follow Christ are called to service, to God and to others. It is not easy to exhaust that responsibility. So, in verse 13, after admonishing the idle, Paul turns to the others: "As for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right."

Scribatius

*O Lord, let us not live to be useless, for Christ's sake.
(John Wesley)*

Young people today....

With YF starting back up again and with our weekend away in the immediate offing, we as a group of leaders could catch ourselves wistfully sighing 'when September ends...'. It is without doubt the busiest time of year and coming hard on the heels of August and our CYFA ventures, not in anything approaching a splendid isolation. However, it is amidst this thronging tumult that thoughts with an inexplicably lingering quality appear most clearly and I had one such thought just the other day.

I was considering my diary and wondering what angle to take with the teaching for YF till Easter '07 and what our primary focus would be. Following in the footsteps of William Wallace, Freedom figured quite prominently and having turned to John 8 v 31-32, I began considering exactly what that meant for our teenagers today.

In the background, I was mindful of the fratricide taking place in Downing Street and the illusion of choice that the current resident is labouring under. The contrast between Michael Schumacher leaving gracefully at Monza a few weeks back and the Gordian knot of Prime Ministerial succession is telling, but both these events shed light on a wider fallacy that is increasingly pervasive. It is this, that true freedom for us is only through us having a choice, being ahead of the curve, being in control of our options: the masters of our own destinies.

This does give us a degree of freedom it is true, as the adulation of the *Tifosi*, the followers of Ferrari, shows us. But to what degree is that true freedom? In what

sense can we be free, when we jealously strive to retain 'ownership of the choice agenda' to borrow a phrase from a recent Government White Paper? We can none of us be 100% in control, 100% of the time, although we would all love to be. To be at the mercy of 'Events, dear boy, events' as Harold Macmillan famously once stated, is to be a slave to our own agenda even when we no longer have control. This can never be described as freedom, let alone true freedom.

So what has this to do with our teenagers? Plenty. They have a plethora of choices that far exceed those open to any other group and yet we as a team of leaders are privileged to see those at YF choosing to follow Jesus over and above all those other things that the world offers, the temptations to put themselves first, always, and that most dangerous of things the culture of no consequence; when we are led to believe that we can act in any way without any repercussions.

Let me assure you there are teenagers within our own congregation who daily reject the fallacy of choice leading to true freedom, and have instead embraced the truth that Jesus himself teaches and personifies. As such they have come to know His true freedom for themselves: that what Jesus taught is not only true, but it works. The privilege that we have as leaders is that we can see that evermore clearly in their lives and be encouraged to do likewise ourselves. Please join me in praying that more may do likewise.

Young Justin returned from his first time in church and was asked how it went. He said, "The music was nice, but the commercial was too long."

A life-changing year spent in an amazing country

Where in China were you living? We were based in Xi'an, the ancient capital roughly in the centre of China and home to the Terracotta Warriors. Xi'an has a population of 6.5 million – quite small for a Chinese city. It has a very high density of universities (at least 40), and many Christian organisations are based there because of the teaching opportunities, and people are less likely to be focused on material wealth.

What about living there with three young children?

Although living in China is very different to life in the UK, we all enjoyed it immensely. The Chinese are very friendly, and the children especially got a lot of attention. At times we did feel a little like a family of pandas at the zoo. Chinese people are quite curious, and so to see a family of Westerners with three children (China still has a single child policy in force) was something to stop and stare at or photograph. It did feel a bit odd to bargain for fruit at the market with a crowd of on-lookers, but we soon got used to it.

Our children went to an international school where there were 40 pupils in total. The average class size was 6, with children coming mainly from America and Korea. I think our guys were the only Europeans there. The children enjoyed mixing with people from other cultures and backgrounds. As we were living on a university campus, the kids had quite a lot of freedom, and they were able to run around on the sports field and kick a football. We also enjoyed some fun time socialising with other people from our group Teachers for China, and went for meals – mostly Chinese, but every now and then, when we needed to taste Western food, we would go to a very good Pizza restaurant (run by Christians) that had a good range of ice cream desserts. There was also a large German supermarket (Metro) near us, that sold a range of Western foods. Thomas and William (and Andrew) also enjoyed the live coverage of all the English premiership football matches and England internationals. David Beckham is very popular in China, and his picture was on advertisements everywhere. Lots of Chinese also wore England football shirts especially during the World Cup – so we didn't feel so cut off from home.

Were you able to share your faith at all? Yes, we had a number of opportunities to talk about Christianity with our

The Cowie family (Andrew, Lucy, Thomas, William and Eleanor) have just returned from a year in China. Andrew tells us what it was like.

students. Chinese people are really interested in finding out about our beliefs, and when they know you are a Christian, they are keen to ask questions – given the opportunity. It was surprising to find how little people knew. For example a lot of students didn't realise that Christmas was to celebrate Jesus' birth, let alone that it took place 2006 years (or so) ago. In the classroom we were able to teach the basic principles of the Christian faith. We taught lessons on Christmas and Easter. We also were able to put on a nativity play with the kids to around 400 students, and that seemed to make an impression. We also had 'free talks' with students, where they could ask any questions, and had the chance to find out a bit more about our faith. I was fortunate enough to have two Christians in one of my classes, who asked me to teach the Bible to some of the other students. So for three months we had a weekly Bible study class in our apartment, with six students attending. It was a real privilege to be able to share the Gospel, and see these students begin to understand what God and Jesus had done for us all.

What were your impressions of China? China is an amazing, vast, ancient country, that is going through an incredible period of change. Whilst the communist party still holds a strong grip on the society, traditional communist values are now discredited in favour of free market economics. Family values and a lack of welfare state mean that children are obliged (by law) to look after their parents (and grandparents), but the single child policy means that responsibility is not shared amongst siblings. The importance of education in society and in order to get a good job, means that there is an incredible pressure to perform from a very young age. School children and university students work like Trojans to ensure they get the required results. However, the size of the population, and the increasing number of students attending university means there is a lot of competition for jobs. In fact a number of graduates leave university only to return to

work in the paddy fields on their parents' farms if there is no paid work. In the midst of these pressures and the whirlwind of changes that are taking place in China, the Christian message and truths of the Bible can provide real comfort to people, which is why the church in China is growing so quickly.

What did you learn about the Chinese church? There are a lot of Chinese becoming Christians. We heard numbers of 1000 people a day coming to faith – but it is hard to substantiate those figures. To give you an idea though, when the Catholic Archbishop of Xi'an died recently, 25,000 people attended his funeral from all denominations. Around where we lived there were at least 6 underground or house churches that have started up in the last few years. Each church has anything from 100 to 1000 members. However, the rapid growth does bring issues, in that 'young' Christians often have to take on a role of leadership, with little experience or training. For example, the Chinese lady who taught our children Chinese was a house leader, but had only come to faith four years ago. There is also a large imbalance in the number of women versus men – a 70:30 ratio is not uncommon. We also met Christians from the Three-Self Patriotic Church, which is the official government church. These churches are registered with and controlled by the government. Consequently there are some parts of the Bible that are not preached on – e.g. the Great Commission and Revelation. However, many services are still very lively, and many church leaders do not follow government guidelines. We were not able to attend an underground church for fear of drawing attention to what is an illegal meeting. We also had to be careful what we said on the phone or over e-mail.

Do you have plans to stay involved in China? Very much so. Our year in China was a life-changing experience for us all. We met a lot of special people with whom we are staying in contact, including students. Andrew is continuing to learn Mandarin, and we hope to play some role with the organisation that we were sent out with. We would also like to thank Holy Trinity for all the support and encouragement we had before we left, during our stay, and also on our return. We would definitely recommend to anyone else thinking about doing something similar to step out in faith.