

## Trinity Weekly News Sheet 13 November 2020



From the minister ...

I know I mentioned last week that it was my birthday, and I don't want to keep banging on about it but I did get a very nice present from my wife Adele. It's a new Bible – the latest 2011 edition of the NIV Study Bible, in fact.

There are quite a number of copies of the Bible kicking around our house, which we've acquired over the years. They're mainly used by people who come to our homegroup who have forgotten to bring their own copy: occasionally I have the opportunity to give one away to someone who is new to the faith (which is an awesome experience). Several of them are officially 'lost property', which have been handed in to me from various churches along the way and never claimed.

But I have pretty much used the same Bible for the last 29 years. You'll be used to seeing it, because I bring it to church with me to preach from. It's the 1990 edition of the same NIV Study Bible which I've just received for my birthday, and it was presented to me when I was accredited as a Methodist Local Preacher back in 1991. There's an official looking sticker inside the front cover to record the event.

So this bible has been pretty close to me for a long time now, and it's seen some action. Some of the pages are torn and crumpled; I've written notes in the margins, I've drawn rings around bits of scripture in pen or pencil, and highlighted some passages in vivid coloured highlighter pens. It's a big book, a Study Bible, and it has often been dropped on the floor or squashed into a guitar case – to the extent that the maps have all fallen out of the back (who needs them anyway?). In recent times I noticed that the whole binding has come away from the spine, which means that really the only thing that is holding my Bible together is the rather severe looking black leather case which it lives in – a case which I bought years ago when I was leading the worship at Cliff College in Derbyshire.

But now I have a groovy new Bible! It's essentially the same as my old one, but it's a newer and more refined translation; there are more pictures (which are now in full colour). The concordance is more comprehensive, and for the first time in a Bible that I have owned, all the words uttered by Jesus are printed in red type, which is cool. I started using it immediately.

I know what you're thinking though: what about his old Bible? All those years he's used it, it must be so special to him?

Well here's the news – it isn't special at all. No, not even with the presentation plate in the front and all the scribblings. Because the Bible is not an object of veneration. It's a material object, it's a tool. It's the living Word of God: it isn't confined to the pages of a specific tome. The worst that we can do with a Bible is to turn it into a lucky charm or a political statement. Do you remember when Donald Trump stood outside St John's Episcopal Church in Lafayette Square, Washington DC, silently holding up a Bible? I remember someone I know on Facebook remark at the time that "perhaps he should try reading it", and they're absolutely right.

There is no power or wisdom in a closed book. It's when we open the book and read the living Word of God, that the power and love are revealed. And it doesn't matter which version of the Bible it is, or whose hands it may have passed through.

As long as I have a Bible, I have the Word. But I have no emotional or spiritual attachment to the specific book that has accompanied me these last 29 years of ministry.

Some time ago I was going through some drawers in the hallway of my home, and I came across a car key. It was the spare key to a Suzuki Vitara, which I forgot to hand over when I traded in the car in 2003 and

bought a new one. There was a little surge of memory and sentimentality when I discovered it, but that was all. What good was this key to me now? What door can I open with it? I now have a new key to a better car. I now have a new and better Bible. Life is a journey – as you travel you have to keep letting things go before they over encumber you. In Luke 9:3 Jesus tells us:

*Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt.*

You see? You don't need any duplicates of anything.

In Luke 6:29 He goes even further:

*If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them.*

If you were talking to someone about Jesus and they asked you for a Bible, would you give them yours? Your special copy? Yes, the one with the presentation plate in the front? The one you've owned and read for years? Yeah ... course you would.

God bless

Ralph

PS: Can I remind everyone at Trinity who has made up shoeboxes for this year's Love in a Box appeal, that you must bring them to church to place in the foyer between 2.00pm and 3.00pm this Sunday, 15 November. This is the only time we can receive donations this year. Please bring your cash or cheque donation of £4.00 per box and place it separately in the collection box provided. Cheques should be made payable to Mustard Seed Relief Missions.

## **Circuit Staff News**

We are delighted to be able to announce that the Revd Gillian Baalham has accepted our invitation to join our Circuit team from 01 September 2021. She will have pastoral charge of Horley and Redhill churches. At present Gillian is serving in the North Bedfordshire Circuit.

The Circuit has also been accepted as an appointment suitable for a probationer Presbyter, and so hopefully this will mean that in January we will receive the name of a Probationer Presbyter who will have Pastoral oversight of Reigate Methodist Church, and work a day a week at Trinity, again from 01 September 2021.

This will also initiate a further change in how the Circuit Staff will serve the Churches and communities of the Circuit with me moving to have Pastoral charge of Trinity and St Paul's.

I would want to place on record our deep appreciation to our Circuit Stewards for the tireless work they have put into preparation of profiles, and all involved in the stationing process this year.

Please do continue to hold in prayer the families and ministers involved in stationing.

Blessings.

Melvyn Cooke

**Circuit Superintendent**

## **Just a thought ...**

Keep your face always toward the sunshine - and shadows will fall behind you.  
Walt Whitman

## Trinity Building Fund

As many of you know, our new church building was partly financed by a ten-year interest-free loan from our sister church in Redhill granted in 2013. The total amount of the loan was £450,000, which we have been paying back in annual instalments since then. We have recently paid our 2020 instalment of £45,000, and that leaves us with a balance to pay of £87,500 - £45,000 will be due in October 2021, and the final payment of £42,500 in 2022.

As ever we are grateful to all those who contribute to the Building Fund, whether on a regular or one-off basis. Inevitably, for a variety of reasons, the level of giving has dropped over the years, and as things stand at the moment payment of the last two instalments may present something of a challenge. We would welcome either one-off gifts or regular monthly payments to enable us to pay off the outstanding debt (we can settle the debt early if we have the necessary funds available), and if anyone feels they could contribute in this way, or has any queries, please get in touch with me.

Andrew B  
Building Fund Treasurer

## Rock Solid

Rock Solid on Zoom started last Sunday at 6.30pm and continues for those over 11 years old.

We expect to continue so if there are young people who would like to join send an e-mail to [rocksolid@trinitymethodist.org.uk](mailto:rocksolid@trinitymethodist.org.uk) and we will be in touch.

John S, Steven and Karen J



## Mum's The Word

Care for the Family is running a series of evening meetings for mums. These are on 17, 18 and November, from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. They say:

We believe mums are kind of a big deal. After all, at any given point in the day (or night), you could be called on to be doctor, chef, referee, chauffeur, birthday party organiser, life coach, personal stylist, entertainer, dentist, crisis negotiator, laundry service ... Talk about a CV!

So we think you've earned yourself a night off! Grab yourself a drink of your choice and a nice big tub of ice cream, put your feet up and join Katharine Hill and Cathy Madavan for an evening of fun, encouragement and fresh inspiration.

We want to recognise, affirm and celebrate your role in society. Why? Because you're worth it! Might sound cheesy, but we think it's true.

More information here - <https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/shop/online-events/mums-the-word>

## The Repair Shop

*In His kindness God called you to share in His eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus, so after you have suffered a little while, He will restore, support and strengthen you, and He will place you on a firm foundation.*

1 Peter 5:10, NLT

I enjoy watching a programme on TV called 'The Repair Shop', where people bring along their treasured, but often battered, items to be repaired and brought back to life by master craftsmen. You see the most dilapidated items being brought in, but, in the craftsman's hand, they are beautifully restored to their former glory. The process always seems to be one of stripping down, so that the restoration procedure can begin. It is painstaking and skilled work, and I'm sure it takes many hours of hidden work which we don't see on screen, stripping, repairing, replacing and reassembling, before the hidden and distorted beauty is restored.

It reminds me of what God wants to do in each one of our lives, if we give Him permission. Many of the items brought to the repair shop have been hidden away in attics and drawers for years, and the owners have had to make a conscious decision to bring them to the restorer. Some are rather fearful of what the end result will be, if they are particularly treasured items.

How much more our Heavenly Father, the master craftsman, wants us to come to Him in His repair shop with all our brokenness, our damage, and our shame which we've kept hidden away! After years of heartbreak, hurt and pain, our shattered lives may feel broken into so many pieces that we've lost all hope of ever being restored.

I have seen many items on the programme arrive in a bag of bits and fragments, and watched how they are lovingly cleaned, glued and restored. When the work is finished you cannot even see where all the damage was, and there's no trace of the ugly glue marks.

This is such a picture of how our loving Heavenly Father longs to restore us, however battered, crushed or damaged we may feel. Today, why not approach Him and give Him permission to heal any hurt and damaged places in your life and bring you back to the fullness of life that He desires for you? Perhaps you would like to pray the following prayer.

*Prayer: I thank You that You are the Master Craftsman, the One who knit me together in my mother's womb. I release myself into Your loving arms today, for Your work of restoration in my life. Amen.*

Margaret Davies worked with Ellel Ministries in Scotland for many years.  
(First published in 'Daily Devotionals from Ellel Ministries')

## Young at Hearts

It has been a real blow that our monthly Sunday outings have not been able to take place this year. We have certainly missed you all.

IF, which is a very small word meaning such a lot, the lockdown is released for Christmas Celebrations and you would like to see if Elizabeth Dickenson and I can organise an event at High Beeches, which is managing the social distancing rules very well, please let us know as soon as possible.

High Beeches has a Christmas Menu with Starters, Main Course and Dessert plus coffee/tea and mince pies for £24.25. Two courses come in at £19.95.

Please telephone Elizabeth or me with your thoughts and any questions you might have regarding this event.

Thank you ladies. Here's hoping!

Mary N

# National Day of Prayer

## Friday 13 November

The Evangelical Alliance is organising a National Day of Prayer TODAY, Friday 13 November. You can find more information here:

<http://www.eauk.org/dayofprayer>

The Evangelical Alliance says, 'As communities across the UK face further restrictions and lockdowns, as many churches are forced to stop their in-person gatherings, as suffering and loss affect so many families, we hear the call again to unite and seek God together in this time of trouble.'

There are a few details on the above link and more details will be available over the next few days, so do keep checking. Hopefully you will feel able to join this Day of Prayer on 13 November.

We are invited to incorporate listening and sharing into our daily routine. This is the suggested outline:

### Opening prayer:

*Lord, today direct my thoughts, inhabit the stillness, give power to my words. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

### Breakfast

- Pray for those in the caring and emergency services, often tired, discouraged and weary.
- Those in hospital, and those in intensive care.

### Mid-morning

- Pray for the bereaved, anxious and fearful.

### Midday

Pray The Lord's Prayer:

Reading: Matthew 6:9 – 13

### Lunchtime

- If possible, go out and move around and pray for your community, streets and local businesses.
- Those shielding or in isolation.

### Early afternoon

- Pray for the church in the UK, that we would carry the gospel, be salt and light.

### Mid-afternoon

- Pray for the poor, unemployed, homeless.
- Those with addictions.
- Those struggling with mental health issues.

### Late afternoon

- Pray for the vulnerable, children, those with disability and their carers.
- Those who are lonely.
- Those who are fearful in their home situation.

### Evening

- Pray for those in positions of power and leadership and decision makers.

### Night time

Closing prayer:

*Lord of grace, may Your goodness fall in our nations.*

*Father of love, pour out Your love on, in and through us.*

*Spirit of fellowship, build and strengthen communities across the UK.*

*Have mercy, heal our land, extend Your kingdom in our day.*

*In Jesus' name, Amen*

## Whole Life Worship: Worship and Creation

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.  
Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.  
They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.  
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.*

### **PSALM 19:1-4**

At this time, you may miss singing with others in church, but the Bible is clear that humans are not the only part of creation able to praise God. The very air around us, and the sky with its sunsets and magnificent clouds declare the goodness of God.

What we already know from Scripture, scientists are discovering today. A recent study reported that 'a regular dose of childlike wonder, achieved by taking a weekly 'awe walk', can help maintain a healthy mind' (*The Times*, 22 September 2020).

What is 'awe' and 'wonder' if not worship? God's created world evokes that awe in us, moves us to wonder. As Paul tells us, 'since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made' (Romans 1:20).

In these strange times of Christians being scattered, with limited gatherings, could we rediscover the natural cathedral of God's creation? As the worship band or choir can't gather to sing, perhaps we could 'listen' to the skies instead?

Gary Thomas, confessing to encountering God better outdoors, writes: 'I'd give up the artificial glare of a backlit video screen for the sun's light peeking over a hill any day. I'd much rather hear the sound of a strong wind racing over the earth than the clank of the heater kicking on in the middle of a sermon. When we lock ourselves inside, we leave part of God's creation, and therefore part of our understanding, outside' (*Sacred Pathways*, page 45).

The traditional 'indoor spirituality' of church has distanced us from the natural 'outdoor spirituality' we see in the Bible. Do we only expect to encounter God during short moments in specific buildings, rather than the everyday experiences of garden, park, and footpath? If we expand our view of God to see His involvement in the changing seasons, the grandeur of star constellations, and the minute detail of the bacteria living in our soil, we may start to bridge the gap between what we consider sacred and what we tend to think of as secular.

Worshipping in God's creation might also change our attitude towards the planet. Just as no healthy Christian would trash their church building, so the outdoor worshipper will experience a newfound respect for treading lightly on the earth.

How could you encounter God through His creation today?

Sam and Sara Hargreaves  
(First published by LICC in their 'Word for the Week' thread)

### **Just a thought ...**

Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile,  
but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy.  
Thich Nhat Hanh

## Notes from a Scandinavian Correspondent - Summer 2020

### Episode 8 - Shopping and Sky Gazing



The end of the summer sees sales in shops, great for modern designed products and I speak of quality durable items, rather than transitory 'must haves'. Sometimes these sales have been a great source of family Christmas presents. Families also have garage sales and there are, maybe emporium is the right word, enterprises, where individuals or charities occupy a disused warehouse or showroom to sell items, giving an opportunity to recycle the old, or even sell that brand new present which you never really wanted ...

Whilst walking around the harbour in Hejls, we found a small second hand/recycle store, based around the long obsolete village blacksmith. The workshop was 'modernised' in the late 1800s! The joy of the building is that you can still see the belt drive system, which ran from an early electric motor, to power the bellows and operate hammers in the forge.

Of an evening, from our cottage, we can see two major land masses separated by a large area of water. There are constantly changing clouds over the sea and land, at different heights, ceaselessly moving and changing colour in the sunset, colour, which is then reflected in the sea. Everything silently moving, so peaceful, continuing towards the final sunset and the nighttime darkness ... when you might be able to see millions of stars!

I am told there is less friction for clouds over the water, which is why there is a difference in the speed of clouds travelling and which then helps create absolutely stunning and perpetually flowing skies, both at the start and the end of the day ... perhaps one of God's eternal gifts given to us to enjoy.



One Monday afternoon we drove to Vejen, cross country to the middle of Jutland. It was a little like driving in 1960s UK, hardly any vehicles around, although in fact there is a busy east-west motorway close by. This town, in fact most towns, had free parking, MSDC take note.



However, you do need to set a parking disc ... I have only once been caught out! Never again! This small town had an art gallery with a brilliant fountain, sadly the gallery is closed on Mondays. In one of my favourite shops, I found some Alvar Aalto items to add to another family member's collection of Finnish pottery, but not until Christmas! Most Danish shops wrap purchases intended as gifts ... a small, delightful and practical service at no cost. Alvar Aalto, Arne Jacobsen and a number of other Scandinavian designers, have the label of 'furniture architect' - in fact, they

designed many things from domestic cutlery to hospitals and even St Catherine's College in Oxford in addition to the now famous classical 'mid-century' furniture from Scandinavia.

Some journeys were on motorways with a speed limit of 130 kph, about 80 mph. Although often only a two lane carriageway, this is not a problem. Every driver appears competent and driving conditions are assisted by lorries not being allowed to overtake on hills between 7.00am and 6.00pm.

When travelling abroad I always tune the car radio to local classical radio stations. All the Nordic nations have good classical music traditions and radio stations similar to Radio 3. Today I chance upon a transcription of Stravinsky's Petrushka, sounding as though scored for organ, and accordion. This was variations on a theme, coming from North German radio, sounding to my ear very French ... it all adds to the international feel of our holiday.

## Home Thoughts 30 High Flight

*Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;  
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth  
Of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred things  
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and swung  
High in the sunlit silence; hovering there,  
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
My eager craft through footless halls of air ...*

I was reminded of this poem, written by a nineteen year old RAFC pilot, and read at the Remembrance Day Service in the Royal Albert Hall. Perhaps it speaks of the freedom birds feel flying high above us. As I write this article, the azure blue sky sets off the golden leaves of a silver birch swaying and dancing, moving with the fluffy white clouds in a gentle breeze. In lockdown we might not be free to roam but the great Winter bird migration continues. The air is full of wings. As we wandered over fields and footpaths, we were struck by the masses of gulls, corvids, pigeons and starlings - as well as small birds - swirling above us. I think I saw a kestrel back on the branch of the pine tree where they perched last Spring and Summer, but it flew off before I could get my binoculars to check. I live in hope. Arriving at Polesden Lacey, there was no doubt that a kestrel flew across in front of me and perched on a telegraph pole, its chestnut back gleaming in the sunshine.

We walked through avenues of beech, birch, oak and other trees - it was as if we were looking down a colourful tunnel of scarlet, russet, gold, green and silver/brown as the dappled sunlight caught the tumbling leaves and tree trunks. A buzzard wheeled high above, a blue-grey sparrowhawk dashed low across an open field preparing to ambush prey. In an old orchard we disturbed a green woodpecker, probing for ants and beetle larvae, and magpies no doubt feeding on fallen apples. Under the hedge a dunnock fluted and shuffled among the leaves. Fieldfares, a stocky thrush with grey head, heavily spotted below, and a hunger for berries and windfall fruits perched in the trees, announcing their arrival with a distinctive 'chacka-chack-chacka' sound. In the woodland were several goblet shaped cream fungi, some dark brown fungus and a large rubbery bracket fungus common name - Poor Man's Beefsteak. We sat on a log to eat our lunch, being careful not to destroy some charming, tiny brown fungi clinging to the sides.



Not all November mornings are bright and clear. As I drove to meet a friend at Chartwell, woolly sheep huddled under the dripping trees as a blanket of mist swirled round. A skein of geese honked their way overhead in that characteristic 'vee' formation. A friend sent me a picture of a female mallard sitting on eggs just outside her lounge window. It will be interesting to see if she hatches a brood so late in the season. I am still seeing buff-tailed bumblebees and honey bees in the garden. I keep looking out for yellow brimstone butterflies sheltering in ivy or brambles; the comma mimics dead leaves; large tortoiseshells, small tortoiseshells and peacock butterflies prefer holes, hollows and buildings. I have seen several bats, probably pipistrelles, flying round in the evening light and I hope to see an owl as I walk back across the fields. At this time of year I occasionally see a tiny goldcrest poking about in the holly branches next to a pine tree. Each Autumn our breeding population is swollen by large numbers arriving from Scandinavia - they are one of nature's long-distance travellers.

On a fine, bright evening I walked to Hedgecourt Lake hoping to see a murmuration of starlings and as the sun dropped low over the water we were not disappointed. They performed brilliantly - weaving and twisting, rising and falling, swirling round and, as their numbers increased, diving into the reeds, which became alive with murmuring sounds. I spotted eight pochard over the far side of the Lake and as, I hurried back home, there was a magnificent dog fox with a bushy tail, making his way in a leisurely fashion round the back of one of the houses in Mill Lane. At Weirwood Reservoir we were fortunate to see eight

mandarin ducks, but no gadwall. Canada and greylag geese, eight great crested grebe, families of coot and mallard enjoyed the quiet of the evening as mist crept like a blanket across the water, softening reflections of the trees which ring the Reservoir and provide cover for so many birds and other creatures. By the feeders I spotted a wren and a robin searching for their evening meal, while assorted blue and great tits, long tailed tits, chaffinch and greenfinches made short work of the seeds and nuts provided. Suddenly a marsh tit flew in to enjoy the feast. Wonderful!

Dandelion, meadow buttercup, meadow vetchling, daisies, groundsel and shepherd's purse are still blooming. Dahlias, roses, salvias, sedums and a few delphiniums brighten our days. Fatsia japonica, a Japanese relation of the ivy, with large, glossy hand-shaped evergreen leaves and bearing a multiple head of creamy flowers is a magnet for many insects and provides a welcome source of nectar. Walking in the Sussex countryside with a friend, we passed a mediaeval Manor house and there on a high, decorated chimney stack sat a majestic buzzard – lord of all he surveyed. From a nearby field another buzzard soared up into the trees. The hedges were 'alive' with the sounds of sparrows and tits making short work of the remaining berries. I found a lily beetle, attempting to overwinter, hiding on a lily stem. Ladybirds and other small insects continue to secrete themselves in the raspberry canes and I try to leave 'untidy' areas in the garden, as well as a patch of nettles and brambles which will provide cover for them during the Winter chill.



*Up, up the long, delirious burning blue  
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace  
Where never lark, or even eagle ever flew -  
And, while with silent lifting mind I've trod  
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.  
'High Flight' - John Gillespie Magee*

Joan B

### **Some thoughts on friendship ...**

Some friends are like the wind, some are like mountains.  
They come in and breeze out of your life, or they are there for a lifetime.

My best friends are like fairy tales,  
they've been there since once upon a time and will be there until forever after.

A best friend is like a four leaf clover, hard to find, lucky to have.

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