

# TRINITY NEWS & VIEWS



*For the Beauty of the Earth.....  
Lord of all, to you we raise this our joyful hymn of praise*

**September 2023    Issue 61**

## A Message from Rev Sam Funnell

Dear Friends,

At the service I led back at the end of July, we thought about JOURNEYING. About journeys we had made, how we might see Christ in the journey and then also, strive to be 'as Christ' to others on the way.

And now we come towards the end of August, September is not far away and a new Methodist year begins. This means I've been with you now for 3 years; we've travelled 3 years together as a church community. Somebody asked me recently if it feels like this time has gone quickly or slowly, and you might have your own views on that (!), but for me it's a mixture: sometimes it feels like these 3 years have gone so fast that I can't quite believe it's really that long; other times, it really feels like I've been with you for such a long time, as I feel so much a part of life in and around Trinity, the Circuit and beyond in my District work too.

Time flies by, does it not and we can so easily be swept along – so I think it's important, every now and again to pause, and look back, so that we might better travel into the future with hope, joy and expectation.

The picture on the next page was one I used in a couple of Quiet Mornings I led for 'Reflect' (the Methodist Spirituality and Retreat group) recently.

I posed the question – 'Do you think the person is looking back, over the way they have come, or looking ahead to where they still have to travel?'

What do you think? When we 'look back' over the past 3 years, what do we see? What's happened in that time? When we look ahead, how does the future path seem now?



I think we've moved through extraordinary times:

- from Pandemic panic and a sense of powerlessness to a more hopeful outlook and ability to, mostly, live with Covid-19;
- from looking inward, to looking outward;
- to fearing what might be, to stepping out in faith for what God might have in store for us;
- from worrying about what we'd lost, to excitement about what we might gain.

In these times we have lost loved ones and other folks have moved on from our church to other places and churches but we have welcomed many others in (to the Sunday morning congregation, to Foundry Worship, to Junior Church, to Messy Fun Church, to Bible Investigators, to Coffee & Chat, to prayer meetings and the prayer tree and many other aspects of church life).

The Foundry Project, spear-headed by Hugh and Dan and supported by others, has given space and welcome to develop and nurture amazing partnerships with all sorts of different groups including: the Monday night JAM club, the teachers and pupils from the Short Stay School, IMM (Intergenerational Music Making), HALOW (nurturing

young people with learning disabilities and autism to enable them to fulfil their potential through person-centred care) to name but a few.

And then there's the amazing development of our Chinese congregation which has seen exponential growth as they've welcomed people having to leave Hong Kong and continues to provide spiritual, pastoral and practical support for people settling into life in the UK. They are truly a 'wonder to behold' and we are blessed to work in partnership in many ways at Trinity and hope that this will only deepen as we move into the future.

And so many of you have given of yourselves, in so many selfless ways: looking after property and finance; being part of stewards' team, coffee rotas, pastoral care, gardening duties; looking after the IT systems and livestreams, music provision, prayer, bible study and so, so much more! I know I say thank you quite a lot but I mean it – THANK YOU! For being YOU and allowing me to share in our adventure together, it's a great joy!

Above all – the main thing that I sense, is a shift in how church 'feels' – more hopeful, more joyful, more confident in our ability to offer the 'extravagant Christian hospitality' that we strive to be our USP. We have good news stories to share; we have hearts alive and 'warmed' with God's love, that help us reach out to others in love when they need us; we feel ourselves connected – to each other, to our community, to our partners in faith and good will, to the Circuit and, above all, to God!

So let's mark and celebrate where we are now and then step out into the next year and see what God's got up God's sleeve for us.....exciting times!

Which puts me in mind of the following hymn that might just have been rattling around in your brain as you read this letter:

*This, this is the God we adore,  
our faithful, unchangeable friend,  
whose love is as great as his power,  
and neither knows measure nor end:*

*'Tis Jesus, the first and the last,  
whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;  
we'll praise him for all that is past,  
and trust him for all that's to come.*

*(Joseph Hart, 1712-1767; Singing the Faith no. 67)*

It's been a delight to travel with you these last 3 years and I look forward to the next part of the journey!

With love, prayers & a dance or two!

**Sam x**



*(The music group rehearsing for the service Sam mentions)*

## Dates for your diary

In addition to our usual Sunday services and other activities at Trinity please note the following special events taking place over the coming months.

Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> September	Circuit Service at Knaphill @ 6pm to mark the start of the new church year
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> September	Circuit Meeting at Trinity
Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> September	Church Family Tea
Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> October	Harvest Festival
Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> October	Circuit Mission Day at Knaphill
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> October	Circuit Service at Walton @ 6.30pm for 'All we Can'
Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> October	Neighbourhood Party ( <i>see page 18</i> )
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> November	All Souls Service @ 4.30pm
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> December	Nativity Service
<b>Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Carol Service – joint with the Chinese Church ( <b>Note date!</b> )



## **Guided by God – aboard the Tall Ship Tenacious**

Prelude for those who don't know me too well: I have sailed on Tall Ships with the Jubilee Sailing Trust for many years, with people of varying abilities and disabilities, from blindness, deafness, amputees, to wheel chair users etc. etc. I sail as a watch leader which means that I have to try to get all my watch (of up to 9 people) at the right place, at the right time, dressed appropriately for the weather for the next 4 hours, on a "1 on, 3 off" round-the-clock shift pattern.

**Mike Tozer**

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During a service – and especially in prayers, I sometime find that there is the odd word or sentence that resonates with me very deeply. During this year's Lent liturgy, I was particularly struck by the following:-

*"Sometimes we are frightened by other people's demands or we are unsure how to carry out a servant ministry."*

The reason for this resonating so deeply with me, was that in February, during my last voyage on the tall ship Tenacious, one of my watch, Gerry, back in 2002 had suffered brain and leg / hip damage, due to an accident involving a motorcycle. Now, my knowledge of the reactions and abilities of people with brain injuries was almost non-existent. At first this was not too much of a problem for me as he had brought his buddy, Charlie, to look after him.

As luck would have it, the stores for the ship were delayed (we were in the Caribbean after all, and things don't always happen when they are promised) and we were given shore leave for the first afternoon. During this time we were able to get to the beach, have a refreshing dip and generally start to bond with fellow crew members.



While Gerry was relaxing in the water with his buoyancy aid on, Charlie explained to me a lot of Gerry's reactions to various situations, which was best summed

up by thinking of Gerry's brain being a series of closed doors. Any one of these closed doors could be opened by a word or other stimuli, whence Gerry would become very lucid and could remember his past (e.g. when he served in the RAF as an aircraft engineer) with ease and talk confidently. At some point, however, the "door" would slam shut – even in mid-sentence, and no amount of prompting could restart that conversation. We just had to wait for another door to open. The other main thing I needed to remember was that Gerry could forget things completely which would be the start of him becoming stressed. I was happy to learn this so that I could try to help as much as possible without stressing Gerry or myself too much.

After a "run ashore" that evening with more chat and team building, the next morning things took a turn which no-one could have expected. Charlie's nose started to



bleed profusely, so the ship's medical purser was called. Unfortunately, she couldn't stop the bleeding, so Charlie and the medical purser went to the local medical centre. Even they couldn't stop the bleeding and so they were both sent across the island to the main hospital where the diagnosis was that Charlie would need to be kept in for an emergency operation and would not be able to re-join the ship.

With no other male in our watch to take over, I volunteered (with some trepidation, and a quiet prayer for guidance) to be Gerry's buddy for the rest of the voyage and shifted all my gear into his cabin. The rest of the crew were all aware of the situation and rallied around magnificently with Gerry never being left alone for too long.

I tried, as best I could, to help out with Gerry's numerous requests and to have him join in as much as he could e.g. helming the ship, setting sails, coiling ropes etc. and even climbing the rigging, but without the in-depth knowledge that Charlie had, I still found it hard going. As soon as I "moved in", Gerry was already stressing that he couldn't find his house keys. We could only assume that when someone had packed up Charlie's kit and sent it ashore, that the keys had gone ashore with him. Unfortunately, Gerry was adamant that this was not the case - and so the search started. The First Mate and I then went through every bag that Gerry possessed (he packs everything in separate plastic bags), but still no keys. Even days later, when he again started stressing about his keys, I made him watch while I searched all his bags again and showed him that there were no keys, this didn't help as then he was worried as to where they were and how he was to get into his house when he got home.

Luckily that “door” shut and he quickly forgot about the keys and we were able to get on with sailing the ship.

We settled into a routine as best we could for the rest of the voyage, with Gerry often being unable to find things, and me searching through his kit and finding the item, normally in the least obvious plastic bag.



Throughout all of this, Gerry remained his usual smiling self and I found that the more work I gave him, the more he felt he had helped the watch and the better he felt about himself – and life aboard in general. One of Gerry’s highlights was that the ship’s cook had made a cake for Charlie’s birthday but, in his absence, Gerry was asked to cut the first slice to cheers all-round from the whole crew. Gerry beamed from ear to ear!

After visiting Dominica where we were able to go ashore and visit many interesting places, and Barbuda where, unfortunately, we didn’t make it ashore, the voyage came to an end and there was Charlie on the dockside to greet us. After checking he was OK, and me telling him that Gerry was OK, I asked about the house keys. “No problem” said Charlie, “we left them with his neighbour for safe keeping before we left home.” Ah well, another mystery solved.

So, we may not know what God wants of us or when, but we do know that there will be a guiding hand somewhere that will help us fulfil that need.

## Waymakers

Waymaker Groups are based at Trinity and are a spin-off from Foundry Worship. The group started in September 2022 and is currently led by Mike Cope. The main aim being to support and encourage each other and to discuss topics relevant to those attending.

The group meets fortnightly on Thursday evenings in the Kabin and we usually have a lively discussion (with 6-10 people attending). Some of the topics covered so far include: What is the church - its people or a building?; Is the standard model of church working?; How 'holy' should the media we consume be?; The world is my parish and Wesley's Rule; Jesus the Influencer; Creeds and statements of Faith; Lent Reflections; What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?; God and the Universe of Faiths (is Jesus the only way to God?); What is the essence of Christianity – to believe rightly or to do rightly?; God on mute (how do we deal with unanswered prayer)?

We would like to start a second group later in the year if we can get enough people interested. If you would like to find out more about joining a small group, please contact Hugh Bowerman

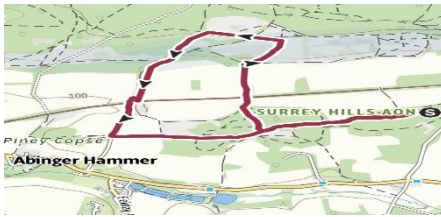


([trinityfoundry@mg.churchsuite.com](mailto:trinityfoundry@mg.churchsuite.com)) for further details.

**Mike Cope**

## Trinity members and friends - Hiking in the Surrey Hills

Mike Cope organized another hike for Trinity members and friends, which took place on Saturday, May 27th, 2023. It was a privilege to have Mike lead the group, given his experience as a walker and his authorship of the hiking book, "The Surrey Hills." Around fifty people joined the event, mostly Chinese, with about half from the



Chinese congregation and the others from their friends living near Woking. The weather was excellent, showcasing British weather at its best.

Since many Chinese participants had recently settled in the area from Hong Kong with British National Overseas status, hiking in the Area of Outstanding Beauty in the Surrey Hills presented a fresh and exciting idea for them.

The chosen route was suitable for a family walk, although it included a steep hill that everyone managed, even those with young children. Once we reached the top, Mike introduced the group to breathtaking and stunning views over the Surrey Hills. Along the way, we discovered beautiful wildflowers which were identified by using a phone app, great fun to learn. As we knew each other, we naturally gathered in small groups, chatting in a carefree manner. With an expert leader like Mike, there was no need to constantly check the map or worry about getting lost; we simply followed the group. The bird's-eye view of the train passing between Gomshall and Dorking provided a wonderful experience. Some participants were initially baffled by the stiles, which they had never seen before,

but the purpose was later explained to them. Both seniors and younger people received help from others to cross it, while our dog cleverly found its own way to solve the problem.

To ensure everyone could join in the fun, the Chinese congregation devised a carpool system, displaying seat availability at the glance of a table. For those without their own transport, this made participation easier. Though there was a slight hiccup for some people in locating the car park for the assembly point, a driver was sent to the rescue, and they joined the group after its departure. In the future, we plan to obtain a more accurate GPS location for the assembly point to set off as an entire group.

The hike lasted for about three hours and was fully enjoyed by everyone. We were grateful for God's creation of fantastic scenery, the fine weather, and the church organizers who made this memorable trip possible. We eagerly look forward to the next hike.

**Alick So**



## Thoughtful Praying

One of the advantages of having a daughter who is an English teacher is that we have a ready supply or recommendations for books to read, and a 'personal' lending library. We are never short of a wide variety of reading material, and there are always books 'waiting to be read'. One book that I have recently read left a lasting impression on me. It wasn't the storyline and content, or the characters, or the style of writing, (although all were very good), but a short paragraph that has stayed with me and made me think.

It was an extract from a letter from the mother of one of the main characters to her son. It read: *"Read this letter three times before you tell me what you think. I'm also including a prayer card and it would do you some good to pray on this every night. Get on your knees when you talk to the Lord. Do not call yourself praying by lying in the bed thinking. Thinking and praying are two different things and for something this important you need prayer."*



We have been thinking a lot recently about prayer at Foundry Worship and also at Waymakers group (see page 10). Prayer takes many different forms and we are urged in Ephesians 6:18 to "...pray in the Spirit on all occasions

*with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people ..."*

Are thinking and praying different? Much of my praying is done, not on my knees, but 'lying in bed' – often in the middle of the night, and I know that God hears me, even when I drift off to sleep mid-prayer! And I also know that He knows my every thought. But that paragraph has made me think more about how I pray and the time I actively set aside for prayer, as well as the many spur of the moment prayers offered up in the course of day-to-day life. I love the way that God can speak to us in so many different ways – even in the words of a fictional character in a book. I will keep thinking (and praying) on this!

**Helen Bowerman**

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At the **Methodist Conference** held in Birmingham at the end of June Rev Gill Newton was inducted as President of the Conference for 2023-24 and Deacon Kerry Scarlett as Vice-President. Gill Newton is Chair of the Sheffield District, a post she has held since 2014. Kerry Scarlett is from the Birmingham District. She has been involved in a wide range of work in the church and beyond, including the founding of ADAVU, a charity seeking to combat modern slavery and support its victims.

## Margot Craig



Margot died in May, shortly after her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. A Thanksgiving Service was held at Trinity on 5th June. Alongside the tributes paid to her by three of her sons, Andrew, Matthew and Peter, on that occasion, an extensive obituary appeared in the local press. For Margot, apart from being a loyal and hard-working member of Trinity for 50 years – alongside husband John – was, as the paper headlined it, “a true

community champion”. Among her more prominent roles she worked with the Woking Association of Voluntary Service to support ethnic community groups which led to the founding of the Chinese Association of Woking; she organised One World Week celebrations; she served as a Borough Councillor for eight years; and was a founder member of Horsell Care. But of course much more was accomplished quietly both in the community and among friends at Trinity.

Barbara Phillips has shared her personal memories....

*“The Craig family and the Phillips family descended on Woking in 1970. The four Craig boys and the two Phillips boys met in Junior Church, Cubs and Scouts. David Phillips became the wicket-keeper in John Craig’s Woking & Horsell cricket XI and Margot Craig invited me to help*



*prepare the cricket teas in the pavilion. And that's where our friendship began.*

*Margot has been a great friend to me over the past 53 years. We visited Chelsea Flower Show together many times, and sat drinking cups of tea in her beloved garden very often. She drove me to hospital at the crack of dawn when I went in for operations and sat calming me down until I had to go into the operating theatre.*

*When David Phillips and Frank Parker organised a trip to Yorkshire to do the Lyke Wake Walk in 1984 all the Craig family signed up to take part and travelled up in their Dormobile. We had to walk from Osmotherly to Ravenscar, a distance of 40 miles in 24 hours, so it meant setting off at 5am. We slept on the floor of Northallerton Methodist Church and Margot woke everybody at 4am saying "Rise and shine"!*

*The two highlights of our friendship both happened in France. When I won a "Weekend in Paris for Two" I took Margot as my 'plus one' and we had a fabulous time. Secondly I was invited to Andrew's wedding in Provence. John and Margot went ahead in their car (and took my two hats). I went by train and ferry, catching the Sleeper from Calais to Marseilles, and they met me at the station and took me to my hotel. Why did I need two hats? We went to the civil ceremony in the Mairie at Pierre-du-Var on the Friday, and to the church wedding in the chapel of a Catholic boarding school for boys on Saturday – so two outfits were needed. The reception was held under the olive trees in the olive grove at the chateau belonging to Andrew's in-laws. A wonderful experience and such amazing memories."*

**Barbara Phillips**

# Neighbourhood Party

**Saturday 28th October, 4pm – 6pm**  
Trinity Methodist Church, Brewery Road, Woking



You are warmly invited to our neighbourhood tea party; transport can be arranged. There will be a high tea, entertainment, and a fun quiz.

Please join us for a jolly time, meeting friends old and new. Contact us via phone, post or email to be added to our official invite list and please invite anyone who would enjoy a sociable afternoon out.



We have yet to confirm who will be entertaining us, so here's to a nice surprise!

**Phone:** Marian 07749 094064 or Pauline 07729 301713

**Post:** Trinity Methodist Church, Brewery Road, Woking, GU214LH

**e-mail:** [trinitywoking@btinternet.com](mailto:trinitywoking@btinternet.com) Tel. 01483 730754



## Sharing my faith journey – a personal testimony

### Prayer and Praise

The worship song '*Kingdom Come*' (KXC Music) says: "Lift up your shout, let the earth hear your voice!" I've been sharing my journey of faith with our Lord each day, praying about my highs as well as my lows, and this has helped me feel that I'm closer to Him and that He is closer to me.

I began to be more intentional about being thankful and praising God in my prayers, initially to deliberately lift me out of the angst of my prayers of grief. I also ask the Lord to show me the way I should go, as I entrust my life to Him (*Psalms 143*). As a result, I'm convinced that God has taken on all the cares and anxieties that were troubling me and that He will guide me each day, through the Holy Spirit. In building this trust, I've found peace in my heart and soul and this has been a clear sign to me that God is indeed leading and shaping my life.

Through my prayers, God has gradually brought me back to life with a lightness of spirit. It has been transformative, not just of my prayer life but in my feelings and attitude towards life in general. This has given me such joy that I'm moved to 'lift up my voice' and share some of that joy with you.

### Sharing

I've always felt that the love that Gerry and I shared was a wonderful gift from God and a testimony of God's love for us both. I believe that Christ and the Holy Spirit are helping me to share that love with others, so that it encourages and blesses them.

In Pete Greig's newest book '*How to hear God*', there's a quotation that perfectly expresses my last 6 months. It's by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was a theologian and anti-Nazi dissident: "*God has willed that we should seek and find his*

*living Word in the testimony of other Christians, in the mouths of human beings. Therefore, Christians need other Christians who speak God's word to them."*

I feel an increasing desire to share my faith because I am excited about God's love, and His purposes and plans for our lives. I want to grow and learn more about faith through sharing our stories with one another. My hope is that by being more open about where I am in my spiritual journey, I will encourage others to be willing to take the risk of being more open in return, so that we can grow in faith together as "the Body of Christ".

## **Joy**

Over the last few months, my joy in life has returned and there have been other tangible changes:

No matter what the situation, I never feel alone because I know that Jesus is here with me.

I'm aware of the Holy Spirit working in me, especially when I pray, physically stirring my heart, encouraging me, guiding and prompting my thoughts.

I feel a loving kindness to everyone I meet, as though God is pouring His love out through me.

I've found my singing voice, which was silent for so long.

I've gradually accumulated a YouTube playlist of Christian worship songs and this has become significantly more upbeat, with more 'Songs of Joy',

and my inner spiritual joy - well, it just grows by the day and some friends have told me that they can see my joy shining out of me. It's a wonderful thought that this means they are seeing God's love through me! I recently found this scripture, *from Psalm 126*, which perfectly describes my last 4.5 years: "*Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.*"

For me, the seed was inside me waiting for Christ's living water and the sheaves are loving kindness. This phase of my journey shows me how sharing my faith and joy can

engender loving kindness to everyone around me, through the power of prayer, God's love and the Holy Spirit.

This benediction was used at my membership service last December and it's turned out to be a wonderful prophesy: *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* (Romans 15:1)

**Enid Burman**

## Sunday Morning Refreshments Donations



Each month a different charity benefits from donations given for Sunday morning refreshments, served after the morning service. The following amounts have been forwarded to the charities listed below.

October – Engage	£70.75
November - Jubilee Sailing Trust	£70.00
December- St. Mungo's	£55.00
January - Mary's Meals	£85.00
February - Surrey Young Carers	£100.00
March - Fund for Human Need	£85.00
April – Engage	£115.00
May - Anazao	£80.00
June - The Brigitte Trust	£70.00
July - Marie Curie	£115.00

Thank you for your contributions. We will continue with this support every month and more information about each charity can be found on the flyer on the refreshment trolley or on the notice board in the Courtyard.

**Helen Bowerman**

## Coincidence – God’s anonymous way

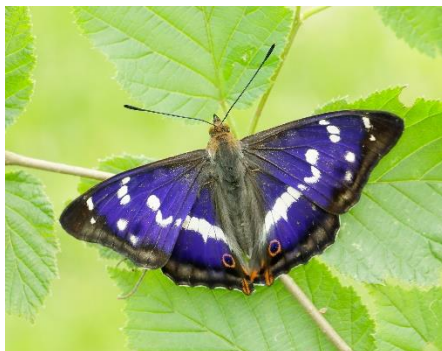
*"Coincidence is God’s Way of Staying Anonymous."*  
(Albert Einstein)

This is a factual story about my friend.

She earned her living by driving lorries around the busy streets of South England, delivering groceries for a supermarket chain. At the age of 40, her dream came true! She got married to the love of her life! They were wedded in a civil ceremony as neither she nor her husband-to-be were religious.

Their wedding was one of the most fascinating weddings! She drove to the ceremony in a sparingly decorated, gigantic, blue and yellow Scania trailer lorry; driving it smoothly along the narrow, dust-filled roads of her village in Hungary.

They stood under the arch of the fragrant, flower-decorated altar in the middle of the crowd-filled village square, which was surrounded by the reassuring safety of enormous trees. Everyone was curious to take a sneaky glance at the stunning bride! As they were gently humming their wedding vows, this amazing, brightly coloured Purple Emperor butterfly softly plunged onto her dress, and it would not leave her proximity despite of several attempts of being deployed. Eventually after about 15 minutes, it finally flew away forever...



Years passed by. After three years of trying for a child, they were blessed with a wonderful daughter. She finally felt that her life was complete, and she was the happiest woman in the world! However, this feeling was soon torn apart, and drastically destroyed by months of cruel suffering and pain, caused by a deadly illness, and just after her daughter turned 18 months, she passed away.

The husband with the daughter moved back to the village in Hungary where his beloved wife was born and they had got married. However, he was constantly hesitant if the decision to move back was a wise one, or was it just a rushed commitment that he will soon regret. He was choking on desolation and doubts day-by-day, and he felt petrified from the haunting arms of the future ahead. Then a miracle brought the spark of hope back into his life...

Three weeks after they moved back, on a sunny spring day, a Purple Emperor butterfly was waiting for him on the crusty paint of the rusty front gate, and it refused to leave...Rivers of tears started to flood his eyes; and a torrent of humbleness and supreme compassion poured through his entire body. He suddenly remembered the memory of the Purple Emperor butterfly appearing on their wedding day, not leaving his wife's bridal dress. In that moment, he was convinced that this was a magical, perhaps even a heavenly, signal from his late wife approving the big move back to Hungary. A sign that gave him the first glimpse of hope after the troubling turmoil he went through that was dragging him deep into despair.

Native Americans consider butterflies as symbols of transformation, freedom, and rebirth. An atheist would believe that the appearance of the Purple Emperor was certainly not God leading him through spiritual healing, but an utter coincidence. An antagonist would refuse to put any meaning to a butterfly appearing twice in someone's life.

The husband does not believe in God, but he also does not think it was coincidence. He believes it was an angelic sign from his late wife. In the end, it all comes down to one's interpretation and belief system. However, as a Christian, I do not believe in coincidences. I believe that the double appearance of the Purple Emperor butterfly, could have only been staged and conducted by the omniscient powers of God. Only our Heavenly Father knows what we need and when we need it; and only He has the wisdom of how to make us whole again after a trauma, a loss or an event that shakes our foundation to the core.

When he told me the second appearance of the Purple Emperor butterfly, I burst into tears, and instantly thought about the magnificence and awesomeness of God.

I wonder if he has seen a Purple Emperor ever since...

**Ildi Johnson**

## Circuit News

In July the Circuit said a fond farewell to Rev Dave Faulkner and family after 13 years serving Knaphill and more recently Byfleet churches. Dave is moving to Liphook in the East Solent and Downs Circuit. Our Circuit did not seek a replacement for Dave, reflecting the staffing situation for presbyters across the Connexion. For the next year Rev Paul Glass will be taking pastoral charge at Knaphill and Rev Sydney Samuel Lake at Byfleet. Sydney Samuel will be leaving the Circuit in Summer





2024 and so the Circuit has entered the stationing process to replace him.

With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September Linda Weedon steps down as Senior Circuit Steward but remains on the team, along with Jean Normington, who is replacing Linda as Senior Circuit Steward, and Nigel Campion-Smith. David Lander and Helen Belsham have left the team after seven and four years respectively but two new stewards have been appointed – Ruth Taylor from Trinity and Andy Seehusen from Weybridge.

## Faithful Carers

For some time Carers have been assisting me to live what we might call a near normal life. In the beginning the Carers' country of origin was what we call Eastern Europe.....Romania, Lithuania and Latvia mainly. At that time we rarely talked about anything but care-related issues but one of the Romanians did not think much of the Church in his home country. In the last year or so the team has consisted of a musical gentleman, a practising Roman Catholic from Manila, and several ladies from Zimbabwe and South Africa.



Most of my present carers were practising Christians at home but the requirements of the caring job mean that Church attendance is very difficult, but I did read the Bible one Sunday morning with one of them. It is good news too that I have introduced a Methodist lady to our Sunday morning services and she comes when she can.

So let us remember that it can be very difficult for those in this Country who wish to attend Church to do so.

**David Reeve**

## Trinity Garden and Advent Pots

The garden is a great resource both for connecting with the local community and users of the building but after 10 years it may be time to take a fresh look and have a new approach. We currently have 4 gardeners. We usually meet on a Saturday morning from about 10 am but since I have moved to Chichester I sometimes come at other times. It is a lot of work for 4 people and to continue long term we either need more volunteers or a paid gardener who can plant, prune, maintain and propagate the plants. Also money to buy new plants as needed plus compost.



The garden team also feel the Advent pots have probably run their course. If we do the same thing every year it loses impact and the pots are hard work not only to do in November but also to look after during the year plus moving them twice a year. There is also the cost of new plants every year as some are annuals and some need to be replaced. We are thinking of not doing the pots this year and planting at least some of the plants in the church garden. We need some fresh ideas about Christmas - we do still have the stable of course and quite a few lights and the scripts of the Christmas story. They were supposed to be like an advent calendar - reveal one episode per day - but it needs someone to do that. We would have 25 empty black pots - great for growing veg and salad as we can fill them with good compost although there is the cost of compost and seeds etc plus they would need looking after. Maybe people could take on looking after a pot for a year.

The soil is generally poor and sandy and dries out quickly and really needs mulching every year to retain moisture and improve the soil. We have 5 compost bins but emptying them and the leaf mould under the oak tree which we could

also use is heavy work. The leaf mould also needs to be removed for the sake of the tree - if it builds up too much round the oak tree it won't do the tree any good. It suffocates the roots. Unless we water and look after new planting it dies before getting established. The pots by the east entrance need new planting but would also need watering, maybe several times a week when it's hot. It would need a rota otherwise it's not worth buying and planting something that is just going to die. Or do we just remove the pots? All pots need the compost changing every few years and added fertiliser and some fresh compost every year. Compost is organic - it breaks down over time and only contains enough feed for about 6 weeks or at most a few months. Each of the big pots takes 3 to 4 bags of compost to fill. That's £75 to £100 to refill and plant per pot. It takes me at least an hour per pot to dig out the old compost and put it somewhere and refill it before starting to plant and my back will not cope with four pots at once!

The garden is full of bindweed - we are spending several hours a week pulling it out. It's almost impossible to kill as it's mixed in with the plants and if left it covers and kills the plants. We can manage it by pulling it out regularly but weeding is several hours work each week. I have planted so many things in the front beds but without watering and mulching they die. Even drought tolerant plants need watering until they are established. It would be good to maybe grow some fruit or vegetables - salad in pots, blackberries, raspberries, the list is endless - but they would need looking after.

So this is a plea for ideas, inspiration and volunteers! We can teach gardening skills and if we could spread the tasks among enough people it would not be so difficult. Please contact Jill Willis, Lee and Elaine Slatter or Shelia Card if you have any ideas, suggestions or would like to volunteer to help. Contact Dan in the church office for our contact details or pop round on a Saturday morning!

**Jill Willis**

**'Lord teach us to pray' (Luke 11:1b)**



*[The blue, symbolic River of Prayer flowing onwards from the Font, in Newcastle Anglican Cathedral, linked to the Memorial Candles in Coventry Cathedral reflecting that prayer is a lifelong experience.]*

A few Sundays ago, a member of the congregation at Trinity said it was all very well talking about praying but how should we pray? They rightly suggested that we had not had any teaching sermon on prayer for a very long time. That set me thinking.

Whilst on holiday in Northumberland at the end of July, Dan and I visited Newcastle Roman Catholic Cathedral. It was a lovely experience, so calm and quiet with the light streaming through three modern stained-glass windows reflecting on the floor; just as our window does at Trinity, it reminded me of some words from the book of Psalms: *'Be still, and know that I am God!'* (Psalm 46:10)

Having lit two candles, we sat in silent contemplation for a while. Then spent some time browsing in the Cathedral

Bookshop and we both found helpful books for our own interests. Bearing in mind the subject at the back of my mind, I found a book on prayer. The opening few lines struck many chords with me, for the author started by saying he had never seen himself as a prayer expert and how he struggled with prayer – how to pray, what to say, how does God hear us, how much time should we spend in prayer?<sup>1</sup> Already I have found it very useful in both my private devotions and service planning. I thoroughly recommend it to you.

Returning to the question the disciples brought to Jesus, and his reply:

*"When you pray say: 'Abba God hallowed be your Name! May your reign come. Give us today tomorrow's bread. Forgive our sins, for we too forgive everyone who sins against us; and don't let us be subjected to the Test'".*  
(Luke 11:1-4 The Inclusive Bible)

We will probably recognise that this, the Lord's Prayer, is reflected in the structure of prayers in Sunday worship: Prayers of Adoration, Praise, Thanksgiving, Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness. Ok, but how about private, personal prayers – we probably use all or some elements from the above structure. However, it has taken me a lifetime to realise prayer is an ongoing conversation with my Lord and Saviour.

How did this adventure begin? My earliest memories are now over seventy years old but are still clear. We always said a simple Grace before and after meals, but it was at bedtime, when Mike, Paul and I, who shared a bedroom, were taught to pray by our parents. They were both Salvation Army Soldiers and, either together, or one of them shared these simple prayers:

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<sup>1</sup> Praying without pretence – being honest in prayer, Nick Fawcett (Kevin Mayhew Ltd 2021)

*"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon a little child. Pity my simplicity, suffer me to come to Thee; and Now the day is over, night is drawing nigh, shadows of the evening steal across the sky. Grant to little children visions bright of Thee; guard the sailors tossing on the angry sea".*

(Methodist Hymnbook 1954 – 842, 944)



Words now very dated but still remembered. Then would follow, "... *Mummy and Daddy, and a list of brothers and sisters, and close relatives...*" However, the childhood prayer I remember most, and have shared with my children and grandchildren I learnt at the 'Primary Department', Bromley Salvation Army: "*A little star peeps over the hill, the woods are quiet the birds are still, the children clasp their hands in prayer, for the love of God is everywhere*". An eternal promise. I loved to sing it to its simple tune and still do. Sadly, for a while these early prayer experiences became neglected – but not forgotten.

As my fledgling faith developed, prayer was formal, in church and at school. Then there were those few years when they got lost too. It was in my late teens that God suddenly became real again. The Holy Spirit met and challenged me – I realised my faith was something of a sham. With God's help I responded to the challenge and began to prepare to follow the call to become a Local Preacher. Prayer suddenly became very relevant and important. As I have grown in my faith, and through life experiences, I have found that prayer is an active conversation with God that involves sharing all that has happened, and is happening in my life. God wants to share my joys as well as my sorrows. The presence of the Holy Spirit is always there, encouraging, supporting, grieving and laughing with me.

I remember, a few years ago, going up to the top of a mountain range on the Swiss/French alpine border. We went up in a chair lift (which I don't enjoy but going up is better than coming down!). When it was time to go down, I agreed with the family that I would walk down and meet them for lunch at the bottom in about an hour. What an hour it proved to be! As I began to walk down the steep, rocky, but manageable path I suddenly found myself singing to God – 'How great thou art', particularly verse two: "*When through the trees and forest glades I wander and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees; when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze. Then, sings my soul, my Saviour God, to you, how great you are!*"

The hour's walk developed into an amazing walk of Praise and Thanksgiving. We shared the two hymns that Christine and I chose for our Wedding (because they could be sung in both English and German): '*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation*' and '*Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices*'. It was a truly uplifting experience.

When teaching in Clapham/Brixton I relished the half hour bus ride to and from Clapham Junction station. On the way there I would discuss with the Lord my thoughts and hopes for the day. On the way home we would share the day, its highlights and its troughs - where I could have improved my involvement - but also the successes, particularly, when a child said '*Mr Warr, now I understand*' I would celebrate that with the Lord.

We will consider praying in times of difficulty in the next issue.

*May God richly bless you all, over this holiday period. Amen.*

**Graham Warr**



## Woking People Of Faith

*Diverse Beliefs United Action*

On 12<sup>th</sup> August WPOF joined Woking Action for Peace to commemorate the dropping of nuclear bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. The ceremony, held on the Wey Navigation at Send, included floating candle-lit grapefruit skins along the canal as daylight faded.

Details of forthcoming events can be found on the WPOF website ([wpof.org.uk](http://wpof.org.uk)) and include:

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September (12pm-1pm).** Meeting at Mercia Walk in the town centre with various activities to mark International Peace Day 2023. It will be the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WPOF participation in this event and, to mark the occasion, among the activities, 60 wild flower seed packets will be handed out to children.

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October (3pm).** Last Post Inter-faith Service at Brookwood Cemetery.

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October.** Horsell Common Working Party – an annual event to clear unwanted saplings from the Common.

Plans are also in hand for another Ladies Coffee Morning following the successful event held in May.

**Daphne Lander**



**“Awoke”**  
**(From Blake Blakeana, a member of the Chinese congregation)**

To embrace democracy and liberty, which has been getting more and more challenging in Hong Kong, I decided to leave my homeland and came to the UK in May 2022. I have never imagined that I would migrate to another country at such age. With fear and excitement, I came here to begin my new life. Even though there would be a lot of difficulties and uncertainty ahead, I would never regret. I can only pray to God for His love to guide me forward.

When I landed, I stayed at my friend’s home at Godalming. Her house is very spacious, a home with luxury and comfort. She helped me a lot finding a new place to settle down. A month later, I moved in to the new flat at Woking. The process of renting was not at all easy and smooth. I had to go through all the complications regarding my renting procedures. It made me cry many times. However, God sent many angels around me. My sisters in church prayed for me and one of them helped me solve the problem of translation. Finally, rental arrangement was settled. Thank God!

UK is a very nice place to me. I like the people, the culture, the food, the life and even the weather. Everything is great here. Even there are bitterly cold winter days, I really enjoy living here. Compared with weather in Hong Kong, I would prefer fresh winter of UK to the extremely hot summer of Hong Kong. I have passed the exam ‘Life in the UK’ in April this year, and I hope I can cope with all the difficulties ahead by the grace of our Lord.

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## Let them grow together

A man went from church to church hoping to find and then join the perfect church. In the midst of his search someone was bold enough to say to him "I feel sorry for that church if ever you find it, for from the moment you join it won't be perfect anymore."

This salutary if apocryphal tale was told by Rob Gill when he preached at Trinity on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. He took as his text

Matthew 13 v30 where Jesus, speaking of the farmer confronted by weeds (or more properly tares) growing among his wheat, says to his followers "Let both grow together".



Darnel (the tares) when growing cannot easily be distinguished from wheat so removing what appears to be 'bad' may lose valuable crop.

In all of life there is good and bad to be found. It isn't always unambiguously clear which is which and we, with the partial insight of human beings, do best to leave judgement to God. Were there a perfect church it would always be less than perfect once a sinner joined it.

It was a pleasure to welcome Rob back to Trinity from his home in France to lead our service again- for the first time since before the pandemic.

## A note to contributors

It is our practice to publish each edition of TNV on the Trinity website. It is an important source of information about church life at Trinity and something we want to share with others. At the same time we recognise that some contributors may be uncomfortable for their personal details to appear on the internet in this way. We will be happy to omit names and any other personal details in any future issue if requested to do so.

## From the Editor

Thanks to all who have helped with the preparation and distribution of this issue of TNV. We are planning that the next issue will be a Christmas/Winter edition. Articles should be submitted by **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

**David Lander**

It is a little-known fact about Adam that he was a great athlete. We know this because he came first in the human race.  
*(Don't blame the editor!)*



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**“Trinity is a welcoming Church seeking to live  
in the love of God and share the message of  
Jesus Christ”**

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