

Sunday 3 September	Picnic on the Rec, 12.30 pm
Tuesday 5 September	Monthly youth update and time of prayer, 9.30 am & 7 pm
Wednesday 6 September	Holy Communion at 11 am, followed by a light lunch
Monday 11 September	Ladies Social evening at Cafe Piccolo, 8 pm
Wednesday 13 September	Monthly Prayer Meeting in church, 8 pm
Thursday 14 September	Men's Curry evening at Claygate Tandoori
Monday 18 September	Anchor: Rachel Stiddard on Domestic Violence, 7.30 for 8 pm
Thursday 21 September	New Alpha course starts with supper in church foyer, 7.30 pm
Saturday 23 September	Harvest Tea in Church Hall, 5 pm
Sunday 24 September	Back to Church Sunday, and harvest thanksgiving
Wednesday 27 September	Joint Homegroup meeting in church, 8 pm
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
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

Insight is the Parish Magazine of Holy Trinity Claygate, published monthly.
 Editor: Jon Davey, 71 Hare Lane, Claygate, Esher, Surrey KT10 0QX
 Phone: 01372 810106 email: annandjon.davey@ntlworld.com
 Subscriptions and distribution: Merle Liddiard, 01372 465038
 Church Office Church Road, Claygate, Esher, Surrey KT10 0JP
 Phone 01372 463603 Fax: 01372 464894
 email: churchoffice@holytrinityclaygate.org.uk

September 2006

50p

INSIDE THIS MONTH'S MAGAZINE

ALL CHANGE - OR NOT?
Philip's first letter - page 2

TEACHING PROGRAMME
What autumn sermons will
cover, and why - page 4

A SUMMER OF BLESSING
Young people today - page 5

MISSION TO UKRAINE
A report on this year's visit
- in our centre pages

FLOWERS OF THE FIELD
Botany and the Bible - page 9

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

'BACK TO CHURCH' SUNDAY

Holy Trinity will be giving a special welcome on Sunday 24th September to those who haven't been to church for a while. It is part of a national initiative to encourage former churchgoers to take a fresh look at what the church is offering and to discover what they are missing.

The initiative had a trial run in Manchester two years ago, as a result of which 876 people returned to church after dropping away. A survey conducted among them by the University of Wolverhampton indicated that nine out of ten said that they might well come back. As the scheme spread last year, it became clear that many people were only too pleased to respond to an invitation to return to church.

So if you are an *Insight* reader who has not come to church for some time, we should be delighted to see you on the 24th. And if you are a regular member of the church family, please do make a point of inviting friends who may have fallen away. It is also our harvest thanksgiving weekend, and newcomers will, we hope, find that our services are accessible to them.

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

YOUTH WORKER: ASA HUMPHREYS

Phone 01372 463603 Fax 01372 464894
 email: churchoffice@holytrinityclaygate.org.uk
 www.holytrinityclaygate.org.uk

All change! It has been quite a summer. Moving, starting a new job, and - perhaps by the time you read this - a new baby: there's been a lot to get used to. Of course, it helps that we are so happy to be here. Annabelle, Sam and I already feel so at home in the vicarage: the team who redecorated did a splendid job; the garden we have inherited from Julian and Heather is a delight and the upstairs view of the cricket pitch is appreciated by father and son alike! It's been great getting to know Claygate and the area; I reckon I've visited just about every road in the village on my bike, and Annabelle and Sam have become fans of 'pick your own' at Garsons. And we feel already at home at Holy Trinity; I have greatly enjoyed my first month or so as vicar, loved meeting you all (and doing my best to learn all your names!) and feel a real sense of rightness about being here.

Of course, the sense of change is not just on one side. The staff team have had to adjust to having a new member, and as well as being grateful to them all for their work during the interregnum, which meant the church was in good shape and heart when I arrived, I am so thankful for the gracious way they have welcomed me on board, supported me, and showed me the ropes. We are very blessed with the staff team here. The same applies to the wider church family; the words of gracious wisdom and encouragement from you have made a real difference to me. Thank you and praise God.

Then again, it's not really a case of all change at all. As I said on my first Sunday, I am not planning any wholesale changes in the months to come; my task will be to listen and learn how things work here at Holy Trinity, while at the same time being committed to discerning God's vision for this next chapter in the life of our church. I look forward to working with others in this process and will share more about this at the AGM next spring.

However, recognising what transitions have taken place, I think it is right to focus on what stays the same: the unchanging God and the ongoing mission he has given his church. That is why I am excited about our studying together the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians in our Sunday teaching and homegroups this autumn. As I explain more on page four, I believe that this letter has some particular relevance to a community like Claygate and a church like Holy Trinity, but above all it helps us focus on the identity of the church and the message that shapes its mission. It will help remind us all what we are about as a Christian community, and how we are to undertake the work God has called us to do. I look forward with you to hearing God speak to us through His word as we read this letter, and also to getting to know you all better over the months to come.

With my love and prayers

Philip



From the Parish Registers

We welcome into the family of the Church:

Maria Nicole Trigg
(baptised on 20th July)

We offer congratulations on the marriage of:

Yuri Krishna Gupta
and Audrey Mae Hui Tay
(married on 8th July)

Patrick Flanagan
and Anna Mary Jude
(married on 29th July)

We offer sympathy to the relatives and friends of:

Robert Windham O'Neale Collis
(4th June)

Sybil Frances Ramsden Purdom
(25th June)

William Guy-Pinkney
(26th June)

Doreen Eggleton (27th June)

Donald John Hill (2nd July)

John Acland Fuller (9th July)

Rotha Elaine Lowe
(12th July)

Barbara Rowlands
(17th July)

Brian John Fenwick
(25th July)

Eric William Parsons
(3rd August)



Parish Personalities

Joanna Slade faces up to this month's Insight Inquisition.

Where were you brought up?
Hounslow, near Heathrow.

How long have you been at Holy Trinity?
We moved to Hersham in September 1994 and found our way to Holy Trinity by Easter 1995.

What do you like most about it?

Working with and learning from people who have a heart to do God's will and share his love.

And if there was one thing you could change?

As someone about to move away, very little. But if pushed, possibly a greater engagement with the 'issues of the day'.

Where would you locate your ideal home?

Overlooking either the Helford or Tamar River.

What is the least welcome part of your daily round? In term-time, packed lunches!

Which personal trait do you struggle most to overcome? Exaggeration.

What food are you most partial to?

Buttered toast.

And leave on the side of your plate?

Just the pattern!

What do you watch on television?

I'm avidly watching 'I, Claudius' on BBC4 - and we are all big Doctor Who fans.

What would your desert island book be?

An anthology of poems to learn.

What is your favourite music?

Kate Rusby (a folk singer).

And your favourite hymn?

"Before the throne of God above".

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

Matthew 6, verses 25-34. It was read at our wedding and seems as pertinent today.

The Church and its message

Philip explains the choice of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians as the subject for the autumn series of sermons and for Home Group meetings.

As I mentioned in my letter on page two, we will be looking at the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians in our Sunday teaching and homegroups this autumn. I'll be introducing the sermon series in the services on 10th September, and sharing more of the Corinthian background at our joint opening homegroup evening on Wednesday 27th September, but I thought I would take this opportunity to say why we are looking at this letter and why I am excited about what we will learn together.

First, this is a letter for our times. Recent commentators have drawn attention to the similarities between the culture in ancient Corinth and that prevailing in our society today. They point to certain aspects of that ancient city

- its social fluidity and anxiety, with many people acquiring money and prestige quickly (and therefore anxious about losing it again).
- religious pluralism – with a range of faiths and belief systems in that cosmopolitan port city.
- a priority of market forces not only in business but also in rhetoric – with success coming through image and reputation.
- a concern for recognition and honour – with a resulting contempt for those who hadn't made it.

Put that culture against our context of affluence, pluralism, spin and celebrity, and you can see why Paul's words might have particular relevance for our world today.

Second, this is a letter for our church. Paul was addressing a church whose task it

was to live out the Christian gospel in a rapidly changing world, and that is a task we share today. Now I am not suggesting that Holy Trinity suffers from the shortcomings which Paul has to address later in the letter (I haven't been here long enough to comment on that) but these first four chapters are Paul's basic understanding of what a church is about, and so they will help us reflect together as we face a new chapter in the life of Holy Trinity.

We will find ourselves engaging in the following sorts of questions

- what is our basis for unity?
- what is success?
- what is our main message?
- how do we become mature disciples?
- what should others think of us?

I hope you have got hold of a copy of the sermon card which sets out the sermon titles; do please pray for the people preaching and leading homegroup studies. Also, you'll get more out of the sermon series if you manage to listen to each sermon and see the argument build over the weeks. If you miss a Sunday, don't worry: as well as homegroup notes we hope to have sermon notes for each passage and most of the sermons will be on the website in one form or another, as well as available via tape.

Do let me know your thoughts and own response to the series as it develops; I welcome feedback on this vital part of our life together as a church.

Philip

PLANTS OF THE CHURCH GARDEN

No. 12

Flowers of the Field

It is not possible to identify the individual 'flowers of the field' referred to in the Bible (Isaiah 40: 6-8 and 1 Peter 1: 20) but they form part of a delightful passage: "All men are like grass; and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall but the word of the Lord stands for ever." It is a reminder of God's timeless presence and underlines our fleeting existence in the material world. Nevertheless we are the guardians of this material world and the churchyard needs to be kept tidy, and so each month the grass certainly withers and the flowers fall before the enthusiastic onslaught of the working party. However, unlike the biblical metaphor the grass and flowers do come up again, over and over and over again!

The churchyard, Holy Trinity's field, is not particularly rich as flowery meadows go but one of the older sections, where the graves are no longer tended, is well endowed with a range of wildflowers and might make a useful experiment in meadow management. The wayside species occurring in biblical lands would be different from those here in Claygate but similar and closely related. There would be a range of composites, members of the daisy family. Clumps of white oxeye daisies (*Leucanthemum*) and striking purple knapweeds (*Centaurea*) are just as much part of the scene in Claygate as they would be in the meadows of Palestine. Yellow dandelion-like hawkbits (*Hypochaeris*) and catsears (*Leontodon*) take over in summer and dissected-leaved aromatic yarrow (*Achillea*) seems to thrive on mowing but seldom gets the chance to show its cluster of white or pink daisies.

Undoubtedly some of the members of the parsley family (Umbelliferae) would have

been well-known to people of the Bible lands as several of them are edible. Coriander, both leaves and seeds of which are used widely in cookery, is mentioned in the Bible: "The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin" (Numbers 11:7). Matthew (23:23) includes dill and cumin, both spicy umbellifers. The Holy Trinity flora does not include these but has another edible umbellifer, the tall yellow fennel, a common Mediterranean plant which is now seeding itself in the church garden. A much larger fennel was the source of galbanum, a spice mixed with frankincense for burning in the tabernacle (Exodus 30: 34). In spring under the churchyard oaks there is a mass of white-flowered pignut (*Conopodium*), the underground tubers of which have a taste somewhere between potato, hazel nuts and soap (a childhood memory!).

In summer various pea relatives (legumes) add colour to the scene, although not the useful ones referred to in the Bible such as beans and lentils (2 Samuel 17: 28). One can find the creeping yellow bird's foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), tendril-bearing vetches (*Vicia*), clover (*Trifolium*) and the more showy *Lathyrus latifolius*, an attractive purple relative of the sweet pea which is naturalised here rather than a native.

Returning finally to the grass that we strive to keep under control: one wet spring when cutting became impossible the grasses flowered *en masse*, revealing what a striking and diverse array of species we have. When conditions improved and work began it was not only the grass that withered; the working party followed soon after!

Brian Mathew

This year's harvest celebration

Instead of a supper or a lunch, this year we will be holding a Harvest Tea. It will be at 5 pm on Saturday 23rd September, and will be designed as an occasion for all the church family, young and old.

Do please listen out for the details, and make a note to be there.

An evening with Philip Yancey

Readers may remember Philip Yancey's visit to Holy Trinity five years ago. The 14 million of his books that have been sold point to his popularity as a Christian author, and his new book on prayer will surely add to that. If you heard him five years ago, you will probably want to hear him again. If you failed to get in five years ago (the church was fully booked) you now have another chance.

Philip Yancey will be coming to the Leatherhead Theatre on Tuesday 19th September, at 7.30 pm. Tickets cost £9, concessions £7.

Ladies get together

The Anchor Group begins its new season this month, with a meeting in the church foyer on Monday 18th September at which Rachel Stiddard, who is a Detective Inspector with the Met Police, will discuss the question of domestic violence.

There is also a further Ladies Social Evening at the Café Piccolo in Esher on Monday 11th September, to which friends can be invited as a possible preliminary to their being invited to the Alpha course which starts 10 days later. Enquiries and bookings to Vicki Schmidt on 469439.

Another Alpha

Your new opportunity to join the Alpha course, or to persuade your friends that now is the right time to do it, comes up this month. Holy Trinity's latest course will take place on Thursday evenings, starting on Thursday 21st September with a supper in the church foyer beginning at 7.30 pm.

The Alpha course has become an extremely popular way of getting to grips with the basics of Christian faith, and has been instrumental in the renewed growth of interest in Christianity. The course is designed to provide a non-threatening environment in which even the most elementary questions and doubts can be aired without fear of ridicule.

Do contact the Church Office if you, or someone you know, is interested.

Toddlers' Praise

Twice a month, pre-school children, together with their parents or carers, can get together for action songs, a story and refreshments. As from Wednesday 13th September, it moves to a new time, at 10 am instead of 2 pm. In the nature of such a group, membership turns over quite quickly, and if you are now in that category, you would be very welcome to come along to Church House and join in.

PEOPLE

Farewell to the Slades

Joanna Slade's appearance on the facing page is by way of a Holy Trinity curtain call. Andrew has been posted to new responsibilities in Bristol, so he and Jo, with Tristan, Thomas and Callum, will shortly be moving to North Somerset. Their contribution to Holy Trinity has been a valued one, and we wish them well.

A new era begins with celebratory splendour

The Institution and Induction of Philip as Vicar of Claygate on 19th July was a great and happy occasion. Holy Trinity was packed, predominantly with members of his new congregation, but also with representatives of the community, other churches and Philip's previous congregation at Chineham, who had come to make sure that their curate was properly - and colourfully (did you see the shirt they presented him with?) - settled.

The service was opened by the Bishop of Guildford, the Rt Revd Christopher Hill, who led us through our confession and absolution. The lesson, from 2 Corinthians 12, was read by Chineham's churchwarden and the sermon was delivered by the Revd Kenneth Habershon, Secretary of the Church Patronage Trust, our patrons.

Then came Philip's formal Institution by Bishop Christopher and his Induction by the Archdeacon of Dorking, the Ven Julian Henderson. After greetings from the Mayor of Elmbridge and others, Philip was presented with symbols of ministry - the water of baptism, the Scriptures and bread and wine - and also with the keys to Holy Trinity church.

After our final hymn and a blessing from Bishop Christopher, the celebratory atmosphere continued over refreshments in the Church Hall.

David to move on at end of the year

David King will complete his curacy with us in December, prior to moving to become Associate Minister and Director of Training at Holy Trinity Redhill. Philip made this announcement to Claygate congregations on 30th July, expressing his congratulations to David on his senior post in a large and growing church in Redhill and our sadness at the large hole that he, along with Katy, Samuel, William and Georgina, will leave at Holy Trinity Claygate.

Holy Trinity Redhill describes itself as a lively evangelical church which this year is celebrating the centenary of its foundation. Its congregations average 280 adults and 100 under 18. David will join a ministerial staff of six, taking on special responsibility for encouraging Christian discipleship and ministry within the parish.

David's last Sunday with us will be on 10th December, when he will be the preacher at all three services.



Learning from the Bible

It is not surprising that the Bible mentions swords so frequently, since they were the main personal weapon of biblical times. References to a double-edged sword occur in a few places - the earliest being in Proverbs - but it is interesting that it is always by way of a metaphor. Another New Testament use of the phrase is in Revelation, where in the vision of Jesus in chapter 1 "out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword", and then in chapter 2, the church in Pergamum was sent the words of "him who has the sharp double-edged sword".

This gives rise to a debate as to whether the "word" in our Hebrews quotation means the Scriptures or Jesus himself, as in John 1 ("In the beginning was the Word"). Perhaps the answer is not quite either. The context of the letter to the Hebrews shows us that the reference is to our being confronted by God. We might experience that through the words of the Bible and in what Jesus said and did, but those in themselves are less the answer than the avenues by which we find ourselves before God himself.

But why "a double-edged sword"? Modern usage may hinder our understanding, because the phrase tends to be used as implying something that "cuts both ways", that can be both positive and negative to the case we are arguing. That is not how we should read its meaning in this passage.

The passage helps us to see that the double edges of God's word work together in harmony. First, it discerns what we are, to

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword..." "

Hebrews, chap. 4, verse 12.

the innermost parts of our being. Everything is open to his gaze, our thoughts and intentions, our unacknowledged feelings and attitudes. "Everything", says verse 13, "is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account". We have no secrets before God. The sharpness of his double-edged sword penetrates all we are.

Secondly, having penetrated and exposed us, God's word judges us. Here it is helpful to recognise that the word "For" with which verse 12 begins links it to verse 11, which urges us to make every effort to enter God's rest and to avoid the fate of those whose disobedience had excluded them. Judgement implies that we pass or fail, are accepted or rejected. We face that judgement stripped of all pretence and artifice.

If we have something in our lives to hide, this passage can be intimidating. But we should embrace it rather than run from it, welcoming what its effect will be. If we have a hidden burden, we need to lay it before God and seek his grace and mercy. Only then can we shed it and walk with him instead of in fear from him.

And that is why we should read the Bible in a way that allows us to open ourselves up to its message and to permit God to truly speak to us through it. It is then that we will find that the Scriptures are indeed the "living and active" word of God, powerful and liberating.

Scribatus

Thanksgiving is good but thanks-living is better.

Young people today....

Having just returned from Haslemere B and C, where we had sun and showers and cloud and more sun, I find myself with over a hundred emails in my inbox and the chance to catch you all up with all that went on in the Surrey hills.

Firstly, a big thank you goes to you for allowing us to borrow the minibus and the mobile Public Address system for three weeks. The house party relies very heavily on the generosity of churches and so I would like to ensure that you know how greatly your sacrifice was appreciated.

Secondly, I had the great privilege of leading, at the various weeks, with another eight leaders from this church, six of whom have come through Youth Fellowship over the years and are now leading people to Jesus. Be encouraged that your prayers are being answered and our young people are growing closer to and going deeper with God.

Thirdly though, it is all about the young people themselves, and seeing seventeen of our young people attending this house party and with others travelling to other summer camps across the country it shows how blessed we are with young people who are so willing to explore the question of faith and take that step of following Jesus for themselves.

Seeing the Holy Spirit changing our Young People evermore into the likeness of Christ is thrilling and enthralling, and catching those moments when they realise it for themselves is a treasure for eternity. This happened with heart warming regularity this summer and is encouraging for

us as a leaders' team at Youth Fellowship, but also for us as a wider congregation. Please be praying for us as we continue to build on these encouragements this term, especially as our numbers swell again.

However, there was also a colossal amount of fun had at the house party, with trips down to Portsmouth, Hunt the Pirate and night walks to Gibbet Hill just a few of the attractions on offer. But the most important thing about the house party, as it is about all we do, is the relationships that are built up firstly between the young people themselves but most importantly between the young people and God. The cardinal rule of what we do is that the young people are most likely to encounter Christ amongst themselves, and all we do as leaders is encourage the atmosphere that is conducive to allowing young people to be themselves and then answer questions that they raise themselves.

As such, this summer has been one of great blessing and we look forward to seeing these new relationships of trust and hope burgeoning evermore between now and Christmas and then onto 2007 and beyond. Please be praying that our young people may be sustained by each other, but ultimately by Christ throughout the coming months and years. Check out if you fancy www.haslemereventures.co.uk for some photos of this year and previous years to see those relationships in action.

Asa

The vicar's telephone call came just as Jane was getting her frail mother on to the stairlift to go upstairs. He was a bit startled when she said "I'm sorry, I can't talk right now. I've just got Mother into the electric chair, and she's waiting for me to press the switch!"

Sharing the experience of God in Trans-Carpathia

Who went? There were 49 English people predominantly from Holy Trinity but also from Walton Baptist Church and Petersfield United Reformed Church. An exciting element of the trip this year was the number of young people that went – 10 under 20. They added an energetic element to the trip.

How did we get there? We flew to Budapest and the next day set out by coach. A few stops, the obligatory toilet break, a great goulash lunch and then the Hungarian Tesco experience. This is an opportunity to stock up on last-minute provisions. Not quite sure what this small Hungarian town makes of two coach loads of English people arriving and buying the entire stock of still mineral water! And sorry, no, you can't use your Clubcard! We then had to cross the Hungarian/ Ukrainian border, one of the most difficult parts of the trip. Time to pray! We sat on buses laden with medicines, wondering about the possibilities, but this time, after three hours, we were all allowed through with all the equipment. Praise God.

Where did we stay? Villagers opened their homes to us. The majority of them also gave up their beds for us. We arrived in the villages at 9pm on the Saturday night. It felt a little like I imagine the evacuees felt like in the second world war – getting off the bus and waiting to be collected by the people that you would be spending the next seven days with.

How did we communicate? Each family had an interpreter that lived with us. They were drawn from a Christian college in a Ukrainian city about one hour drive away. Many of the interpreters returned for the second or third year. They were brilliant and very tolerant of us. Living in villages where no English is spoken and - I think it would be fair to say - few of us could speak much Hungarian, highlighted that only 10% of all communication is verbal. 90% is non-verbal. It is amazing how much you can communicate through pointing, smiling, miming and a lot of hugging.

What did we do? The trip had three main areas of activity – education, health and mission.

The School - As in previous years we ran an English School for 6 to 13 year old children. The school ran daily. The children enjoyed sports, crafts and classroom activities based around the Jesus 'I am ...' messages. The school peaked at

Holy Trinity's third annual mission trip to the Ukrainian villages of Akli, Gyula and Uj-Akli took place last month. Clair and Stuart Sadler tell us more.

150 children.

Dental and medical – as in previous years, this was a huge success. The doctors felt that this year they had more time to spend with patients. A range of conditions were diagnosed and treated. Some major trends are blood pressure, gall stones and conditions related to excessive alcohol. Our team offered often not only a physical assessment but a spiritual one as well. It was also handy to have the doctors to care for the English people who succumbed to upset tummies and insect bites!

The dentists were thrilled this year to see that some of last year's patients returned! The villagers' previous experience of dentistry had not been good and synonymous with pain. The dental mission had a strong educational element, with visits to the school and the youth camp. The locals do have a very sweet tooth!

The Mission team is a smaller but essential part of the trip. And of course in many ways whatever we are doing we are all in the mission team really. This team works in a number of different ways, including doing house visits to the house-bound, whether they be the frail elderly or a disabled child. Stu Wright, who led the trip, supported and worked with the two local ministers, Attila and Yano. We also ran a social event in each village – chocolate crispy cakes, party games, the works. Each village also hosted a film night – Narnia in Hungarian with English subtitles; this was huge success. This also led to an opportunity to talk about the Christian symbolism in this great film.

We were also in the position of offering a hair salon which was a huge success.

A Youth camp was offered for the first time this year. 40 young people attended what was a condensed Alpha course. It was great to see the young people enjoying presentations, discussion groups, crafts and support. The camp though really highlighted

the reality of living in the villages. Many families had dilemmas as to whether their young people should be allowed to attend, not because of concerns as to the nature of the message, more the fact that if they were at the camp they would not be working in the fields harvesting the cucumbers and the tomatoes. It was great to see so many young people, many of whom chose to make a commitment to Christ. It was quite noticeable however that there were few young men - they were in the fields. Watch this space: maybe next year we will be reporting Claygatians taking Alpha out to the cucumber fields of Ukraine.

What was new for 2006? Each year is and should be different – this year's visit saw the addition of a youth camp, hair salon and many more English youngsters; all had a very positive impact on the trip. Another less visible addition was that of technology. This is a remote area of the world but with the wonders of modern technology we were able to provide a web diary (known as a blog) in order to keep people back in England updated and to make prayer requests. This was a clear example of the wonders of technology but more importantly of the wonders of God. There were a couple of instances of poor typing. One was that we travelled to the villages on "two couches" and the second was that instead of asking readers to "please pray that the school does not have too many children", we forgot the word "Not" - and the school saw 140 children the following day!

How can you find out more? Visit the blog (see the address below) to see a day to day diary of events and prayer requests. Talk to any of the Church team who went. There will also be a focus on the Ukraine trip during and after the morning service on Sunday 10th September.

What did we learn? This year there was a wonderful sense of unity and common purpose within the team. Our theme for the week was 'Jesus be the centre' and indeed he was. There was a real reliance on prayer, starting each day with a prayer meeting in each village and relying on prayer throughout the day. God poured his blessing over these villages and it was an honour and humbling experience to be part of His mission.

www.holytrinityclaygate.org.uk/ukraine.htm