

# TRINITY NEWS & VIEWS



*"Like a candle flame, flickering small in our darkness.  
Uncreated light shines through infant eyes.  
God is with us, alleluia."*

**Winter / Christmas 2022/23 Issue 59**

## A Message from Rev Sam Funnell

Dear Friends,

“So, this is Christmas” sang John Lennon and by the time you read this letter and the rest of this edition of TNV, it will almost be here....unless, of course, you’re reading this very late, after finding it beneath a pile of magazines on the sofa, which you’ve been meaning to read all through the festive season, in which case – ‘Happy New Year’!

In Advent, the season BEFORE the Christmas that’s to come, we have a variety of ways of counting down the days until the big day itself – Advent candles, Advent calendars (of all varieties, often including chocolate!) and various other family, local community and cultural traditions. ***(In preparation for our Christmas Day service, if you have any interesting ways of marking the ‘Christmas countdown’, perhaps you’d be kind enough to share them with me. I’d love to know!)***

This year, as in some previous ones, I’ve been given a gift of a downloadable on-screen Advent calendar. It’s a beautiful wintry scene, based on a rural village in Sussex (my home county) and once we get to the start of December, there will be a bauble for me to find every day, revealing a little video, game, picture display or interesting facts about this special time of the year.

At the moment, I can’t do anything but play some games that are there to keep people like me happy while we wait for December 1<sup>st</sup> to arrive and redecorate my Christmas tree whenever the mood takes me! I’m currently enjoying smashing baubles – great fun!

My Advent calendar is a gift; it's familiar in parts and new in others. Which seems to me is rather like the Christmas story and all our remembering of it – it's a *gift*, it's *familiar* and *new* at the same time.

This season of preparation that we call Advent and the Christmas that we await – are both a *gift* in the time they mark out for us as special in our Christian year. They are also all about 'The Gift' – as we mark the coming of Jesus to the world all those years ago AND anticipate the time, at the end of all time, when he will return and bring all things to fruition according to God's priorities and purposes.

It's also *familiar* but *new* at the same time. We tell the familiar story of the birth of Jesus, sing familiar carols and share in our familiar gatherings and services BUT, alongside all that is familiar, I truly believe that every year, each Advent, all Christmases have something new to offer us and call us to.

So – this is *almost* Christmas....may it be a great gift to you this year; may it feel familiar and yet new; may you hear God's voice offering you peace, and hope, and joy, and love; may you be open to the new things that God has in store for you, and through you, for others too!

Every blessing for Christmas and the New Year!

With love, *Sam x*



## Family News

**Welcome to...** Octavia Morris and Ioan Williams whose Christenings took place at Trinity on 16<sup>th</sup> October and 6<sup>th</sup> November respectively.



**Best wishes to...** Ann Dawson following her move to Southbourne (Bournemouth), and Jill Willis in her new home in Chichester – and even more good wishes as she continues to travel to and fro at weekends to be with us at Trinity. We pray that they will both settle happily in their new homes.

**Congratulations to...** Eric Bates who marked his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on 16<sup>th</sup> November and Eunice Bunting who had a very special birthday on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

Adam Phillips on gaining his Masters degree in computer science at University in Paris.

**In memoriam...** We remember in our prayers the family of Jill Pearce who died recently and give thanks to God for her long life and service at Trinity.



Each year we provide the opportunity to announce Christmas greetings to Trinity friends through TNV. This year we will be doing that via the weekly newsletter. Contact Dan in the office if you have any queries about this.

## ...and the wider Trinity family

*None of us can have failed to be aware how busy our premises are. We thought it would be of interest to ask Dan to tell us about new and existing tenants, the folk who rent or hire our premises on a regular or ad hoc basis. Dan says "For reasons that will become obvious, I've adopted a rather familiar Christmas theme..."*

On the first day of Christmas, my true love sent to me  
**A vibrant church community.**

On the second day of Christmas, my true love sent to me  
**Two forms of yoga** – Chair Yoga (Tuesday) and Yoga with Julie (Thursday)  
And a vibrant church community

On the third day of Christmas, my true love sent to me  
**Three French hens** - we don't have French lessons on site but we do host Dot Sign every week who teach sign language...  
Two forms of yoga  
And a vibrant church community

On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me  
**Four calling choirs** (as the EDI rep I can't write 'calling birds' can I!) – Epworth Choir and Woking Ladies Choir have their home with us, rehearsing on a Wednesday and Monday



respectively, Laudamus Choir and The Octavia Singers also have concerts at Trinity this Christmas.

~~Three French hens~~

Two forms of yoga

And a vibrant church community

On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me

**THE MONDAY MORNING WOMBLES!**

{If you want to know who the wombles are, ask Trevor, David Lo, and Lee, or Lok, Richard and Alan if you're from the Chinese congregation...}

Four calling choirs  
~~Three French hens~~  
Two forms of yoga  
And a vibrant church community



On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me

**Six geese a-laying** – tenuous one here, Trinity Toddler Group on a Monday morning do have story time and crafting time, so you know never know, Mother Goose, the Goose that laid the Golden Egg or Jemima Puddle Duck might well have been inspiration at one time or another...!

**THE MONDAY MORNING WOMBLES!**

Four calling choirs  
~~Three French hens~~  
Two forms of yoga  
And a vibrant church community

On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love sent to me

**Seven kids a-swimming** - The Girl Guiding Movement and the Scouting Movement both encourage young people to do fitness, sport or swimming badges so let's hear it for the uniformed groups! Guides (Monday), Beavers, Cubs and Scouts (Tuesday), and Brownies (Thursday).

Six geese a-laying  
**THE MONDAY MORNING WOMBLES!**

Four calling choirs  
~~Three French hens~~  
Two forms of yoga  
And a vibrant church community

On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me

**Eight maids a-milking** - Well, Milk & More deliver our milk so

I'm calling time on this one, but Helen B, and the Sunday morning coffee rota, as well as the Coffee and Chat (Wednesday) volunteers all pour a lot of it each week!

Seven kids a-swimming

Six geese a-laying

THE MONDAY MORNING WOMBLES!

Four calling choirs

~~Three French hens~~

Two forms of yoga

And a vibrant church community

On the ninth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me



**Nine drummers drumming** –I unashamedly built this whole article around the ability to actually cite nine drummers drumming! The School of Drumming are based with us now. They host a Monday Night Jam every week, and we're also hosting their regular Drum masterclasses!

Eight maids a-milking

Seven kids a-swimming

Six geese a-laying

THE MONDAY MORNING WOMBLES!

Four calling choirs

~~Three French hens~~

Two forms of yoga

And a vibrant church community

On the tenth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me

**Ten pipers piping** – I haven't heard bagpipes yet at the Associated Board Royal School of Music exams but have heard flutes, clarinets, brass, saxophone and bassoon, as well as voice, strings and piano...

Nine drummers drumming

Eight maids a-milking

Seven kids a-swimming

Six geese a-laying

THE MONDAY MORNING WOMBLES!

Four calling choirs

~~Three French hens~~

Two forms of yoga

And a vibrant church community

On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love sent to me **Eleven ladies (and gentleman) dancing** - Cremona School of Ballet have been based with us for many years and have expanded their classes at Trinity post pandemic. Italia Conti have visited twice this year to run their auditions. We're also hosting Woking Panto again this year for the full cast rehearsals. So lots and lots of dancing 😊

Ten pipers piping

Nine drummers drumming

Eight maids a-milking

Seven swans a-swimming

Six geese a-laying

THE MONDAY MORNING  
WOMBLES!

Four calling choirs

Three French hens

Two forms of yoga

And a vibrant church community



**Twelve Lords (and Ladies) a' Leaping** – have you seen us all on a Wednesday morning?? A very merry Christmas from Dan, Hugh, Emlyn, Sue, Allison, Shirley, John, Jean, David, Ruth, Samantha and Rev Sam – the (12) combined staff and leadership team x

**Daniela WS**

### **Dog Biscuits**

Alan Johnson, the then Labour Health Secretary was invited to lunch with the Queen in 2008. Discussing the event afterwards with fellow Cabinet member Paul Murphy, who had been there too, he mentioned that he had particularly enjoyed the cheese and the unusual dark biscuits. Murphy pointed out those had been for the corgis.



## Christmas and New Year at Trinity

In addition to our usual morning services and Foundry Worship we will be sharing the following special services over the Christmas period.

11 <sup>th</sup> December	Nativity Service @ 10.30am Foundry Praise Party @ 6.00pm
18 <sup>th</sup> December	Carol Service @ 5.00pm
24 <sup>th</sup> December	Christingle @ 5.00pm Midnight Communion Service @ 11.15pm
25 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Day Service @ 10.00am
1 <sup>st</sup> January	Circuit Service @ 10.30am
8 <sup>th</sup> January	Covenant Service @ 10.30am

## Trinity – embracing the future

At its meeting in September the Circuit Meeting asked the Circuit Leadership Team to facilitate a discussion with each church in the Circuit looking to ascertain how they view their current situation and way forward. Church reviews have been carried out in various guises before but the circumstances now are more specific, and more pressing. On the one hand there are clear pressures arising in respect of finance, human resources (both presbyteral and lay) and property maintenance whilst on the other we are becoming increasingly aware of the opportunities to look at new ways of worship and mission. The intention is to see how these can be harnessed to establish a sustainable future for Methodism in Wey

Valley. The responses will be collated into a report to the Circuit Meeting in March 2023.

The circumstances of each church are different. Here at Trinity the consultation helpfully comes at a time when our Leadership Team have started to look in detail at the changes and practical challenges that we face, and most importantly the opportunities that are emerging for the future. A progress report was presented to Church Council on 14<sup>th</sup> November, framed according to the four themes in 'Our Calling' – Worship, Learning & Caring, Service, Evangelism. By describing the busy and varied life of Trinity it is clear that we are a growing community, but we need to understand that this is not growth back to what the church was 15/20 years ago. Trinity is becoming a different, modern, inclusive Christian organisation, worshipping God in a variety of ways, and witnessing to the local community. The evidence from The Foundry, from Messy Fun Club, from the Chinese Congregation and from the increasing number and variety of groups and organisations who want to meet on our premises demonstrates that whilst by no means everyone is a 'Member' in the traditional Methodist sense, everyone is part of the Christian Community based in the Trinity premises. We should celebrate that so much is going so well.

Growth brings both challenges and opportunities. The challenges are largely the same as those faced in many other churches and which underlie the Circuit consultation – people, finance, property costs. And so if Trinity is to be able to establish a sustainable future and harness the opportunities for worship, mission and service that are so obviously developing, some things will need to change. The report to Church Council identified two specific initiatives in this regard: (1) the establishment of a central services resource which would expand on the current staff to provide professional support to Trinity,

those using the premises and further afield (eg. other churches in the Circuit); and (2) to continue conversations with the Chinese Church about how we can further integrate our two congregations, not only through shared activities but in terms of formal structures.

There is a long way to go and no doubt other strands to the thinking will emerge. In the meantime Church Council endorsed both these initiatives and authorised the discussions to continue. The whole church community needs to know about the work that is going on and to pray about the way forward. So this article is intended to provide an introduction which will of course be expanded upon as the work continues. If you would like to find out more in the meantime please speak to any member of the Leadership Team.

## **The Leadership Team**

### **Remembrance**

Remembrance Sunday on 13th November had an added poignancy for many this year following the death of Her Majesty the Queen. It also came at a time when there has been much turbulence in the affairs of state – for many and varied reasons. It was against this background that I was struck by these words by a journalist in one of our newspapers on Remembrance Sunday:

*"At a time when the shallowness, vanity and sheer indignity of public life is enough to make one fear for the nation's future, we need a collective ceremony to remind us that this country is more than its politicians and its hucksters, and that out there beyond the media glare the quiet but essential virtues of service and loyalty are still alive and well."* [Ed]

## Trinity Ring Carol

(A carol for Burma)

*These are the words of the carol we are using as part of our Advent Liturgy this year. It was written by Glen in 2007 to raise money for the charity Global Care and in particular their work supporting refugees on the Thai/Burma border. At the time 100 CDs were produced which were all sold, raising a good sum for the charity.*



See now the time is here, the ring is made dark night made clear

Where God entwines our lives to each enrich and banish fear  
All heaven's angels sing for central to that ring is love that  
once came down  
God's only Son, His work begun.

A flame just on its own, the first to light but not alone  
When John within the womb just jumped with joy his Saviour  
come  
All heavens angels sing to herald in a King, two babies'  
hearts as one  
Their dual work is now begun.

A second candle shines, remembers those, from our sight  
gone  
The prophets, saints and friends who rest in faith are living  
on

All heaven's angels sing in presence of their King their hope  
was not in vain  
In heaven's bright light they sing again.

Now two are joined by one, and three bright flames, they  
beckon on  
God's people, sing and pray and work together for the day  
That heaven's angels sing, to bring before the King, a  
lifelong race well run In honour of God's Holy Son.

A fourth for Mary glows, for deep within her heart she knows  
A sword will pierce her through, her baby son to die for you  
When angel voices still, as silent on that lonely hill, a mother  
and her Son  
Endured, for all, what we had done.

Now central in the ring, the one true light, the risen King  
And Christmas tells the world, that Christ is Lord and can be  
heard  
Calling His children to Him, for hearts to let him in, the  
Christmas gift is given  
The ransom paid the past forgiven

All heaven's angels sing for central to that ring is love that  
has come down  
God's only Son, His work is done.

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## Prayer Time

### Advent – A baby changes everything!

*'A child is born to us, an heir is given to us, upon whose shoulders dominion will rest. This one shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, the Strength of God, Eternal Protector, Champion of Peace. This Dominion, and his peace will grow without end – sustained with justice and fairness now and forever. The zeal of YHWH Omnipotent will accomplish it.'*  
(Isaiah 9:6-7 The Inclusive Bible)

For Mary and Joseph this promised child was a surprise – conceived in a mysterious way, born in a 'Cattle Shed;' where a group of local shepherds came to see the new born baby, accompanied by Angel hosts, and a short while later a party of Astrologers bought rare gifts. And then...

*'The Angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph with the command, "Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you otherwise. Herod is searching for the child to destroy him." Joseph got up, awakened Jesus and Mary and they left that night for Egypt.'*  
(Matthew 2:13b-14 The Inclusive Bible)

This is not the way we would have expected God's Son to be born! To a displaced couple, fleeing for their lives. However, in every respect, what happened was not uncommon then, or now.

Sadly today we tend to remember only the 'traditional Christmas story' and have largely forgotten what happened next.

Last Christmas when Dan passed the 'Big Issue' seller outside Woking Library she gave her the usual hot drink.



*The Flight to Egypt - Breamore Saxon Church, Hampshire*

Asking how things were the lady became distressed – she lived in Feltham and Woking was her nearest vacant 'Pitch'. Covid had significantly reduced her income. She had to travel in by train and pay a friend for childcare. She was distressed because she had just received a 'Notice to Quit' her accommodation and it expired on Christmas Eve. Dan found her details of local charities that might be able to help.

Shortly after Christmas Dan saw her again. She told Dan that she had been evicted on Christmas Day and had very temporary accommodation for them with a friend. Her pitch has now been taken by someone else.

Three weeks ago, as I entered Church Path, sitting against the wall was a young lady. She was noticeably pregnant and looked exhausted. When I asked, she told me she was six months pregnant. My heart bled for her and her baby, I gave her what help I could, and God's

blessing. She was so grateful, I was embarrassed. When I returned later she had gone.

This year how many approaches have you received making requests for financial support from genuine charities for their valid causes - for those who, like Joseph, Mary and Jesus were homeless, refugees and victims of violence. Also those grieving, starving, ill, lonely, sad..... the list goes on.

As much as I want to, I know I can't support them all, and will have to look carefully at what I can afford. However, as Christians there is one thing we can all do - pray. Not a token prayer but to take a time of quiet away from the hubbub and focus on prayer. In Psalm 46:10 God says - *'Be still, and know that I am God!'*

Why not use a bundle of twigs in a vase or a small branch in a pot to make a 'Christmas Prayer Tree' (*the image shows ours*) where you can hang a reminder of those requests. Put it in a visible place and at some time each day use it as a prompt to pray for a group, if not all, at a time - in the quiet. Lift them up to God, praying through Christmas and Epiphany. Perhaps also through Lent as we follow the journey of Jesus from Egypt to Nazareth, Galilee, Samaria, Jerusalem - reaching out to all who had need of him, and also to those who despised and rejected him.



We know that God, through the promptings of the Holy Spirit, will hear our prayers, and answer them, with love, in his way.





*You came as a baby Lord, as a little helpless child who relied on a human family to care for you.*

*You cried because you were hungry, because you were homeless, because you were a stranger far away from home.*

*You still cry with hunger, Lord, in the voices of the many starving; your tears still flow: for the homeless, the lonely and the forgotten; you still rely on human families to care for you.*

*So this Christmas, Lord, we pray: help us to be the kind of people who look for you in the world, and joyfully discover you as we care for one another.*

*(Carol Dixon – Candles & Conifers, Wild Goose Publications)*

This Christmas, bless us all Lord Jesus, bless us with the compassion and power of your love.

**Graham and the Trinity 'WhatsApp' Prayer Group**

## **Moving forward together – 2023 and beyond**

### **The Chinese congregation at Trinity**

The unexpected pandemic kept the Chinese congregation away from communal worship from March 2020. When worship resumed at Trinity in March 2021, a new era dawned. Following the waves of many new arrivals from Hong Kong, the congregation began to rebuild and plan for the increasing demand to help new friends to settle in their new spiritual home. God's mighty hand is working among us! It has been a time of witnessing Christian love through communication and assimilation to discern the will of God to bring growth in the church family.

The church leaders adopted an open attitude to welcome new friends to Methodist family, inviting them to participate in various ministries. In return, their devotion and dedication, professional skills and remarkable experience in church service, have enriched all dimensions of the congregation. We now are blessed with a team of pastoral workers and many dedicated volunteers, working together for the good of the church family. We have to thank God for His rich provision and the love of Trinity to support our ministry in full measure.

Since 2014, we have been invited to have representation in Trinity Church Council (non-voting), to be in touch with matters relating to Trinity ministries. The Partnership Committee with leaders from both churches have been working to promote understanding through sharing of vision, shared worship, joint services, and active co-operation in projects and activities to foster good relationships, laying a sound foundation for moving forward together. We have much pleasure in our

involvement at Church Tidy-up Day, Church Walk, Foodbank contribution, Gambia project, as well as the Wombles. The forthcoming Advent will see our serving together at the Carol service and Christingle. We look forward prayerfully to the seasons ahead for His calling to move forward together.

The following is a brief introduction to some ministries we are now working upon. Your prayer, advice and participation are most valued.

### **Sunday School**

*Pastor Cyrus Yeung would like to share her journey with us :* "The return of communal worship in May 2021 brought



a steady increase of students. Our Sunday school in time discerned the need for regeneration. In October, we had about 40 students. To meet the need of the new challenge, we launched a new curriculum with four major components:

games, hymns worship, bible message, and group sharing. Students are to join one of the three classes of their age group: Teenager (age 12-18), Young Children (age 7-11), and Kindergarten (age 2-6). By now, after a year, there are about 60 students, with very regular attendance.

We are so grateful that we witness God's love in our Sunday School ministry, as He provides such a spacious and decent place through unconditional support and generosity from Trinity. Kabin is the haven for Teenagers. Some 20 youngers are nurtured under the pastoral care of the Bible

Investigators, where Denzel, Stephe and Sue have dedicated so much time, love and care. At Main hall, Young Children can have fun in group games and concentrate on bible message at Small hall. At Lounge, the room right behind the Small hall, the newly established Kindergarten are just happily playing muppets and enjoying colouring.

We would like to render our deep appreciation to our staff and teachers, God's faithful ones who serve humbly as One in unity, with so much patience, love and dedication, singing, playing and journeying with the children. We are grateful that some parents who first came as non-Christians and eventually have become followers of Christ, having witnessed God's love to their children.

We fully realise that we are not babysitters but Christ's co-workers, who bear Christ's mission to share the good news and lead all people, children and adults, to Jesus Christ. May God bless His work and guide His faithful servants to co-work with Him to extend His kingdom, making way for His coming again. Amen."

## **Elders Fellowship**



We have a number of elders in the congregation. To cater for their special need, we have launched the Elders Fellowship in

October. This monthly meeting has a remarkable start, attracting Chinese elders in Woking and the neighbouring area. This is the only group serving Cantonese speaking Chinese elders, with programmes pertaining to their aspirations, such as, health care, recreation, learning, sharing, and refreshment. The effective functioning of the Fellowship depends on active participation of the elders, and also ardent support of the younger ones in organization and preparation. We trust God will make it a good opportunity to witness His love and bring the gospel to those who are still searching.

### **Seekers Fellowship**



Seekers Fellowship first started as a group to gather new friends together over tea and chat to have sharing of their encounter in their new home and introduce Christ as a friend and saviour. In time, the group attracted more friends, both seekers and believers. Snacks become more appealing, mostly homemade. Themes have been

designed by leaders to cover essential elements of gospel and spiritual growth, with sharing of practical application in daily life. For the grace of God, many have their spiritual life regenerated, and some seekers have eventually cleared the mist along the path of their searching and have decided to follow Jesus.

## Wombles 2.0

As members of the church family, we are well aware of the need of maintenance and repair work of Trinity. Some of us are amazed to find out the routine maintenance work has been shouldered by the elders of Trinity, better known as Wombles, and have decided to join the team and learn from their skill, experience, and most important of all, their wisdom and unfailing love and devotion to the church family. Now on Monday morning, a dedicated team from both churches are working together to help various kinds of minor repair and maintenance work to make Trinity a better place to witness God. In time, communication and sharing help promote understanding and relationship, with amazing partnership moving forward.



## Chinese New Year 2023- Year of the Rabbit

Chinese New Year falls on Sunday 22 January 2023. According to traditional Chinese culture, Rabbit is a symbol of mercy, elegance, and beauty. People born in the year of the Rabbit are usually shy, curious, and high spirited. They are also calm and peaceful, avoid fighting or arguing and are usually artistic, enjoying good tastes in life. One Chinese proverb goes, 'Rabbit has three burrows', meaning a feeble animal needs extra havens to seek refuge from predators. Being quite low at the food chain, rabbits have to survive with good anticipation, making preparation for rainy days. Our

creator has prepared all living things essential skills for survival. Only that we human beings are too slow, if not too late, to learn the lesson. Rabbit has another role in western culture, Easter bunny. What a cute animal to be related to something so meaningful, resurrection of Christ.



***Wish you all a very prosperous Year of the Rabbit 2023.***

**Simon Che  
On behalf of Chinese Congregation**

## **Woking People of Faith**



**Woking People Of Faith**  
*Diverse Beliefs United Action*

WPOF brings together people of different faiths across

the town – and there are many for Woking is a truly multi-faith community. We have Christians, Jews, Muslims (both Shia and Sunni), Hindus, Buddhists and Baha’i. There are possibly others, but these at least are all represented on WPOF. It organises or takes part in various events through the year. Over the past year these have included an inter-faith football tournament, conversations with local faith leaders on zoom, Faiths in Harmony – an evening of music from different traditions, cooking sessions, visits to places of



worship, clearance work on Horsell Common and International Peace Day.

Interfaith Week is a national event held in November each year. Among the events suggested for local groups is to visit others' places of worship. Responding to that idea WPOF organises a 'pilgrimage walk' each year somewhere in the Borough and this year the walk was in Byfleet.

We started at Byfleet Methodist Church where there were short talks about the origins of Methodism and the Byfleet church.



This year's Pilgrims outside Byfleet Methodist Church

After that we walked to St Mary's, the Parish Church for a talk about the church and a chance to look around. The church is mentioned in the Domesday Book and has an interesting history. Then it was back to the Village Hall for an Indian meal and a talks about Hinduism, Baha'i and Islam. With so much division in society and conflicts across the world WPOF seems to have a particularly valuable role to play in bringing together people of different faiths in a spirit of mutual understanding and care. If you would like to know more about WPOF or follow up on opportunities for taking



part, please visit their website [www.wpof.org.uk](http://www.wpof.org.uk) or speak to me.

**Daphne Lander**

## **A Prayer for our Father**

*"My Father, our Father, help me understand as far as I am able, your loving care for all people of our world. Where you are is heaven, your presence brings heaven, help us to recognise and feel the aura of your heavenly presence. Your very name holds holiness. May the world be your kingdom and your unique wisdom influence all lives as we bow to you in humility. Give us the bread we need for this day; help us to remember you are our daily spiritual need. Forgive us Father for the wrongs we have committed this day, for not listening to someone who needed an ear at that moment, and other selfish actions. Thank you so much for true undeserved forgiveness that does not record our sin in anyway but gives us a clean sheet. But I need your help to forgive and forget the slights and nourished resentments I feel. Father help us feel the need and find the time to pause and look around and notice maybe, a tree full of pregnant buds preparing to give birth in the Spring to each native leaf offering Summer shade and a beautiful colour display in their Autumn dying. Help us in the pausing and wondering to release the worrying problem and see clearly our next decision. We trust that you are always with us to bring strength where needed and when we are tempted to go our own selfish and enticing route. The power and all the glory are yours – there is no-one else. Yours for ever and ever. May it be so!"*

**contributed by Peggy Boorman**

## Christmas in Ukraine

Throughout history the message of Christmas has been kept alive in war and other human disasters and no doubt that will be true of Ukraine this year. Ukraine is a largely

Christian country operating mainly in the Orthodox tradition and so even in happier times Christmas there is marked slightly differently to the pattern that we are familiar with. The Orthodox church celebrates



Christmas on 7th of January because it still uses the old Julian calendar. Also Father Christmas, or rather St Nicholas, travels on a different schedule visiting on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

The main Christmas meal, called (in English) Holy Supper is eaten on Christmas Eve (6<sup>th</sup> January). Traditionally people fast until the first star is seen, confirming that Jesus has been born. In the past the meal would have 12 dishes, to represent the 12 disciples, mainly vegetarian or fish-based. The importance of wheat in Ukraine is reflected in both the food and in decorations where a vase with ears of wheat or even a sheaf is placed in the room where the meal is served.

The tune of a well-known Ukrainian carol 'Shchedryk' has been adopted in English as 'The Carol of the bells'. In Ukrainian the title translates as 'bountiful' and tells the tale of a swallow flying into a household to proclaim the plentiful year that the family will have. For many that may sadly be too much to hope for this year, but it is certainly worth praying for.

## Christmas Missing Vowels (puzzle contributed by RBRB SPLHP)

*These words are all related to Christmas but have been written backwards and with all the vowels removed. Solution on page 30*

1. R G N M	11. Y K N D
2. Y T V T N	12. Y D H T R B
3. S D R H P H S	13. S N C N K N R F
4. M H L H T B	14. H P S J
5. D L G	15. L B T S
6. S S J	16. S L G N
7. T N V D	17. S T F G
8. Y R M	18. L T T C
9. W R T S	19. R T S
10. H R R Y M	20. R P K N N

## The right hymn for the job

Dentist	Crown him with many crowns
Meteorologist	There shall be showers of blessing
Builder	The Church's one foundation
Tailor	Holy, holy, holy
Golfer	There is a green hill far away
Politician	Standing on the promises
Optician	Open mine eyes that I may see
Astronaut	Nearer my God to thee
Fisherman	Shall we gather at the river
Historian	Tell me the old, old story

*(Nothing to do with me! [Ed])*

## Keeping Christmas

by Henry van Dyke

*Henry van Dyke was an American author, diplomat and Presbyterian minister who died in 1933. He was also the author of 'The Other Wise Man' on which the musical Artaban is based. This poem comes from a collection entitled 'The spirit of Christmas'.*

"There is a better thing than the observance of Christmas day, and that is, keeping Christmas.

Are you willing...

- to forget what you have done for other people, and to remember what other people have done for you;
- to ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world;
- to put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance, and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground;
- to see that man and women are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy;
- to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life;
- to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe, and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness.

Are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing...

- to stoop down and consider the needs and the desires of little children;

*Continued.....*

- to remember the weakness and loneliness of people who are growing old;
- to stop asking how much your friends love you, and ask yourself whether you love them enough;
- to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear in their hearts;
- to try to understand what those who live in the same house with you really want, without waiting for them to tell you;
- to trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you;
- to make a grave for your ugly thoughts and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open.

Are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing...

- to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world—
- stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death—
- and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred (*sic*) years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love?

Then you can keep Christmas.

And if you keep it for a day, why not always? But you can never keep it alone.”



*Sleigh bells ring. Come and listen*

*epworth choir*

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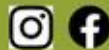


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### Missing Vowels solution

- |              |                  |               |
|--------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1. Manger    | 3. Mary          | 15. Stable    |
| 2. Nativity  | 9. Straw         | 16. Angels    |
| 3. Shepherds | 10. Myrrh        | 17. Gifts     |
| 4. Bethlehem | 11. Donkey       | 18. Cattle    |
| 5. Gold      | 12. Birthday     | 19. Star      |
| 5. Jesus     | 13. Frankincense | 20. Innkeeper |
| 7. Advent    | 14. Joseph       |               |

### 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. The next issue is planned in the Spring in time for Easter and will be edited by Jean Normington.

**David Lander**

**Articles for the Spring 2023 issue should be submitted by 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

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