



TRINITY TIMES



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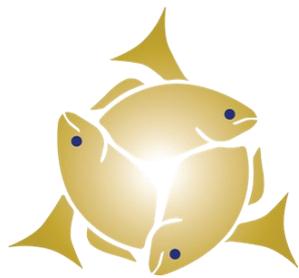


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This month is Lent. The clergy are running a Lent course via Zoom and there are photographs in the magazine which come from the Lent course: - *Here - and there.*

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Remember we love to receive articles and photographs for the magazine which can be sent to the e-mail address below. However, we reserve the right to edit anything that is sent to us and the editor's decision is final.

Please note that views expressed in Trinity Times are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Parochial Church Council.

The next magazine will be the **April 2021** edition

The copy date is 12 March

If any item is left until the very last minute, or received after the copy date, there is no guarantee that it will be able to be included in the magazine.

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#HolyTrinityonsocialmedia   

Front cover :- *The Chained Bible with Reflections* by Felicity Howlett

Holy Trinity Team



Revd. Patrick Taylor
Vicar



Revd. Steve Jarvis
Associate Vicar



Revd. Kay Dyer
Associate Priest



Phil Harper
Children & Families Minister

Triggers & Provocations...

I wonder how many of us are familiar with the use of the word “*triggered*” within today’s society? The Urban Dictionary defines “*triggered*” as “...when someone gets offended or gets their feelings hurt, or people with strong a sense of victimization.”

During this past year, there have been lots of evidence, both in social media and within everyday life, of people having been “*triggered*”. The statue of the slave trader Edward Colston being toppled, or of the National Trust being far more revealing of the extent to which the proceeds of the slave trade funded many of the large properties within their care. Both are fine examples of actions which, rightly or wrongly, left many feeling “*triggered*”.

However, used in the right way, triggers can provoke actions and reactions that have positive effects, or empower us to move forward and beyond impasses, as individuals, communities, institutions and societies. I’ve recently been reminded of this through watching a powerful short series on Channel 4 called “*It’s a Sin*”.

Triggered by the beginning of the AIDS/HIV epidemic in the 1980’s, those years provoked the writer Russell T. Davies to reflect, recapture and dramatize the collective experiences of those who lived through that time. The series follows a group of young people, mostly gay men, as the adventure of their adult lives begins in the ’80s. The viewer journeys with them as they find themselves — and then find themselves under a terrible shadow.

It’s truthful, honest, unsparing about the consequences of unknowing and unbridled promiscuity in a community that was still finding out how to live wisely in a world where love was not forbidden. It also remembers energy and laughter and joy and friendship and care and life, sustained even in the face of fear, shame, stigma, illness and death.



Within an article in the Church Times at the end of January, the Rt Revd Paul Bayes, Bishop of Liverpool, shared that the series triggered a personal resonance, and especially resonated among his LGBT+ friends, who he says remembered “...people they loved and lost in those years, remembering their own experience of living in the shadows, still hearing the homophobic echoes in their lives today”.

Bishop Paul continued to share a powerful personal memory that had

been triggered. He was a chaplain in West London in the early 1980’s, and shared about the ministry of a fellow priest he came to know well. That priest was Fr Bill Kirkpatrick, a priest only too aware of the mystery illness which was devastating and further marginalising the gay community in London at that time.

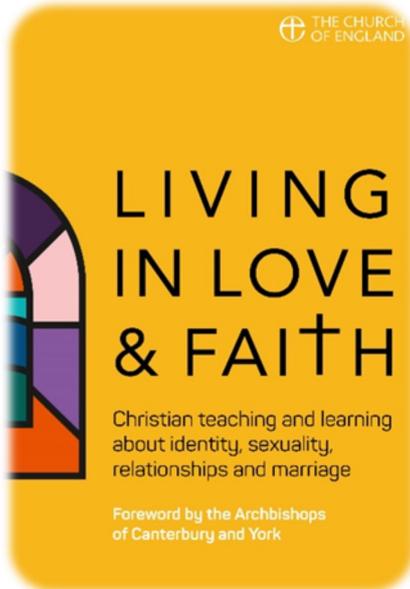
Bishop Paul recalls that more and more, “...Fr Bill’s life was spent accompanying people in their journey of illness and, too often, of death and bereavement. He brought a listening ear and the openness and love of Christ to people in fear and desperate need, people who saw all too little of that openness and love in communities of Christians that told them nothing more than that they were sinners, and passed by on the other side when they fell ill”.

Fr Kirkpatrick’s example provoked Bishop Paul to remember in the present “...that a self-absorbed, censorious and condemning Christianity need not have the last word - it will indeed never have the last word, because the last word is life beyond death”.

Cont.....

Triggers and Provocations..... cont.....

Bishop Paul's own reflection on "*It's a Sin*" is timely. The Church of England is called this year to engage with *Living in Love and Faith*. Headed by our own Diocesan Bishop, Bishop Christopher, *Living in Love and Faith* was commissioned by the House of Bishops as a framework for the Church of England to engage in listening to, and learning from, the different voices, perspectives and readings of Scripture within the Christian tradition, regarding human sexuality, identity, relationships and marriage.



There will be an invitation to engage in the *Living in Love and Faith* course as a church locally. This will be both within our deanery with other parishes, and within our own parish, using the specially produced LLF materials to facilitate our discussions, listening, exploration and learning. Without doubt we may find ourselves triggered and provoked, however, such things are often necessary to move us closer to understanding and meeting the aspiration of our Archbishop's for the Church to be a place of genuine "*radical inclusion*".

So, why bring this up during the season of Lent? Well precisely because Lent is a season of triggers and provocations. Being a penitential season, from Ash Wednesday we are triggered and provoked into reflection and repentance of our own sins, our complicity in the sins of others, and our silences that may have led to the continued marginalisation of others, and in keeping them in the shadows.

We tend to forget that leading up to his death, the religious leaders, the Scribes and Pharisees, were triggered and provoked by Jesus' words and actions, so much so, as to seek his death. We forget that they in turn would trigger and provoke the Roman authorities to acquiesce to Caiaphas' demands for Jesus' execution, and a baying crowd demanding "get it done". And yet, Jesus' death would go on to trigger God's saving action for all of humanity, through the act of resurrection that would provoke an eruption of belief and the growth of the Christian faith throughout the Roman empire, and indeed throughout the world!

So, let us allow our Lenten journey to trigger and provoke in us a deeper understanding of God's plan of redemption, forgiveness and reconciliation through Christ, for all of humanity and God's diverse creation!

With every blessing,

The Revd Steve Jarvis



Walkthrough
Ash Wednesday Service

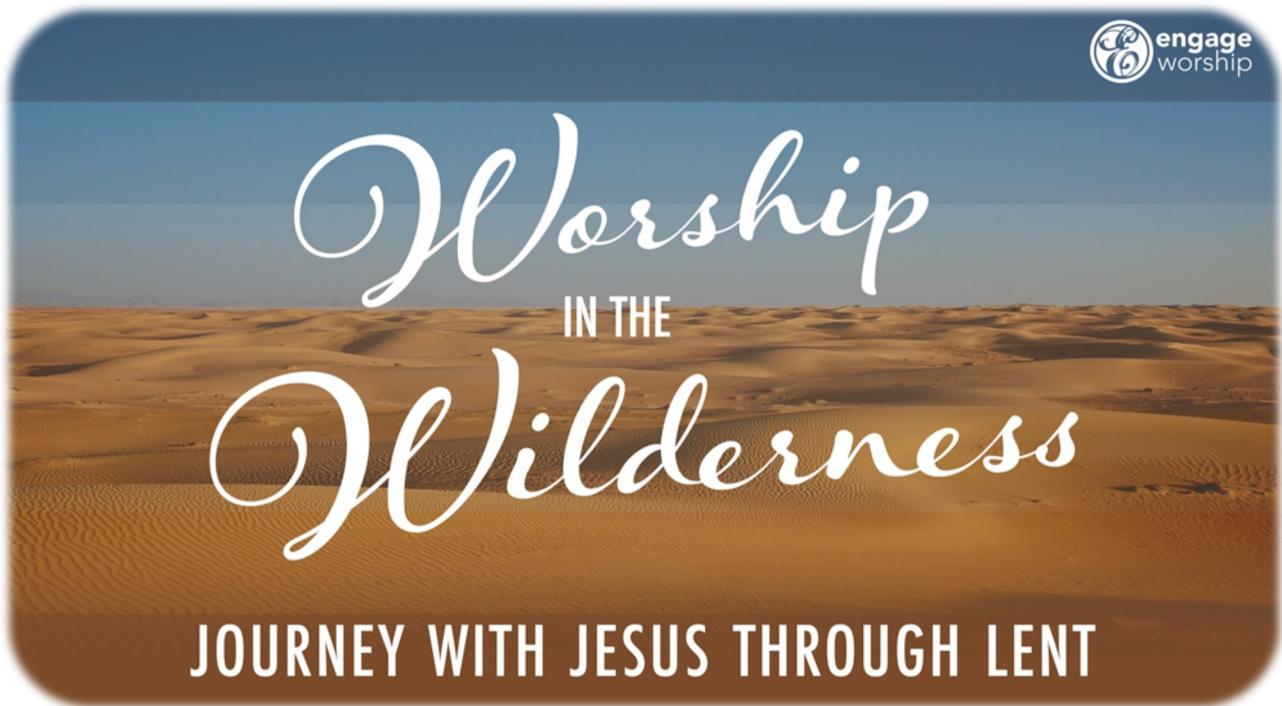


Photographs by
Harry Lomax

WORSHIP NOTES

At the time of writing public worship in our churches remains suspended, but the situation may change as we come out of the present lockdown.

We will continue to live stream the Sunday Parish Eucharist at 10am on Facebook, and this is available to see anytime afterwards on You Tube.



This Lent our Sunday 10am services (with the exception of Mothering Sunday) will be following a series called "Worship in the Wilderness." As we Journey with Jesus through Lent, we are exploring the following themes:

21 February	1st Sunday of Lent	A Spirit-led Journey
28 February	2nd Sunday of Lent	A Simple Journey
7 March	3rd Sunday of Lent	A Sorrowful Journey
<i>14 March</i>	<i>Mothering Sunday</i>	<i>Celebrating Mothers and those who nurture us</i>
21 March	5th Sunday of Lent	A Sacrificial Journey
28 March	Palm Sunday	A Surprising Journey

If you want to catch up with the whole series, services that have already taken place are available to view on You Tube.

Holy Week and Easter Plans

Maundy Thursday 1 April

Live stream (only) Eucharist of the Last Supper, 7.30pm followed by the watch.

Good Friday 2 April

The Three Hours - a walk-through with Veneration of the Cross at Holy Trinity, 12-3pm. Unlike other walk-throughs, there will be the opportunity to sit in a pew for those who wish, to spend some time in prayer during these most holy of hours.

A pre-recorded service of Tenebre with an address will be available to view on line.

Easter Eve 3 April

8.30pm (live stream only) The Service of Light, when the new Paschal candles will be lit.

Cont...

Worship Notes cont...

Easter Day 4 April

We are planning to open up all the churches in the parish for Easter, if possible. The present plan is for services of Holy Communion (with booking required) at All Saints' and St. Helen's at 9.30am and a walk-through service with Holy Communion at Holy Trinity, which will be open from 9.30-11am. This will be a similar arrangement to the one that worked well at Christmas.

There will also be a pre-recorded Easter day Eucharist with Sermon, available to watch on line.

Patrick

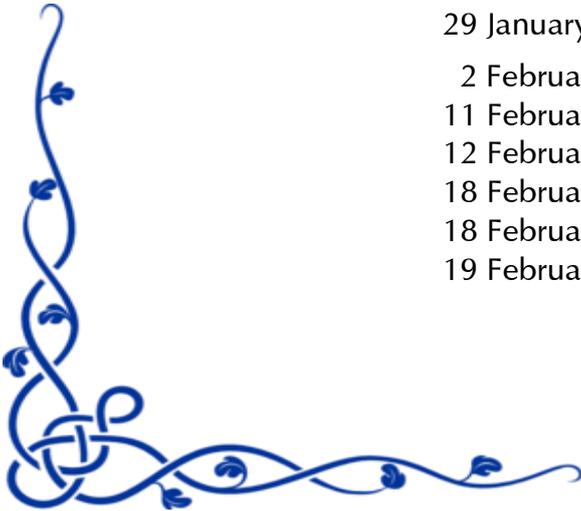
FROM THE REGISTERS - JANUARY/FEBRUARY

Christenings

Weddings

Funerals

29 January	Joan Ava Horton
2 February	Terence Michael Stuart-Thomson
11 February	Patsy Christopher Thomas
12 February	Jennifer Wendy Mitchell Canvin
18 February	John Brian Davis
18 February	Jean Gwendoline Kennedy-Bolton
19 February	Pamela Ellis Peel



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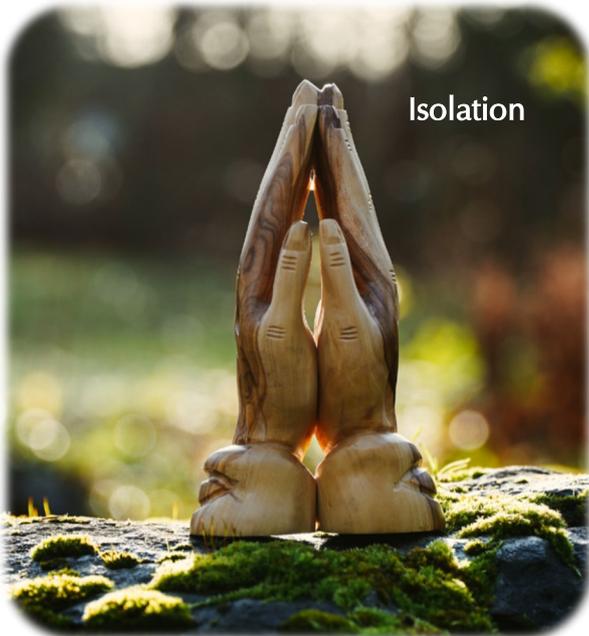
Here - and there

Course for Lent

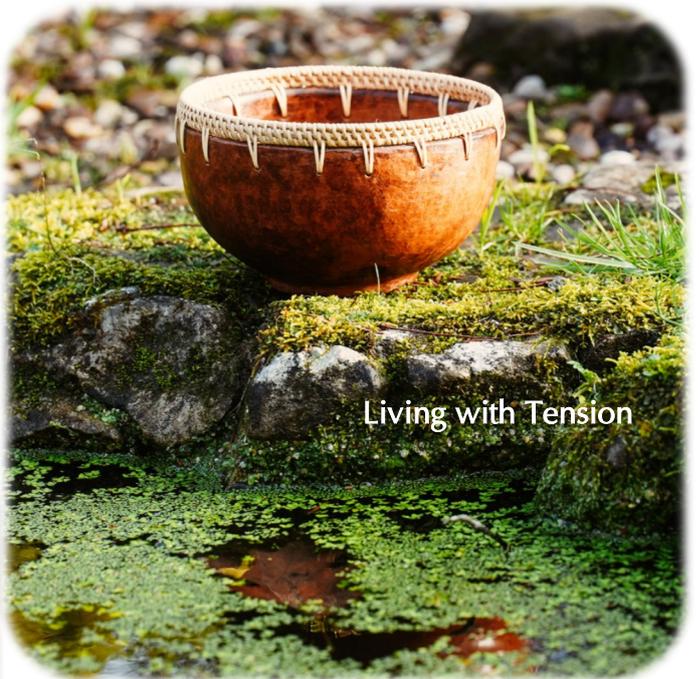
Provision



Isolation



Living with Tension



Anguish



Hope



Photographs by Samantha Burgoyne
from Roots *Here - and there*

He is Risen

As we approach what will be a very different Easter, we would like to fill our beautiful church with Easter Lilies to celebrate our Lord's rising from the dead.

The church will be open on Easter morning from 9.30 to 11am, and if you would like to donate towards the Lilies in memory of a loved one, or just feel you would like to contribute, the Flower Team would be extremely grateful.

Donations can be made either by cheque (made payable to Stratford-upon-Avon PCC) and posted into the Parish Centre, marked Easter Lilies, with your dedication (if required), or by direct bank payment to:

**CAF Bank – Sort Code 40-52-40, Account Number – 00015844,
Reference – Donor Name/Lilies**

Trinity Times Subscriptions for 2021

Annual subscriptions for Trinity Times are usually due in January each year. A number of people have asked about paying their subscription for 2021.

Prior to the current pandemic, printed copies of Trinity Times were primarily distributed by subscribers collecting their copy (or copies for other people) from Holy Trinity, usually after a Sunday service, or from the Parish Office. Since the start of the pandemic this hasn't been possible as Holy Trinity has either been closed or the size of the congregation has been very restricted. In addition, the Parish Office has been closed. As a result, for most of the last twelve months, the magazine has been circulated by email, using a link to the online version on the church website.



A very limited number of copies are printed in-house for those without online access or with a sight or mobility impairment that makes it difficult to read the online version. These copies are distributed by a handful of volunteers. Unfortunately, we do not currently have the infrastructure in place to allow us to distribute more copies.

Printing copies in-house almost halves the cost, compared to using external printers, which means that, with the advertising income carried over from last year, we have sufficient funds to cover the current production costs.

As a result, the Editorial Committee have decided to defer asking for subscriptions for 2021 until such time as life begins to return to some form of normality (whatever that may mean!!), and we are able to offer a printed copy to anyone who would prefer this to the online version.



Paul Lageu
Trinity Times Editorial Team Member

Brian Russell reflects on being an Archdeacon



Do you enjoy being an Archdeacon?

Someone once asked me this and I always try to be honest. I replied, "I enjoy *most* of it!" Well, what did I enjoy?

"Why can't we do what we like with our church building?"

People often think an Archdeacon is a member of the Bishop's senior staff. This is true. But there are specific responsibilities that are given to the Archdeacon only, which single you out. One of them is the oversight of the church buildings. The Archdeacon has powers of decision, subject to the Chancellor of the diocese (the senior legal officer and a professional Judge).

You see, our buildings are there for others, not just for the congregation. All parishioners have a right to attend and visit, subject to practicality. Public notice of any changes gives them the right to comment. All our churches are listed: Holy Trinity has a high rating, Clifford quite high and Luddington is also listed. We have a duty to the future: decisions now can open or limit possibilities. We have a responsibility to do things well: *cheap* can rebound and end up costing more. Changes can be good, fitting the building better for worship, for visitors, for mission, for use by the community. I enjoyed working with experts in their fields. I can read a play script and see a play. Musicians can read a score and hear a symphony. Architects can look at a drawing and have the finished building already constructed in their imagination! The difficulties are sorted before the work is even begun!

"Church Wardens are the bedrock of the Church of England"

The Bishop often smiled in our staff meetings due to the in-depth knowledge both of his Archdeacons had of their parishes. There was no mystery. We understood because of our close relationships with our Church Wardens. In my time in Stratford, I have been impressed by all our Wardens. They represent the whole community, not just churchgoers; and they represent the Bishop. They have a hotline to the Bishop, often through the Archdeacon. With our Wardens, we always held in mind together the spiritual needs of our churchgoers and wider communities, as a help towards care and mission.

"Clergy are our greatest treasure"

There are fewer of them! In Birmingham, the Archdeacons carried out appointments for the Bishop, to a considerable degree. In a heavily urban diocese, most parishes belong to the Bishop's power to appoint. Outside cities, there are often "patrons" who historically hold that power. Patrons *usually* take advice from the Archdeacon! Finding the right person to *fit* the vacancy is key. Supporting and affirming clergy is vital. Helping them to move when a job has been well-done or a new challenge would stimulate, is important.

"Odd jobs"

The Archdeacon is often there to do odd jobs. One of my skills was to chair a meeting well. You do not need to be an expert, and, in fact, *too much* expertise hinders the Chair! You need to distil the informed advice, discern the consensus, see possible implications. I enjoyed that in all kinds of spheres: communications; parish development; lay training and education, and so on.

Cont...

Brian Russell on being an Archdeacon cont...

“Difficult jobs”

So, what did I not enjoy “quite so much”! The Archdeacon holds the “complaints desk”. People commit highly to their church: their feelings often run high. Disappointments hurt. I am never keen to be in conflict, and it worried me at first. However, I found that people who get a buzz from conflict do not make good Archdeacons. It is often possible to handle conflict creatively with patience, once you have listened to **all** the different points of view. Surprises happen. People often see the matter more widely than you might think. Ways through can be found!

Brian studied English Literature and Theology at Cambridge, although he admits to spending a lot of time in the theatre! With a PhD in theology, Brian has been a theological teacher, becoming involved nationally in clergy selection and training. Brian’s strong ecumenical vision led him to teach in an ecumenical church school, and he played a part in the ecumenical relations between the Church of England and the Nordic and Baltic Churches. In the summer of 2017, the Russells retired to a house in Stratford from Norway, where Brian was the Church of England Senior Chaplain. Before that, they were twenty-one years in the diocese of Birmingham, where latterly Brian was the Archdeacon of Aston. Brian’s wife Pam is a retired hospital social worker, and both their children are theology graduates: their son is the Director of a University Business School and their daughter Deputy Head of a Church Secondary School. Brian and Pam also have two grand-daughters whom, sadly, they cannot see at the moment due to Covid19 restrictions.



Holy Trinity Flower Team

Do you **love** flowers; do you enjoy arranging them; would you like to join our small team of enthusiastic arrangers and help to create the displays we see in our beautiful church?

Absolutely no experience necessary, no gender bias, just an enthusiasm for beautiful flowers.

Our friendly team is divided into small groups who normally work together once a month, with the whole team arranging for Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

If you would like to join us, please contact Hilary on 07786 195498 – we’d love to have you.



NOTES ON MY PLACEMENT AT HOLY TRINITY

by Su McClellan

This year has been full of disappointments, of hopes raised then dashed, of light appearing at the end of the tunnel - only to discover that it's a train. I was a month into my placement at Holy Trinity when we went into lockdown two. I was so disappointed. Already my ordination training had taken a huge rap, with all my classes moving on line and contact with my new friends limited to staring for yet more hours at a screen.

I'd asked to come to Holy Trinity, because I wanted to discover how a busy town centre church, with its own special place in history, communicates the love of God to locals and visitors alike. I wanted to know if the civic functions of the Church of England are still relevant or if increasing secularization is side-lining the church and I really wanted to know how Shakespeare fits into the whole picture.

I was all fired up and ready to go for the start of October and all went well for the first three weeks. It was great to join staff meetings and to watch and learn as I observed the team in action. I got to meet some of the volunteers who welcome visitors and had some valuable conversations with a few of the people who'd come for a day out in Stratford. What really struck me was how many people had come from Birmingham and how many were not particularly interested in visiting Shakespeare's grave. It seemed to be much more about coming into a beautiful place, where one could be quiet. I noticed a number of people simply sitting in a pew and just quietly enjoying the sense of peace in a beautiful setting. The building is spectacular and lends itself to, in the words of Walter Bruggeman, "openness to wonder and awe in glad praise". In these anxious times Holy Trinity had become a place of sanctuary.

Sadly, that all had to stop again as we went into the second lockdown. I was left with so many questions about taking the Eucharist online. Clearly technology has been a real blessing this last year. We've been able to stay in touch in a way that would have been impossible even five years ago. But, it's raised for me so many questions about what's going on when we watch a communion service. For a church like Holy Trinity and indeed for any church, where the Eucharist holds a central place in its worshipping life, the question has to be asked: what impact has the lack of physical presence had on those who have been unable to attend church in person for almost a year? What does it mean to share in 'communion' when people are physically apart, and what further work and reflection needs to be done on the nature of the Eucharist in light of the experience of the pandemic.

Clearly the church has had to make changes and all of us have had to make sacrifices but for me, one of those changes produced something better than that which it was designed to replace. The experience of a walk-through carol service on Christmas Eve will stay with me for a long time. There was delight and wonder, curiosity and surprise. The chance for people to go on a mini pilgrimage, actively entering into the awe and wonder of Christmas, as active explorers rather than passive Congregants, clearly struck a chord. The highlight was when an older gentleman explained to a steward that he'd lived in the town all his life but had never been inside Holy Trinity. For those unfamiliar with church life, walking through at your own pace and not having to worry about not knowing the hymns, or standing or sitting at the right time, offered those that came the warmest of welcomes.



Photograph by Harry Lomax

Cont...

Notes on my placement at Holy Trinity cont...

Despite the corona challenges, I'm glad I came to Holy Trinity in a time of such challenge because I learnt about thinking outside the box. As a church you've had to adapt and do things differently and what I saw on my placement gives me hope in the future of the church. You're a church that can appreciate its past but at the same time look at its life and mission anew. God never changes but people and societies do and to see a worshipping community with the level of flexibility to cope with those changes has given me much encouragement.

Thank you for making me so welcome, for answering my many questions and giving me the opportunity to experience a church responding so positively to a period of deep and profound change.

Su McClellan

CENSUS 2021

Households across Stratford upon Avon will soon be asked to take part in the census - a once-in-a-decade survey of housing and population across England and Wales.

Census day is March 21.

Every household will be asked to complete the survey. Your answers will make a difference to how your community is funded. Without the information you share, it would be difficult to understand the area's needs and how best to plan and fund services such as schools, doctors' surgeries, new bus routes, and support and care for families and the elderly.

The census has been carried out every ten years since 1801 with the exception of 1941 due to the Second World War. In February, households should have received a letter explaining the census and will then receive a unique access code allowing you to complete the questionnaire online. Paper questionnaires are available on request. No money, bank or card details will be asked for at any point.

The census will include questions about household size, your age, work, health, education, and ethnicity. For the first time it will ask people if they have served in the UK Armed Forces - including doing National Service and Reservists.

The Office for National Statistics runs the census. It is independent from the government. All details are protected by law and information published is always anonymous. Results will be published in 2022, but all personal details which would identify an individual are locked away for 100 years and kept safe for future generations and family historians. Census information is invaluable in the planning of local services, and in discerning the shape of the ministry of the church community within its geographical location.

For more information about Census2021 visit www.census.gov.uk

The Snowdrop Story 2020

Through the dark cold days of January and February snowdrops appearing are a sign of hope.

At our churchyard around Holy Trinity our paths are used by hundreds of people daily, for exercise, for private thought, for solace and friendship.

We are a small group who meet regularly to nurture our churchyard, and it occurred to me that we had very few snowdrops coming up to brighten those dark days. It was agreed that more would enhance a calm uplifting winter presence within the grounds.

The idea grew and wonderfully we were promised a donation to cover the cost. It seems that for the best results, snowdrops need to be planted in the green - whilst they are in active growth.



Halfway through January I realised that we were within optimum snowdrop planting time. Research led me to what has turned out to be an excellent supplier. This news was shared and I was encouraged to go ahead and order. The snowdrop plants would need to be planted as soon as possible after arriving - all one thousand of them!! Slightly daunting but I was promised lots of help at short notice.

2 February - a warm dry morning and our precious generous snowdrop delivery arrived. Two of us were able to meet - very socially spaced - to begin planting. It was difficult to know where to begin. Mercifully the following morning was also warm and dry and many socially distanced hands working over several hours achieved what had seemed impossible. All one thousand one hundred little plants were snuggled into the ground, in groups of twenty along the paths.



We have initially protected them with twigs, and would like to say a very big thank you for the donation that has brought this idea into being.

Hopefully over the years these determined, small beautiful plants will multiply and give joy to those who share our churchyard through the winters to come.

The churchyard maintenance volunteers meet at 2pm on alternate Monday afternoons, and this year we will also be taking on the upkeep of the garden behind the Parish centre. We welcome anyone interested

in joining us.

Liz Johnson



A “Pot of Gold” to Help us Re-open to Visitors?

In that never-ending search for a “pot of gold” at the end of the rainbow, Holy Trinity has applied for an £84,000 grant to help us re-open the church to visitors. This is part of the Government’s Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage.

Timing for the bidding process was very tight with applications opening on 7 January and closing on 26 January. We will not know the results until the end of March and any grant we are awarded will have to be spent by the end of June 2021.

The focus of the grant is very much on welcoming visitors back and the items we could claim for included:

- **Work required to allow the church to re-open:** this included things like cleaning and minor repairs as well as any maintenance needed to make the building safe for visitors.
- **Work to the church building to improve visitor experience:** this included improving the hearing loop and improving existing signage, together with explanatory videos and virtual tours.
- **Costs associated with re-opening:** this covered basic operational costs (heating, lighting, insurance) and training for volunteers, as well as improvements to our website. It also included the cost of community and visitor engagement surveys with analysis to establish what is wanted from the church.

We were not allowed to include any work that would be categorised as promotion of faith, any capital projects, major repairs or work not associated with the church building itself.

The application asked questions about the importance of our heritage, the impact of Covid restrictions and how we will adapt to ensure our future financial viability. Our request focuses on continuing with our approach through lockdown to be a volunteer-based organisation in order to build links with the community as a whole. Nothing in our submission increased the base level of costs – if visitors do not return or return in smaller numbers than hoped, then our financial position will not get worse.

It is easy to imagine that competition for grants will be extremely tough and we are obviously not guaranteed success. However, if the end of the rainbow does land on us, we do not get an undefined “pot of gold” to spend at will. The application required us to outline specific actions and their costs which is the programme we would have to deliver. This will be closely monitored by Heritage Lottery. Yet there is little time from when we know the results to when we have to spend any grant so some preparatory work has already started to try and get ahead of the game.

I think we all recognise the difficult financial position at Holy Trinity Church and, if nothing else, 2020 has brought into stark relief the importance of visitors to our long-term financial viability. However, it has also shown an exciting new way of welcoming visitors to our church. Hopefully good news in March will help to increase people’s enjoyment when visiting one of the most beautiful parish churches in Britain.



Photograph by
Sylvia McDonald



Mike Warrillow



Whatever our political views, I guess most of us will have rejoiced at Joe Biden's election as President of the USA. That country is still deeply divided, and I hope and pray that nothing bad will have happened by the time you read this. But much of his agenda seems likely to be good for America and good for the world. And, not least, his re-engagement with the fight against climate change.

Our last edition contained a lot about the environment – and there will be more in this one. As the “Eco Church champion” on the PCC, I make no apology for that. We have been living for so long under the shadow of Covid that it is easy to forget that there is an even greater threat to humanity and perhaps to the whole of God's creation. And we cannot ignore our calling to share in the healing and reconciliation of **all things** in Christ.



The PCC notes in our last edition referred to our decision, in common with the church more widely, to “commit ourselves to net zero emissions by 2030”. That sounds technical and boring, but it is the least that we can do as a church. Our activities, and especially but not only our heating and lighting, create carbon emissions which are helping to heat the planet to a point which in a few decades could become really dangerous (and is already affecting our own weather patterns, and even more those in other parts of the world). We have now moved to using electricity only from “renewable” sources – wind, water and so on, which don't involve the burning of coal, oil or gas. Heating is a much bigger problem at the moment, because here we are dependent on gas. The bad news is that moving over to a cleaner approach could take a long time and involve cost and disruption. The good news is that we can – remarkably cheaply – offset our emissions to a considerable extent, for example by joining in

schemes for tree-planting and the like which take carbon out of the atmosphere and thus reduce global warming.

There is much more that we can do, and we are working for example on plans to make our wonderful churchyard even “greener” with more trees and more wildlife – a bit more on this in another article in this edition. Also, we need to help our fellow-citizens to make their personal lives more friendly to the environment; and here we will be collaborating closely with our Methodist neighbours whose efforts have already won a coveted Gold Award from the Eco Church scheme.



Some people say that we will only save the planet by really dramatic and sacrificial changes in our lifestyles – from stopping air (and most other) travel to adopting a vegan diet. Others say that the solution lies in technological fixes – electric cars, carbon capture and storage, and so on – which will involve change and cost but will enable us to continue to live much as we have become used to. There is some truth in each of these very different arguments. But there are no quick fixes, and no one-size-fits-all. We have a Christian duty to find the right way forward, and to follow it whatever the cost. But that requires action, not only by individuals and by churches, companies and other organisations, but by national governments and the international community working together. Which is why Biden's election is such good news.



By courtesy of Elizabeth Roome

VALUED VOLUNTEERS

Elizabeth Roome (often known as Liz) talks to Trinity Times

In what areas of church life do you undertake voluntary work?

Since about 2014, I have been a member of the Bereavement Team, and on the roster for reading the King James Bible. Since 2016 I've been a Lay Chaplain, and in January this year I took on the role of Secretary to the PCC.

What originally motivated you to become a volunteer?

I moved to Stratford-upon-Avon in 2013 and joined Holy Trinity Church. Since I wanted to make friends in my new town, it was important for me to join things in order to meet people.

I grew up with parents who were always involved in church and charitable work, so all my adult life I have been involved

one way and another with the church and with organisations aiming to help people.

In what ways do you think that volunteering supports our parish mission?

It's important that people experience Christianity as a caring religion. Many of the volunteering opportunities at Holy Trinity are aimed at being of service to people, both members of the congregation and others.

The church would not function properly if people were not prepared to serve on committees, so I was happy to become Secretary to the PCC.

What aspects of your voluntary work give you the greatest pleasure?

I love the King James version of the Bible, so I really enjoy preparing for and doing my readings. I get pleasure from feeling that I am helping others, which is why I enjoy my involvement with the Bereavement Team and the Lay Chaplains.

Now that I'm retired, I like to be able to use some of the skills I acquired during my working life, which is why I enjoy the work of the PCC.

How long have you been a member of the congregation at Holy Trinity?

For seven years - since 2013.

What attracts you to our church?

I love the style of worship - enough of the traditional liturgy plus some modern aspects. I love the singing, especially the choir, which I think is very good. I also love the friendliness of the members of the congregation. I feel that I am part of a church family.

Do you have a favourite hymn?

"Almighty, Invisible, God Only Wise".

Is there a particular Bible passage that uplifts you spiritually?

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms". (Deuteronomy 33:27)

Where were you born? Where was your childhood?

I was born at home on my parents' farm in South Africa. The farm is situated on the northern edge of the Great Karoo, a semi-arid big-sky big-farm area, very good for raising my father's Merino sheep. As children, my sister and I had the freedom of the 6350-acre farm to explore on horseback or on foot.

Cont.....

My mother home-schooled me until I was nine, so those childhood years on the farm were blissful, and a wonderful foundation for later life. After that, I went to boarding school, which I enjoyed, and was home on the farm during every school holiday.

Can you tell us a little about your family?

My parents were committed Anglicans, so I was brought up in the ethos of the church. They were good and loving parents. I think the greatest gift they gave me was how much they read to me and my sister. My mother read the popular children's literature of the day - Enid Blyton, Beatrix Potter, the "Anne of Green Gables" series and so on. My father read us the books he remembered from his childhood: Rudyard Kipling (especially "The Jungle Book"), "The Water Babies" by Charles Kingsley and "The Wind in the Willows" by Kenneth Grahame.

Can you tell us about your working life?

I was a secondary school teacher in Cape Town, South Africa from 1971 to 2007 when I retired. Until 1977, I taught Afrikaans, then for a number of years I taught both English and Afrikaans, and then spent the last twenty years of my career teaching English. The last twenty-five years of my career were spent at the same girls' school, where I was Head of English and also a Head of Department. I loved teaching teenagers, even though they could be quite trying at times!

Do you live in or near Stratford? If you weren't born in Stratford, what brought you here?

I live in Old Town, just three blocks from Holy Trinity Church.

When I retired, I came to the UK on holiday. I was staying with Wendy, an elderly cousin of my father's, who had been a close friend of my late husband Ken, and his first wife. After Ken's first wife died in 2006, Wendy kept a watching brief over him, and by the time I appeared on the scene in 2008, she had clearly decided that Ken needed a new wife and that I was a suitable candidate! We married in November 2008. Ken was born and bred a Londoner, so our first few years of married life were spent in south-east London. However, by 2012 we had decided we wanted to live somewhere smaller, and since I am a Shakespeare nut, and we had often visited Stratford, we chose to look for a house here.

Do you have any hobbies or pets?

My hobbies include photography (especially taking photos of flowers), yoga, listening to classical music and reading. As far as pets go, I have a lovely little tortoiseshell cat named Miss Molly.

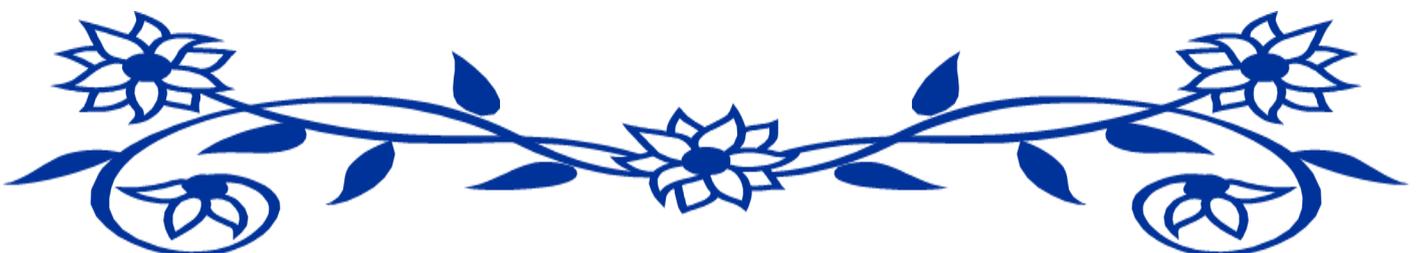
What are your tastes in music, books and the performing arts?

Music: classical - I mainly listen to Classic FM.

Books: detective stories, psychological thrillers; I've enjoyed returning to classics such as Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy.

Films: direct feeds of ballet, opera and theatre.

Plays: Shakespeare especially.



THE WOMAN IN THE DUST

by Lori Shanebeck



A woman thrown down into the dirt, an angry mob screaming for blood while fingering the stones that they are itching to throw, and one man stands alone to face them. The crowd demands her death to fulfill the law. The woman covers in the dust and begs for her life. Jesus stands alone as he considers the accusations and judgment being screamed at him.

He had been in the midst of teaching when they dragged her through the streets and threw her down at his feet. Their expressed purpose was to fulfill the demands of the law, but the real reason was to set a trap for Jesus. The hope was to set up a situation that backed him up against a wall. No matter what response he would give – it would be wrong and they would have grounds to demand his arrest and punishment.

Did they really care about the law? Probably on some level the answer would be yes. Did they care about the woman? That would be an unequivocal no. She was no more than a pawn in a very deadly game of chess. They were desperate to silence this man who claimed to be the Messiah, who dared to call them hypocrites, and told his followers to listen to their words, but not to follow their example.

What does he do? He does not try to settle them down and get them to be quiet. He does not logically present a thoughtful response. He simply bends down to the dirt and with one finger he writes – and a remarkable thing happens. The voices begin to fade and then stop altogether as the crowd pushes forward to see what he is writing. Slowly he continues to write until they are utterly silent...and then he stands and he speaks. He tells them that the one who is without sin is welcome to throw the first stone. As they process that truth, they begin to slink away until no one is left but Jesus and the woman.

I have directed this scene more than once for productions of the musical *Godspell*. Of all the incredible scenes in this play, it is my favorite for so many reasons. As Jesus bends down to her and touches her shoulder she jumps, but cannot look at him. Then he lifts her chin and looks into her eyes as he asks her where her accusers have gone.

It is a powerful moment in the play, and every time I have directed it the same thing has happened. For one blinding moment as I look on the scene it becomes utterly personal because I see myself. There I am lying in a heap on the ground and the voices screaming at **me** are the things that I often hear in my own head. "You are a failure, you are stupid, you will never get it right, God will never forgive or allow you to be of use to His kingdom, you have no talent, no one respects or loves you, you are alone."

I have sat in the back of the theatre and hardly breathed as I watch Jesus lift her chin and look into her eyes, then help her rise from the dust. He tells her that she is forgiven, and in my eyes he is doing the same for me every single time. At every rehearsal and performance chills would run down my spine as my head would lift and for a moment I could see myself as He sees me. Once again, I would realize how much I was loved, how great a price had been paid for my redemption, and how often I trade that truth for the lies of the enemy.

Those productions closed several years ago, but the experience left me profoundly changed. Now, when I am lying in the dust and hear the lies the enemy screams or even whispers in my ear, I see that scene. I hear the voice of Jesus. I feel him lifting my chin and I know the truth – that no matter what, He forgives my sins, loves me unconditionally, walks beside me on the days when I am stronger, and carries me when I lack the strength to go on.

Jesus you are the lifter of our heads, the redeemer of our souls, and the one who never gives up on His creation. At times we will land in the dirt. On those days help us not to listen to the lies that we are told but instead raise our eyes to you – and see the real truth that silences the lies – that we are forgiven and loved. That there is redemption and hope in allowing you to lift us up, dust us off, and tell us that we can go on.

Lori Shanebeck

St Peter's Graveyard Conservation Project

by Cohl Warren-Howles

I obtained the agreement of Coventry Diocese and Stratford Town and District Councils to develop St Peter's Graveyard at Bishopston into a Conservation Area.

The aim of this project is to create areas of grass of different lengths to provide maximum diversity for wildlife. Although I commenced with the project in January 2020, with the restrictions that have been imposed, the project was on hold until the summer months.

I have a team of enthusiastic, environmentally focused local residents who are working with me. I am also working with a botanist who heads up a similar project in St James, Alveston. In the autumn we sowed Yellow Rattle seeds to increase species diversity. We will then be introducing wild-flowers, indigenous to this area.

We have installed bird and bat boxes in the higher trees and have erected a plaque (kindly and professionally produced by one of the key volunteers, Simon Ansell) that describes our project for interested passers-by.

Recently we have been given the generous donation of two established crab apple trees by two kind residents via Maureen Pekenc, a devoted environmental enthusiast! These have now been planted and the squirrels and birds await their fruit!

We hope to encourage insects, butterflies, birds, bees and small mammals. Invertebrates like butterflies need specific plants in order to breed. Some species require long grass on which to lay their eggs.

Bees are the world's most important pollinator of food crops. They support healthy ecosystems. The United Kingdom is home to over two hundred and fifty species of bee. But bees are in trouble. A quarter of bee species are under threat. We want to do our bit to help them.

The once common hedgehog is now under threat from development and habitat loss. In just ten years, their numbers have fallen by 30% and we now think that there are less than one million left in the United Kingdom. Our churchyard can make the perfect home for them.

We will not be using pesticides, and we will be mowing the grass less frequently, ensuring that the wildlife can thrive. This project aims to strike a balance. A churchyard managed with understanding can provide an important refuge for diversity of wildlife, as well as a pleasant, reflective sanctity for the local community.

So it is important to say, that whilst this area is not neat, trimmed and perfect, it is not being neglected, but is a living graveyard.



Saul Warren-Howles ;
Cohl Warren-Howles;
Simon Ansell;
Maureen Peckenc.



GAGA UPDATE

Dawn and the team at 1000 Hills Community Helpers have been inspirational in their response to the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020. GAGA

supporters help to fund the clinic at 1000 Hills Community Helpers and, even though the services had to be adapted to take into consideration the new safety requirements and regulations brought about by Covid-19 this clinic continued to operate and was able to help 1,680 adults and 948 babies and children in the three months to December 2020! This is the power of your donations, providing health care, advice, and preventative medicines to so many people who would otherwise have no access to such care. The breadth of ailments and conditions the practitioners at this clinic see never fails to amaze me – everything from ear and eye infections, through scabies, tetanus, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS. Sadly, the Coronavirus pandemic is impacting individuals with co-morbidities such as HIV even more severely, as they may default on their medication because they are afraid to attend government clinics and hospitals that are overcrowded. 995 packs of chronic medication were delivered in the last three months of 2020. That is nearly 1,000 people who didn't have to make the challenging journey to the clinic. The team at 1000 Hills Community Helpers have also extended their feeding scheme in 2020 and, thanks to the second meals on wheels trailer being commissioned, they reached 4,000 people EVERY DAY with a hot meal!



Hillcrest Aids Centre Trust – South Africa

212 patients were admitted to HACT's Respite Unit in 2020, that means each bed was taken by an average of 8 patients in the year – GAGA supporters sponsor one of these beds and the value that these beds offer to individuals and their families cannot be expressed.

KYGN – Tanzania

This is the Primary 7 class of 2020, the group of pupils who continued to study through the pandemic with home study packs and returned to school to study wearing facemasks and sitting apart from their friends and teachers. This is also the group of pupils who achieved remarkable results in their secondary school entry examinations!

Grateful thanks to the GAGA supporters whose donations allow us to sponsor this Primary 7 class which does so much to give these children a solid foundation on which to build their future learning. The 2020 cohort will be a hard act to follow, but with your help, we hope to continue to sponsor the class for another group of young learners in 2021.



And so to the future.....

When faced with a challenge or adversity, we must keep going and keep focused. Our beneficiaries need our help now more than ever and here at GAGA UK we are determined to continue raising awareness, and raising funds, to help some of the most disadvantaged communities in the world. We couldn't do what we do without you, so thank you very much for your loyal support through 2020 and into 2021.



Remembering Tree Project Update

Those of you in Stratford upon Avon will know that we have not been able to take down the yarnbombing due to the prevailing lockdown regulations. For everyone who is waiting for their bauble and or star, please be assured that they will be sent to you as soon as possible and if any are badly weathered, we will replace them with one suitable to be kept as a memento for you. Please bear with us!

However long the night, the dawn will break – African Proverb



The World Day of Prayer, held every year on the first Friday of March has, inevitably, fallen victim to Coronavirus. We had hoped to celebrate the service at St Andrew's Church in Shotton, sharing a service prepared by Christian women from Vanuatu, a group of islands, some 2000 miles east of Australia.

However, the local committee here in Stratford were delighted to learn that a service has been recorded in Vanuatu, which will be released on YouTube and social media on 5 March.



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The Revd Diane Patterson	01789 266 453
The Revd Jenny Rowland	01789 415 548
The Venerable Brian Russell	01789 266 316
The Revd Roger Taylor	01789 778 471
The Revd Graham Wilcox	01789 551 759

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Trinity Ladies	Gina Lodge	01789 204 850
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Stewardship Officer	Chris Kennedy	01789 299 785
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Trinity Tots	Phil Harper	07791 005 696
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Welcome Team	Helen Warrillow	01789 298 928
Sunday Coffee organisers	Tina Hillyard	01789 551 739
	Diane Edwards	01789 296 396

SIMNEL CAKE

Here is a traditional family recipe for Simnel Cake. This cake was originally offered on Mothering Sunday but now it is always served at Easter. Some cooks put twelve marzipan balls to represent the "Apostles" on top of the cake, but others only put eleven, because of Judas Iscariot's betrayal!

Ingredients:

110 gm (4oz) natural glace cherries
225 gm (8oz) softened butter
225 gm (8 oz) muscovado sugar
4 large eggs
225 gm (8 oz) plain flour
2 tsp baking powder
400 gm (14 oz) mixed fruit
50 gm (2 oz) marmalade
grated rind of two lemons
2 tsp mixed spice

For the topping:

450 gm (1 lb) marzipan - shop bought is fine!
Apricot jam - several spoonfuls
1 egg

- Line a 20 cm (8") cake tin with baking parchment. Preheat the oven to 150 C, 130 C fan, gas mark 2.
- Quarter, rinse and dry cherries.
- Mix all the cake ingredients in a mixer (or by hand) and put half the mixture into the prepared tin. Roll one-third of the marzipan into a 20 cm (8") circle and place it on top of the cake mixture.
- Spoon the remaining cake mixture on top of the marzipan and level the surface. Bake for approx. 2 hours 30 minutes, until well-risen and firm to the touch. Cool on a wire rack. When cool, brush the top of the cake with warm apricot jam. Place a second 20cm circle of marzipan onto the top of the cake, press down firmly and crimp the edges.
- Make the remaining marzipan into eleven balls (or twelve if you want to include Judas) and secure them round the top edge of the cake with a tiny amount of apricot jam. Brush the balls and the top of the cake with an egg wash and place it under a hot grill for a few minutes to brown (but be careful not to burn it!).
- Decorate with yellow ribbons and Easter chickens.



Recipe courtesy of
Judith Dorricott