

## Trinity Weekly News Sheet 30 October 2020



From the minister ...

Okay, so I'm going to talk a little about something that I have never mentioned before, especially from a pulpit. That thing is Hallowe'en.

Hallowe'en is this Saturday, 31 October, and even with the Coronavirus pandemic I bet there are some people who will be taking their children out 'trick or treating'. Christians react to Hallowe'en in a variety of ways – some of us put notices in our windows asking trick-or-treaters not to call (sometimes mentioning that the reason for this is that Christians live here). Some churches organise Light Parties or such like: parties for children at church where Hallowe'en style fancy dress is banned, and all of the focus is on Jesus.

I used to do this very thing in my earlier years as a minister and youth worker. It seemed like a good way of responding to the celebrations of Satan and all his demons. But then my attitude changed. I was running a highly successful Christian youth event that met monthly in local schools throughout the year – it was very popular and used to attract audiences of 200 – 300 each time. Word spread across the local area and I ended up doing it (along with a team of helpers from local churches) across four different schools. So it was happening somewhere every week, and as a result we used to share the Gospel with around 1,000 young people per month. The project lasted for ten years – it was quite a thing.

Anyway, early on in the project Hallowe'en loomed on the horizon and I went to talk to the head of one of the schools which was involved in hosting my youth event. This headteacher was an evangelical Christian, so I asked him if he'd like me to do a special version of my event for Hallowe'en, in the form of a Light Party.

"I'd rather not" he said. I was surprised; but he went on to explain that after many years as a Christian in education he had come to the conclusion that alternative Christian Hallowe'en parties only served to draw further attention to the actual Hallowe'en. "Plus," he said, "If we have such an event in school then half the kids will turn up dressed as demons and witches anyway." He had a point.

"I just ignore Hallowe'en completely," he told me. "I simply never mention it – I banish it completely from the life of my school and don't give the Devil a chance to have any influence."

I was convicted by the wisdom of this approach. And I've never done another Light Party as a result. If you go around telling everybody that something is evil and wrong and they should have nothing to do with it, human nature (especially amongst the young and impressionable) makes them want to know all about it and get involved in it. Satan himself is of course behind this as well, it isn't all human nature – what a gift Hallowe'en is to him! He doesn't even have to try tempting us – there is a multi-million pound industry set up to do his work for him!

If we set up an event in opposition to Hallowe'en, it only serves to remind everybody that there is something else going on which the Christians are apparently trying to suppress, which immediately becomes attractive. "Why don't they want us to celebrate Hallowe'en?" they say. "Could there actually be something in it?"

Well, as a quick trip to Wikipedia will tell you, the history of Hallowe'en is tied up with Christianity anyway. Historically Christians have celebrated All Saints Day on 01 November (which this year does actually fall on a Sunday): and on the previous evening (All Hallows Eve) churches would hold services of vigil for the souls of the departed saints. Over time this was hijacked by superstitious beliefs and became more of a celebration of the dead than anything else, giving birth to Hallowe'en as we know it in modern times. So basically it's something that has been nicked from the Christians and turned to the dark side.

But here's the kicker: what are 'Saints' anyway? They are dead people who have been venerated by the Church. The rules of the Church state that in order to be made a Saint you have to have been dead for at least five years even for the process to begin.

When I lived in Lincoln I sometimes used to go to choral evensong in the amazing cathedral in the city. The intercessions were very strange – we used to pray for 'the Saints' who had died on that day throughout history. Sometimes I recall that we used to pray for people who had fallen to their deaths from the roof of the cathedral as they were working on building it in the 12th century! I mean, *isn't it a bit late for that now?*

Why do we need to pray for the dead? They have passed from this life into eternity. We should devote our time to praying for the living. There is no prayer that you can make for someone who has already left this world that will have any effect on the fate of their soul in eternity. Even at funerals we don't pray for the deceased person – we pray for those who are grieving their loss.

The real problem comes when we start venerating dead people and praying to them instead of to God. I'm not suggesting that any of you do this, but it is important to realise that the Bible specifically warns against attempting to contact the spirits of dead people.

There are around twenty references in my NIV Bible to the word 'Saint'. When I looked them up, every instance referred to people who were currently alive, not dead. In the latest edition of the NIV the word 'Saint' does not appear at all in the entire Bible! In every case it is translated more accurately as 'God's People'. Saints is a word used to refer to the body of believers alive in the world today; who are doing their best, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to resist the temptations of the Evil One and live a life of faith and integrity, sanctified by the blood of Jesus. So when, in the Creed, we refer to the 'Communion of Saints', we are referring to ourselves and all our brothers and sisters. If you belong to Jesus, you are a Saint! Because Jesus has officially declared you as such! Wow, what an honour.

So let's pray for the Saints, all of those people in our church family both at our home church and at every church across the world. In 2020, we need those prayers as much as we ever did.

God bless

Ralph

## Eleanor Wickens

Eleanor will be 100 years old tomorrow, 31 October.

Eleanor was christened in the church in London Road (where WH Smiths store is now) and has been part of Trinity for all her hundred years! We are pleased to have been able to send her a birthday card from all of us at Trinity with pictures of all three church buildings on it (skilfully produced by David Browning).

Have a wonderful day, Eleanor. With love and congratulations from all your friends at Trinity Methodist Church.



## Preachers at Trinity for October

(\* - Holy Communion)

01 November	9.00am - Mrs Helen Greaves	10.45am - Facebook Live Mrs Helen Greaves
08 November <b>Remembrance Sunday</b>	9.00am - Mrs Pat Oakley	10.45am - Facebook Live Rev Ralph Ward
15 November	9.00am - Rev Ralph Ward *	10.45am - Facebook Live Rev Ralph Ward

Please Note: Government restrictions mean we are required to limit numbers for the 9.00am service. If you would like to attend please let Ralph Ward or Pat Oakley know in advance.

### Remembrance Sunday

This year Remembrance Sunday falls on 08 November. I will be leading the 9.00am service that morning. If you have anyone you would like to remember on that day, or have any special prayers you would like used in that service, please send them to me by Thursday 05 November so they can be included on Sunday morning. I am also planning to light candles on your behalf in remembrance of loved ones.

Pat Oakley

### Random Saturdays

My colleagues at Ship Street Surgery, where I work as a Care Coordinator each weekday morning from 9.00am to 1.00pm, always like to know that I have done on a Saturday. Over the last few months I have been able to share some very different things from the normal and for some reason God has been prompting me recently to do share with you as well.

After months on not being able to meeting socially it was lovely back in September to meet up with the East Grinstead Town Action Group, commonly known at the 'Tag New' for a general meeting in St Mary's car park in the sunshine. After an hour or so we split up in groups of two and three and went off and did a litter pick in the surrounding area.

All ten of us were expecting to come back with loads of rubbish after the lockdown, but much to our surprise there was hardly any. I was on the London Road area down to Felbridge, which usually gets rubbish from the town's take-away places.

The next new thing was helping with the Harvest bags which were prepared under social distancing guidelines in Rachael's kitchen. There were three of us working well together and a job which I presumed would take all the morning was done in a couple of hours and we had time to have a cuppa afterwards too.

I took my Harvest Bags out to my list during Sunday lunch time thinking that it would not take very long, but I had such a lovely time catching up with people I had not seen for such a long while and admiring someone's home that I had never visited before.

When I tell my colleagues that I am doing a Street Pastors Patrol as well their ears really pick up and I get all sorts of questions about how are we doing it and keeping to the rules of social distancing etc. I have such

joy telling that we have our uniforms and I wear a head mask, as well as my cap. If and when we have to get close to people then we wear additional masks and also gloves, plus there is no hugging.

It is different and so far it has been working and I am praying that we will be able to keep patrolling at least once a month until Christmas/New Year time.

I honestly feel we are making a difference and people are appreciative of what we do. God has made me realise it's not about how many we speak too, but whose lives we are going to touch each time that we go out on patrol. This of course should be applying to each one of us each time we go out of the front door.

I have done all the above since September plus manging to keep up with the garden, family and all my lovely friends.

Be happy in God and enjoy what He will have you doing in the coming months. So looking forward to the next thing that is a bit random!

Mary N

## Christmas Day Lunch for 2020 in the Welcome Cafe

I am deeply sorry to have to inform you all that we are not able to hold our annual Christmas Day lunch in the Welcome Café this year due to Covid-19 and Methodist Church restrictions on the use of our buildings.

However, not one to be beaten, I am turning my thoughts now to an alternative idea, but at the moment someone from Jubilee Church, possibly someone from Age UK and I are not able to meet because of holidays. Therefore please pray that between us those 'guests' who would normally be with us on that special day will know we care for them and we will do everything we can to give them a special meal on the Saviour's Day.

Please keep a look out here and I will keep you posted on our discussions. I should perhaps mention that we have three car drivers already, so all things are possible with God! I cannot wait to see what He will have us doing in His name. Amen.

Mary N

## East Grinstead foodbank



We need volunteers to join our foodbank session teams working at front of house - helping to set up for the session (and pack away), welcoming clients, making tea, entering data using our laptop (full training given) or chatting to clients and offering to pray with them.

If you have time to spare either on a **Monday 12.30pm - 3.15pm** (session time 1.00pm - 3.00pm), a **Wednesday 9.30am - 12.15pm** (session time 10.00am - 12.00 midday) or a **Friday 12.30pm - 3.15pm** (session time 1.00pm - 3.00pm) we would love to hear from you. We ask for a commitment of at least two sessions a month. We follow Covid-19 guidelines for the protection of all volunteers and clients. If you would like to know more please contact:

our administrator, Lucy, [admin@eastgrinstead.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:admin@eastgrinstead.foodbank.org.uk) or phone **07739 641869**

or our foodbank Manager, Mike, [info@eastgrinstead.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@eastgrinstead.foodbank.org.uk) or phone **07983 209940**

## Animal Crackers

If a turtle doesn't have a shell, is he homeless or naked?

Did you know that dolphins are so smart that within a few weeks of captivity, they can train people to stand on the very edge of the pool and throw them fish?

## The Gift of Limitations

British astronaut Tim Peake has got a new book out. *Limitless* is the autobiography of his life as a soldier, pilot, parent, and astronaut.

Stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things provide welcome flashes of good news in these stressful times. They lift our gaze from the reality of restrictions to the promise of possibilities. And they offer hope that our current circumstances don't have to be our whole story: if we work hard, take the opportunities that come our way, and refuse to listen to those who try to hold us back, we can achieve whatever we want.

This all sounds exciting, encouraging, and empowering. But it also sounds exhausting. While handing you the power to achieve your destiny, it simultaneously hands you the responsibility for it. If you fail, there's no one to blame but yourself. If you're one of the 7,999 applicants who didn't get picked for the space programme, you clearly weren't trying hard enough.

And this doesn't just affect the literal and metaphorical 'high flyers'. It affects all those who aren't top of the class, who don't get promoted, whose lockdown home-schooling attempts were a cosmic failure. If every area of life is a meritocracy, the pressure to succeed is itself limitless. In the launch event for his book, broadcast from the Science Museum last week, Tim Peake was asked about some of the challenges of returning to earth, and said one of them was having people immediately asking him 'What's next?' No achievement ever seems to be enough.

What if the truth is something different? What if our limitations are a gift, not a curse? As Jen Wilkin points out in her book *None Like Him*, only God is infinite and all-powerful. He has put limits on what we are able to do, and on what we are authorised to do, and these are for our benefit. If we were truly capable of achieving everything we set our minds to, we would have no need of other people and no need of God. To be self-sufficient is to be lonely. To be all powerful is to risk arrogance.

The possibilities and choices we in the West are offered every day – even in lockdown – are almost limitless. Instead of worshipping the false gods of options, power, and self-fulfillment, let's choose instead to recognise our limitations, thank God for them, and praise Him. For He alone is limitless.

### **Jennie Pollock**

**Is a writer and editor who lives, works, and worships in central London. Her first book, *If Only: Finding Joyful Contentment in the Face of Lack and Longing*, is out on 1 November.**

(First published by LICC in their 'Connecting with Culture' thread)

## Just a thought ... or three

The biggest difference between men and boys is the cost of their toys.

The best computer is a man,  
and it's the only one that can be mass-produced by unskilled labour.  
Wernher von Braun

I changed all my passwords to 'incorrect', so whenever I forget it will tell me  
'Your password is incorrect'.

### Notes from a Scandinavian Correspondent - Summer 2020 Episode 6 - Thunder Bolts and Lightning, Not Very Frightening ...



Another local town of note is Christiansfeld. Given a charter by a king in 1773 who recognised the group as hardworking, Moravians developed this town.

Today it has UNESCO protection. There is still their community centre and traditions maintained in the town. Their philosophy was to work to glorify God, and their community espoused many principles of social equality from the Age of Enlightenment. In the centre at the crossroads is the Honeyshop, honeycake and honey chocolates are sold, or served with coffee. These are the desserts which one photographs, as they are unique, not to say full of calories.



Further down the road is an antiques shop, we walk around, observing the normal, in fact, often quite interesting artifacts of the past, giving light to life in the past. Next door is a variation on this theme. Jette, a retired lady, but obviously not yet ready for retirement, has opened a furniture shop. Not one of the up-market top notch designer furniture stores, but one where she sells pre-loved furniture from across the past 100 years. She takes delight in restoring the wooden elements, and replacing the fabric where worn. This furniture, of Wegner, Jacobsen and Kjaerholm, for example, is heritage furniture, still expensive, valuable, because of its pedigree and well worth restoring. There is a ready market, since prices of new 'designer' furniture are astronomical. However, I have a partly threadbare twentieth century Norwegian chair, a Balans Gravity. I spot some hard wearing fabric, from one of the top Danish fabric manufacturers, Kvadrat, which has been made into large cushion covers. Jette is happy to contact the company to obtain some more. A week later we find it is no longer available. I subsequently buy the cushion covers, minus the zips, since they can be re-cycled! My rather unusual Norwegian chair will live for a few more years.

We returned to our cottage, I finally made a decision that items I'd seen in a Dutch tool shop, (probably the best tool shop ... in Holland at least) would be worth buying as Christmas presents. The price is good, and even with carriage charges, I am saving money. This action also means I can buy the research book on Dutch woodworking planes I should have bought a week or so before! Like the early Access credit card advert, the internet takes the waiting out of wanting!

This evening, it arrives. Each year, we experience one tremendous thunder storm, probably identifying the end of the summer. Often these storms are over the sea. Tonight, there are faint lightning flashes, mostly hidden by the clouds in the distance to the south over Germany, the wind from the SE, so the storm slowly being blown towards us, and a rumble of sound, like a passing aircraft. The rumbling increases, both in volume and duration. The lightning now a continuous line across the whole of the horizon, over the mainland to the south, the sea and the island way over to the east. We are separated from the storm by about eight metres of double glazing, and yet you can still see stars to the north. Lightning lights up the whole of the sky, just like a bright sunny day, repeatedly. The thunder lasting now for around 25 seconds ... and then the rain arrives, and the rain pounds the windows.

What we think is the nadir of the storm is followed by a peaceful few minutes and it is time to watch the first edition of the Sky News paper review. I suggested we had reached the end of the magic light show, and instantly on cue, is an ear shattering crack of thunder with two streaks of lightning shooting straight into the sea in front of us. The whole area around us brilliantly illuminated.

That was the end of the storm, and with Denmark being a land of farmers, they are no doubt grateful for the nitrates falling from the sky ... not that atmospheric nitrogen is the only fertiliser added to the soil.

With the end of the thunder storm, lights slowly become visible from the far shore, the edge of a weather front becomes apparent, the cloud over the sea begins to lift with the moon shining through multiple layers of clouds with a totally random, but relaxing flow of constantly changing effects and light levels.

## Home Thoughts 28 The Twilight Zone

*"The 31st of October, All Hallows' Eve, was an auspicious date, a festival half-magical, half-religious. We cracked nuts before the fire, and threw apple peel over the left shoulder, to find the initial of the one we should marry. We bobbed for apples in a pantheon of water on the kitchen table, and wet the tips of our noses as we stooped over the bowl ... All Hallows' Eve was a day to remember, as the autumn slipped out of its cloak of leaves and naked winter came to take its place."* A Day to Remember - Alison Uttley

I'm sure many of us remember enjoying some, if not all, of these. They were 'markers' on our childhood's road. What a difference a day makes. Yesterday morning was bright as I walked round the garden, the air filled with song. It was a blackbird, probably a female, singing to defend her feeding patch. As I drove into the drive, returning from another brilliant trip to RHS Garden Wisley, I was serenaded by a blackbird singing from his song post high in an ash tree overhanging our garden, creating a sweet-sounding rumpus. Soon hedgehogs will be hibernating but now they are out feeding on earthworms, slugs, meaty morsels, fattening up so they will survive the Winter. This is also true of badgers. I am thoroughly enjoying Autumn Watch on BBC2, particularly the shots from infrared cameras, of badgers outside their sett, scratching, play-fighting and foraging for food.



Squirrels, nature's acrobats, are also feeding up against the chill of Winter, so is the hazel dormouse. These shy nocturnal creatures, with prehensile feet and tails, live in the woodland canopy and eat flowers, nectar, caterpillars, hedgerow fruits and green hazelnuts. They sleep from October to April in woven nests at ground level. Some years ago there was a thick, tall hedge of hazel and holly bordering our garden and Peter found signs of hazel dormouse activity - nibbled hazel nuts. We could find no definite signs of recent occupants, so developers grubbed out much of the old hedge and with it any dormice that may have been living there.

I have observed that there is much more activity from garden birds on a sunny, bright day than a dull, rainy, miserable day like this! Sensibly, they are keeping their heads down and not wasting energy flying round, or even visiting the feeders and bird bath. In the sunshine, earlier in the week, three blackbirds were 'at war' on the lawn probing for grubs and worms; a green woodpecker joined them - that didn't go down well; two nuthatches; chaffinch; greenfinches; assorted tits, including eight long-tails and coal tits; two robins and a dunnock occupied the feeders. Underneath collared doves and pigeons cleared up the spillage on the lawn. Looking out of the kitchen window I was delighted to see a tiny wren poking about beside and on top of the pots of Winter pansies.

Magpies shouted a warning as my friend and I walked round woodland at Wisley and parakeets flew overhead. A striking cock pheasant stalked across the lawns. From the cafe we watched enchanted as a pied wagtail searched for crumbs near the tables outside and later, as we walked around, we had to avoid stepping too near. Long-tailed tits zoomed around. Beech and birch trees had turned bright yellow among the brown, shrivelled leaves on oaks and littering the woodland floor; larches waved delicate fronds of ochre and bronze in the dazzle-stream of pale sunlight as we entered the hide and watched the birds swinging on feeders over the silver river.

Many unusual fungi had erupted in the woodland, like the bay bolete - a chunky mushroom under beech or oak trees and a tufted medium-sized species with a deep yellow cap and covered in dark brown scales under a stately

beech tree. Fungi are everywhere but they are easy to miss. They are inside us, around us, sustaining all we depend on ... eating rock, making soil, digesting pollutants, nourishing and killing plants, surviving in space, inducing visions, producing food, making medicine, manipulating animal behaviour and influencing the composition of the earth's atmosphere. Yet they live their lives largely hidden from view. The more we learn about fungi, the less our world makes sense without them.

I noticed a red admiral butterfly imbibing nectar on the ivy blossom and I'm keeping an eye open for any small tortoiseshell butterflies, beautiful orange wings dappled with black and blue spots, or peacock butterflies, which enjoy hibernating behind curtains, picture frames, bookshelves in warm but not too warm rooms. If they 'wake up' due to the warmth, persuade them to relocate to a garden shed or garage. Bumblebees, common carder-bees and honey bees are still at work. At Weirwood Reservoir, I've seen a couple of common darters, the dragonflies of Autumn. One of our hardiest species, they can remain active throughout November and into December. Males are bright red-orange, females are ochre and become rust-coloured like Autumn leaves as they age. Common darters mate at lakes, canals, pools and even garden ponds laying their eggs straight into the water. Those laid in early Autumn often hatch after two weeks; from October onwards eggs hatch in the following Spring.

In Sheffield Park NT Garden, crowds of lovely colchicum autumnale, sometimes called meadow saffron, bore goblets of pinkish-purple flowers on pale stalks. Nearby pools of white, pink and purple cyclamen spilled out under the trees. Brilliant acer palmatum, Japanese maple, wearing lime green, gold, bronze and scarlet stood alongside liquidambar styraciflua, sweet gum from North and Central America, in darker bronze, maroon and purple. This garden is famous for its collection of Nysa sylvatica with 400 of the trees raised from seed gathered from all round the world by Arthur Soames. So many wonderful trees set in a stunning landscape. As we walked, a kestrel flew by and later a buzzard 'mewed' above our heads.

There were eight or ten pochard at Hedgecourt Lake when I last visited. Pochard breed here, mainly on lakes and reservoirs in the east of England and Northern Ireland's loughs, but they are primarily Winter visitors. I hope our smart Pochard with red-brown heads will stay with us. They move around on the Lake but seem to loiter near families of coot by the reed beds. Several great crested grebe dive and catch good numbers of fish, the young grebe are losing their stripy heads and now fish for themselves. The swans are a delight and have decided that anyone near the Lake must be about to feed them with bread or wild bird seed.

At Weirwood Reservoir two gadwall duck were perched on branches over on the far side. If it ever stops raining the sandbanks should reappear and then waders will return. This week I have seen neither a kingfisher or a grey wagtail. I live in hope and expectation. On a fine, bright evening I witnessed a marvellous murmuration of starlings. As dusk approaches clouds of starlings gather in flocks over Hedgecourt Lake, swirling and twirling, changing direction with an unmistakable sound of rushing wings, eventually swooping into the reed beds. But they seem to prefer the reeds over the other side of the Lake! They also 'perform' over the reed beds near Weirwood Reservoir. Let's enjoy Autumn - Winter will come and go. Spring will appear ...

*Down through the ancient Strand  
The spirit of October, mild and boon  
And sauntering, takes his way  
This golden end of afternoon,  
As though the corn stood yellow in all the land,  
And the ripe apples dropped in the harvest moon.  
'Autumn in the City' - WE Henley*

Joan Bateman

**Trinity Methodist Church East Grinstead RH19 2HA**

OUR VISION IS TO KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE CHRIST KNOWN

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