

Holy Trinity Geneva Magazine



Worship in isolation – streams of living water.....

*Pray as you can, and do not
try to pray as you can't*

John Chapman – English
Benedictine monk

Earlier visits to Christ Church Lausanne as locum chaplain, in 2017 and 2018 had brought us briefly into contact with Holy Trinity, Geneva. The Archdeaconry Choir Festival and a stimulating seminar, led by Clare Amos, on women in the gospels, gave us a taste of the vibrant community between the station and the lake. Imagine our delight when the invitation came to come for three months during the interregnum. We were excited by the richness and variety of the chaplaincy, its music and its ministry to the people of the city.

COVID-19, however, changed all that and we are here, at home, like everyone else! Our disappointment is nothing compared to the great problems many places have had to endure.

It has been a privilege and a joy, however, to fill the gap, at least on Sunday, as I stream from the confines of the study to Geneva. We returned, virtually, to Lausanne and are similarly present in Lisbon in August and September, with a return planned to Holy Trinity in October.

This new liturgical life has presented the church with options and challenges. The church could not let things languish in inactivity and there was a very steep curve, both in discerning what was the 'right' approach and then in developing a way to do it. Some clergy were most uncomfortable with any idea of a streamed service. Others, for good reason, determined that celebration of the Eucharist was not appropriate in these circumstances where services of the Word took the place of Holy Communion. In some places, live or recorded services are streamed to 'congregants' in their homes.

The leadership at Holy Trinity, Geneva developed online services where the Eucharist could be celebrated following a strong desire to see the pattern and rhythm of regular worship maintained, albeit differently. Accepting the invitation to be a part of their ministry, even from afar, I inherited an established pattern and set out to find a way to create sacred space in a corner of our home which might bring something of its own

tradition and practice. It seemed right to improvise a church setting, which the congregation has valued.

Zoom had been the chosen software. I was, frankly, apprehensive and wondered how we might be able to create a sense of prayerfulness, of dignity, reverence and a necessary 'togetherness'. Nothing could have succeeded without the courageous inventiveness of many people. The determination of so many to make this work is testament to the gifts, organizational, technical, liturgical and musical, of the community. The very strong music ministry has been sustained both instrumentally and with a 'virtual choir'. This collaborative effort illustrates amply how liturgy truly is the work of the people!

And my apprehension has vanished, due largely to two things. ./.

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First, I have become conscious that it is not Zoom, FaceTime or WhatsApp that mediates the grace of God in worship. It is the presence of God's very self, beyond and above the hard reality of the technology, especially when there are practical problems. My concern lay in the apparent inability of a priest to connect with a congregation at so great a distance and by electronic means. The human touch, the warmth of contact at the practice sessions have been a rich lesson in how the human spirit, by the grace of God, can rise above all that might stand in its way.

Second, my initial reluctance to use Zoom (clunky, mechanical, the strange context of people's kitchens or bookcases) has been lost in the intimacy it permits, of people being together, gathered, even when they are not. As outsiders, we have been made very welcome and are grateful for the contact members of HTC have made. There are now familiar faces, voices that have given richness to the experience, far warmer than the prospect of us interacting with the cold reality of an iPad tied to a music stand.

It is stimulating to work with Alan and Clare Amos, themselves playing 'away from home'. Alan officiated at the early services established for the pandemic and I cannot say who led the charge in developing the model I have followed, but I suspect it was a remarkable team effort. Julia and Jo have made a splendid team, ever helpful with swift and gracious emails. Ben and Aylwin manage the production admirably. Without giving away too many backstage

secrets, I fear worshippers will not know the intricate patterns of communication needed to hold it all together, before and during the streamed services. And Mary Talbot, whose dexterity is remarkable, covers gaps, issues gentle reminders and encourages throughout!

To the musicians must go a huge thank you. Clearly, there are hours of work in the preparation and co-ordination of the virtual choirs and instrumentalists who enrich the liturgy so beautifully. I stand in constant admiration of your extraordinary work, especially that of Mark Charles.



Revd. Chris Welsh leading Sunday worship

The theology of remote worship and the liturgical implications have given rise to interesting discussions around the Anglican community. Some say the Eucharist cannot be celebrated without being together. Others feel strongly that the idea of Spiritual Communion 'works', that the inward and spiritual grace of the sacrament can be shared even if the outward and spiritual sign is not. And other services, Evensong, Compline and so on, remind us of the richness of Anglican liturgical form beyond sacramental worship.

Clare and Alan developed a more modern version of the Prayer for an Act of Spiritual Communion, which worshippers can use. Certainly, there is no sense of the elements being consecrated at great distance for people to consume at home! This prayer, a reminder that the sacrament is a signification of what God already does, is reproduced at the end of this piece, along with a poem, written by Alan.

This has been, and remains, a humbling experience. In all our ministry, we are given opportunities to create worship to fit the needs of those who are gathered with us. My wife Deborah has been an excellent congregation and practical support, enabling us to take the sacrament on behalf of all gathered together yet far apart.

There have been some moments of technical collapse, mainly internet dropouts, which people have accepted graciously as an unavoidable reality. Even these have offered their own lesson. In a recent sermon, I said: *We have had some internet dropouts trying to stream services. But the grace of God does not drop out. The connections are firm and uninterrupted. It is we who are susceptible to failure and broken connection.*

As a school chaplain, I found the greatest challenge was to lead Chapel every week for a couple of hundred children in Prep to Year 2. I called it 'God's Playschool' and used all sorts of theatrical devices to create accessible (and age-appropriate) sacred space for the little ones, most of whom had no church

literacy at all. There was little overtly neo-Cranmerian about it, but I somehow feel that Cranmer would appreciate an attempt to create worship in the idiom of those gathered.

In this remote worship, I have been similarly challenged to respond to whatever it can mean to be a member of the Body of Christ, to recognize that the orthodoxies of our tradition must faithfully serve the needs of the people and so nourish them.

And I continue to reflect upon how this may affect our thought and practice when the pandemic is past. In many places, as some sort of communal worship returns, churches continue to offer worship online for those who cannot gather or to accommodate restrictions on numbers. Yet, in all the discussions, it seems what is missing most from the life of the faithful is the ability to be together, sharing in the sacrament of unity. We have been enriched by being with you; but we would much prefer to have been there in person. As Christian worship continues to evolve, the media we have had to explore will surely continue to have their place, but I cling to the familiar notion of 'going to church'.

We who are many, are one body...

Prayer for an Act of Spiritual Communion

We offer and present to you, Lord our heavenly Father, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a holy and living sacrifice; grant that being present together in heart and mind at this holy communion we may now be filled with your heavenly blessing through the redeeming grace of your Son our

Saviour Jesus Christ... [short pause] Lord Jesus Christ, in outward signs of bread and wine you have made known your presence among us; as we unite with one another from the places where we are, may your communion be fulfilled in us now through the work of the life-giving Holy Spirit. Amen.

Corpus Christi

Love's feast is come again
this year we celebrate online
the ardent lines
that reach out to infinity;
parameters of love that know no
end
and where we are
becomes the place of grace.
(Alan Amos)

Revd. Chris Welsh

Writing from Melbourne, Australia



The Virtual Choir

or

Making a Virtue of Necessity!

Intrigued and impressed Sunday by Sunday to see the choir making their contribution to the Zoom services, assembled neatly on my screen with the choirmaster at the centre accompanying whatever anthem was being sung, I ventured to ask Mark Charles, our Director of Music, how this technological feat was achieved. His explanation, which left me even more open-mouthed with admiration was as follows. (I hope I have understood all the intricacies!)

It all begins with a sound track called Click track, which is a sort of online metronome. It has the parts that people sing, and helps them to sing both in tune and in time. Mark sends this out to the singers' earphones together with the instrumental accompaniment to the piece to be sung. (He pointed out that while an organ accompaniment sounds more 'churchlike', using a piano gives a more percussive sound which is easier for the singers to follow). Singers need to have two devices – computer and phone, or two phones, so that they can listen to the Click track, sing along (on whichever line of music is relevant to them) and video record themselves at the same time. They then each send their own recordings to Mark. And this is where the fun really begins, because a 4-minute recording creates a file size of 200 MB which is too big to email, so a variety of methods are used to transfer these large files into various 'Cloud' storage facilities. (Compressing the files to send them by email is not an option as files lose content by being compressed.)

Mark then retrieves all the separate videos from the Cloud and extracts the soundtrack from each one. He must listen to every note on each track and is able to adjust each voice up or down if the pitch is not exact. (He can also mute any mistakes, a handy function which can't happen in a live performance!) When each individual track is perfect and synchronized with the Click track, Mark then mixes them together, listens to the whole thing and adjusts the balance where necessary. He now has a soundtrack.

The next stage is to put the videos together, which also means reducing the various files in size before loading them into the computer editing programme. Positions on the screen are chosen and the videos synchronized with the Click track. The last stage is to introduce the final soundtrack and then remove the underlying metronome function before adding any explanatory text, opening titles and final credits.

To compile a short anthem in this way for a Zoom service takes about 12 to 15 hours of work!

Needless to say, such exploits are not without their problems; the most obvious one in the hot weather we have been experiencing this summer is that if the organ is to be used, the heat in church frequently drives the pitch of the organ upwards. As a result, a recording of the cello part for Panis Angelicum, made by Clare Charles in her home using the Click track, was found to be out of tune with the organ part when Mark came to blend them together. Mark solved this problem by electronically altering the pitch of the cello to match that of the overheated organ.

More positive aspects have been that performers could make music together, not only socially distanced but physically miles apart – from as far afield as Australia and UK. For the performance of Mozart's Ave Verum, which was accompanied by a string quartet, violin 1 was in Nyon, violin 2 in Sydney, Australia, the viola in Geneva and the 'cello in Bursins! A further demonstration of the feats that this technology makes possible was the Trinity Sunday rendering of I Saw the Lord (by Stainer) which had an organ accompaniment by Federico

Terzi, playing in Milan, while all four solo parts were recorded by a single voice – that of William Matthewson.

I am left open-mouthed in admiration of the huge amount of work that goes into beautifying our remote Sunday services with the authentic sound and presence of our choir. Thank you Mark and everyone involved!

Jenny Buffle



From our Northern Correspondent ... on the longer term symptoms of COVID-19

A few days ago I was speaking to someone who had been unfortunate enough to become ill with Covid-19 at the beginning of the outbreak. Although she is better now, there are long-term effects and it will be some considerable time until she has fully recovered. I sympathise very much – some years ago a much less virulent influenza virus left me with a respiratory problem which took more than a year to clear up.

But difficult as these physical symptoms are, or indeed the psychological ones too for those who have walked in the shadow of darkness or who face great uncertainties about their futures, these are not the most threatening post-viral symptoms that our world faces. These more serious symptoms require careful discernment and imaginative

action if our world is not to be left even more scarred and damaged in the future.

In the United Kingdom, we have suffered the greatest number of deaths due to Covid-19 of any European nation. Probably half of the recorded deaths were of elderly residents of care homes. We can understand that such individuals were already extremely fragile through age, general infirmity or underlying disease. So the decision to send many such residents back into care homes from hospital with no checks made upon their infective status verges upon criminal negligence. What happened subsequently demonstrates how little as a nation the United Kingdom cares about its elderly people.

Part of the reasoning behind this callous action was a much-trumpeted slogan adopted by the Johnson Government to 'Save the NHS'. Significantly this was the second of three commands issued at the time, the first being *Stay home* and only third came *Save lives*. During the height of the pandemic, there was a concerted effort made by politicians and the media to extol at every opportunity the work of the National Health Service, which included an almost obligatory moment of communal clapping at 8 p.m. every Thursday evening.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the UK National Health Service, like others throughout the world, has incredibly dedicated professional staff who offer themselves in a highly sacrificial way for the benefit of other people. That *should be* applauded – though I would argue that it needs applause of a very different kind from that encouraged during the height of

the pandemic. The NHS should not need protecting during a health crisis! It should have been properly funded, equipped and effectively administered for decades instead of suffering the progressive neglect and consequent deterioration of service level that has been the case for a very long time. I hope that we shall see as a result of what has happened a real determination amongst all political leaders to tackle this problem, though I have my doubts.

Perhaps even more seriously, and this is something that affects *every* part of the world and not just the UK, the last six months have meant that we human beings have been forced into patterns of behaviour which are radically abnormal. Amongst other things, we have not been allowed to leave our homes, to go and shop freely, to visit our friends and our families, to touch or hug one another, to go out and socialise on a larger scale, to go to the theatre or concerts and, as Christians, most significantly we have not been allowed to worship together, or to receive the sacramental nourishment of holy communion. We cannot just ‘switch off’ these fundamental aspects of our being human! Behaving in the way that we have been told to do (for good reasons I do not doubt) will leave a legacy. And it is one that we must take care to discern and acknowledge if we are not to be seriously diminished by it as people and as societies.

Again, one of the messages here in the UK that we received as the lockdown was gradually loosened was the need to ‘stay in a bubble’. If you lived on your own, you were allowed to associate with someone else only if you lived in an imaginary

bubble and did not allow anyone else to impinge upon it.

This can very quickly reinforce a mind-set, alas not absent within the British Isles, of suspicion of those who are ‘outside the bubble’ however one defines it. We have, after all, a prime minister whose only policy prior to the last election was to bubble-wrap the UK safe from the European Union. How badly this has reflected upon the nation has not yet been fully realised, but it certainly impacted upon the pandemic strategy. Had we listened to and consulted with our once European partners – particularly in Germany – we might well have had a much smaller death rate than sadly we have. But alas even the proffered emergency help from the EU which offered ventilators (our under-funded NHS having nowhere near enough) was rejected by the UK Government.

That there are going to be more examples of the ‘bubble mentality’ I am very much afraid as we go forward in the aftermath of the virus. Already here in the UK the Johnson Government has promised a savage attack on the Civil Service – the means by which a degree of continuity and consistency is achieved in national life independent of the changes of colour of governments. And his other proposed changes include the abolition of the Department for International Development, which is to be amalgamated with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Overseas Aid budget will remain at 0.7% of GNP as it is now, but it will be in future spent ‘in ways that serve British interests’. What this means is of course open to speculation and wide interpretation. But surely an overseas aid budget should first

and foremost address humanitarian need rather than the supposed interests of a bubble of people?

There are signs of a deep sickness here – one that has been brought to the surface through an external challenge to the world from an invisible virus. Moments of crisis are moments of judgment. Times when we are called to weigh carefully and with true discernment our reactions and plans for the future. A global pandemic on the scale that we have seen is hopefully a once-in-a-lifetime event. It has a profound effect upon all our lives, but this does not have to ultimately diminish our lives. As Christians we have always before us the figure of defeat, a crucified man upon a cross. Yet we know that beyond the suffering comes new and inextinguishable life. That Divine Dynamic is to characterise our own living – our judgments, our day to day activities, our whole being – and it is a *redemptive dynamic* because it means that there is absolutely no thing that is immune from it. As S. Paul says in that wonderful passage in chapter 8 of the letter to the Romans, *nothing can come between us and the love of God known in Christ Jesus. All is redeemed – capable of drawing us closer in God’s love to God and to one another.*

We must beware that an enforced isolation from one another, and indeed an isolation from our deepest nature as social beings, does not produce a permafrost in our depths. Such an outcome would spell death to civilisation as we know it.

Perhaps I should conclude though with a lighter and happier note! After three months’ growth of

hair, I finally managed to visit the hairdressers' a couple of weeks ago. I was rapidly becoming unrecognisable! Of course, there was plenty of personal protective equipment around in the salon – for my hairdresser as well as for me, which made things a bit more unusual than on previous occasions. Through various masks and face-coverings we managed a desultory conversation. 'It will have a good side to it' she said, commenting upon the pandemic. 'People are acknowledging one another more

in the streets'. And yes, I had to agree. Here in the Highlands, we usually do speak to one another when we pass in the street – there are, after all, relatively few of us! And there is some evidence that as we emerge from lockdown there is a little more human warmth around. I pray that continues – individually, nationally and internationally!

Much love from Geraldine and me in the far north,

Alex Gordon

Editor's note:

Holy Trinity congregations of recent years will be familiar with Alex' forthright approach to political issues and we feel his comments here may well strike a sympathetic note, particularly with some of our readers in the UK.



Mary Magdalene's Complaint

I do wish people would call a halt
to debating my virtue in cyber space!
Two thousand years of argument
is, thank you, quite enough
without finding oneself
the centre of
a twitter storm!

These days you can't have a boy
friend
Without the most scurrilous
Accusations!
Not that my so-called "relationship"
with Jesus son of man
was ever what you assume!

No, it was not at all like that;
we lived in different times,
in different climes
mentally,
physically
and thank God,
spiritually!

I suppose you might say
I was on his "wave length"
Fair enough
But that was just
A matter of sheer grace
finding I could understand
because
I was understood.

And what about all my "sins"
you ask in
your prurient way...
those devils that were cast out
what tribe did they belong to?

Must you ask?
Is it not enough
To know you are forgiven
By God's own self?
Do you have to rummage
through Judea's dustbins
searching for "the truth"?

He called me his "strong tower"
and I rejoiced at that -
even if Peter got a bit envious -
He sent me with his newborn
Resurrection message.
The first to wing it with the news!

So there. You have
quite enough problems of your own
without scraping history's barrel
salivating over mine!

Thanks be to God!

Alan Amos

Godspeed Julia

(Julia Lacey has left Holy Trinity this summer)

As for quite a number of people, it was the choir that attracted Julia to join Holy Trinity in the first place – and what a gift that was for us! Julia has a heart-rendingly beautiful voice and an innate musicality, which shapes every note and word she sings.

This same sensitivity increasingly permeates the way that she carries out her ministry, particularly in her interactions with, and her care for, people; above all the vulnerable. A Roman Catholic, Julia divided her time between the two churches for many years, before finally deciding that she was called to the ordained ministry and pursuing that path in the Anglican church, her voice rising from alto to soprano in canon. She has now left us in preparation for her ordination as a deacon in the diocese of Chelmsford on 13th September and her curacy at Ascension with All Saints, Chelmsford. Along the way, she spent two or three years as our church secretary, always careful to keep the peace, before returning to teaching, a much greater outlet for her skill and creativity. Julia is a magnet. If you need someone to do something for you, she always has a friend who has that particular expertise. Warmth, sensitivity, creativity and musicality are the words that come to mind.

Mary Talbot

Julia came to us back in 2002 as a gift to the choir, and more particularly a gift to the alto section! She brought not only her lovely voice and obvious musicianship (including an enviable ability to sight-read), but also her delightful sense of

humour and her positive and cheerful attitude towards life in general - she always seemed to have a twinkle in her eye! I'm sure that Anglican church music, as well as the choreography - when to stand and when to sit, when to turn and when to bow - must have come as quite a challenge, but she leapt right in ... and kept on leaping. I'm thrilled to see her now heading for ordination, and am proud to think that her years in the fellowship of Holy Trinity contributed to nurturing her into this calling.

Dawn Ross



It is very difficult to capture Julia in a paragraph or two!

She is engaging, enthusiastic and encouraging with all the congregation and beyond in her work role as well. Never lacking in good humour and very generous with her time and her singing gift, she has blossomed over the last few years and is so ready for her next challenge. Although we are very sad to see her go, it is time for others to benefit from her good heart.

Jo Kitson

Simplicity could define Julia in her Ministry. For her it was easy

and spontaneous to be involved in activities that we organized. She feels naturally responsible for the well-being of the people that she meets. Agapê, universal charity is her way. May the Spirit lead her and her family in this new ministry.

Armelle Ayegnon

What I have appreciated about Julia during the time I have known her :

Her steadfastness, and ability to rise to a challenge - which the last few months have certainly been!

The spirit of serenity she conveys during worship, which is very helpful and important.

The encouragement she gives to others in the church community.

Her appreciation of all that is beautiful and its contribution to life and to worship, not least music !

In the words of Hildegard of Bingen, who I think is Julia's favourite theologian (or one of them) "all of creation is a song of praise to God". That quotation brings together two themes in Julia's life, her love of music and her love of nature.

Alan Amos

I met Julia some twelve years ago when joining the choir at Holy Trinity. Our connection was favoured by a shared interest in the Franciscan lay orders and a love of all creatures feathered and furry. Being more of a cat person, I'd never been exposed to rabbitfolk, at least not on the scale Julia appeared to be dealing with. Rabbits were routinely tossed over the fence



into her garden in Ambilly, an

unofficial shelter it would seem for assorted lagomorphs (don't you dare call them rodents !) Julia would give each one her expert care, lavishing on the small creatures the same quasi-angelic qualities that draw so many of us to her – her capacity for giving each living being her full attention in the moment and making them feel special and loved. But there is a sharp edge to her sword, too, and no nonsense or false pretence ever escape her unfailing eye. That is where Julia's endless stores of compassion and forgiveness quickly step in, often expressed in peals of laughter at the absurdity and hilarity of things. May we meet again soon.

Nina Raydin



St Francis must undoubtedly be Julia's favourite saint!

Where are we? A report from Council

Entering our ninth month of the interregnum and sixth month of living with Covid-19, we are not doing too badly.

On the vacancy, God and Covid-19 willing, our vacancy will be advertised very shortly in September with interviews, followed by a formal visit, planned for November. We are hoping and planning that the interviews will take place in Geneva, which is the reason for the slight doubt, given the virus' refusal to lie down and die and indeed its apparent particular liking for Geneva at the moment. If all goes well, this timetable would allow a new chaplain to be in place in March 2021. Please pray, particularly for those who may soon be discerning whether they feel called to come to us, and for Jo Kitson and Aylwin Zabula, our two chaplaincy representatives, and myself as the observer, together with Bishop Robert and Archdeacon Adèle, seeking to choose the person best suited for our chaplaincy in its next phase.

As most of you will know and have experienced, our on-line Eucharist with Spiritual Communion has been our main form of community worship over the last five months. Defying geographical boundaries and led remotely, either from the UK or Australia, it has on the one hand allowed people from further afield or those who cannot easily get to the church to participate; on the other hand, there have been those for whom it is simply not a satisfactory substitute for worshipping in church. We are very grateful to those who have led us: Canon Alan Amos, Revd

Chris Welsh, Revd Martin Booth, Revd Dr John Shepherd. Providing the music and particularly the pieces sung by the virtual choir requires an enormous amount of time and a considerable level of skill for which we thank Mark Charles. Less visible, but nevertheless pivotal and time-consuming, has been the technical support provided by Aylwin Zabula and Ben Jesudoss, particularly as we move to a more hybrid system of on-line and live services.

We were able to hold our first live service, Evensong, in the church on 7th June, Trinity Sunday and our feast of title. These have continued every Sunday evening at 18h00, except one. As the restrictions relaxed, we were able to have small choirs, particularly for the licensing of Julia Lacey and her final service on 2nd August. Otherwise, one or two members of the choir have sung solos or duets. We have also had a number of visiting preachers. I had expected that we would find another locum priest from June onwards, but those scheduled to come have been prevented by travel restrictions and we have simply not managed to find others available. We expect to welcome Revd. Elizabeth Dean, currently living in Paris, from early November until after Christmas. Meanwhile our Archdeacon recently came to provide a Eucharist in the church. Revd Carolyn Cooke will celebrate for us in the evening, 18h00, on 30th August and we will try to arrange at least one live eucharist in September and October.

For those trying to listen to the evening service on-line, the sound quality has been a challenge. We think that we are fairly close to finding a

satisfactory solution with the purchase and subsequent hanging of suitable microphones. Bear with us until the second half of September. It is important that we get this right, since we will almost certainly want to continue to broadcast services live once we are able to have our main services in the church again.

With many mixed feelings – joy on her behalf and sadness on ours - we said goodbye to our ordinand, Julia Lacey. She will be much missed as she prepares for her ordination as a deacon in the Diocese of Chelmsford, planned for 13th September.

Building Tomorrow is proceeding well and plans are almost ready for submission to the various authorities and particularly to the Service des Monuments & Sites. An informal meeting was held between our architects and M. Luscher, now head of SMS, in which he indicated that there may be some leeway in removing some of the pews in the church, provided they are kept and stored. We understand that this change of heart is as a result of pressure from a number of churches in Geneva, who have argued for the necessity of doing this mainly, we understand, on financial grounds. Storage is being investigated. Inevitably, the question of retaining all or some of the existing pews is controversial. There is quite general agreement that two rows could be removed at the back to allow a better welcome area, but Council is quite evenly divided on whether it would be right to seek permission to create more space at the front of the nave and/or remove a larger number at the back. Those in favour of seeking greater flexibility believe that removing one or two rows in the front

would allow for more varying patterns of worship (including retaining the existing pattern), particularly for children, teenagers and young adults, making us more family friendly. In their view it would enable us to use our space more productively for concerts and other cultural events and allow us to explore possibilities of using our space for the benefit of the community around us, in particular those who are marginalised and disadvantaged. They also believe it would be aesthetically more pleasing by making the church lighter and less cluttered. These objectives follow a pattern of many city centre churches in the UK. Those arguing against feel that the pews retain the essential character and aesthetic of the church (*see the next article*); that they are well suited to our existing pattern of worship and a number of people are concerned at the thought of the church being used other than for worship. We are not alone in trying to find answers to these questions. Please pray for Council as it seeks to identify the best way forward and to achieve a consensus. At this stage, the decision is simply what level of flexibility we should seek from SMS. It would not commit us to implementation of a more radical plan, which we believe requires further consultation.

As regards finances, the figures at the end of July show a deficit of CHF 10,500, which is forecast to rise by end of the year. The current deficit is not out of line with the same time last year, but we think it unlikely that we will benefit from the normal increase in income in the later months. We are not, of course, carrying the cost of a chaplain, which would have resulted in a significantly higher shortfall.

Our AGM is still tentatively fixed for 27th September and we are looking at the feasibility of this or of an alternative solution. We have meanwhile co-opted Nicolas Dériaz and Amy Martinez, who were planning to stand, on to Council.

Mary Talbot

Church Pews

At St Mary's Reading it was agreed in 1581 by the chief men of the parish in order to augment the parish stock and to maintain the church because 'the rents are very small' that those sitting in front seats in the church should pay 8d, those behind them 6d, the third row 4d and so on.

Up until the late Middle Ages congregations usually stood in church although occasionally benches were provided along walls or round the base of piers for the aged and infirm and for women with babies.



Fixed seating in the nave was uncommon until the 15th century. This seating when installed took the form of long wooden benches or 'pews'. This furniture seems to have largely escaped the destruction wreaked on the interior of churches during the Reformation although it has been

remarked that the subject matter of the carved ends of the pews did slowly change. Subjects such as the symbols of the passion carved on a pew in Launcells, Cornwall or the resurrection in Bishops' Hull, Somerset gave way to less controversial carving such as the fruit and foliage of Simon Werman, working in the Taunton area during the reign of Elizabeth I.

As the provision of pews became more widespread it was realised that they could be used as a source of revenue (see above quotation). At St Dunstan's, Stepney parish, London a book was made by the wardens 'wherein was expressed the pews in the whole Church' distinguished by numbers. 'Also there was noted against everie pewe the price that was thought it shoude yeeld by the yeare...'

Over the centuries pew rents, although frequently disliked and the cause of dissension in many instances, became the norm. Lords of the Manor constructed elaborate box pews for their



households with doors to keep out the draughts and with interior furnishings. Owners of houses and farms were attributed their seats and paid for them.

When Holy Trinity was built and consecrated in the 1850s its

capacity was estimated at some 524 seats and these were naturally sturdy wooden benches, or pews, 36 of which were made for seven persons each and another 26 pews each with space for five persons. There were also two calculated to



hold six and a number of side and "drop seats". The gallery at the west end held 80 seats which were intended for servants and for those who could not afford to pay the pew rent. Altogether it should be possible for every parishioner to be seated when attending divine service. The pews were situated in various parts of the church, principally in the nave and the two side chapels, but also in the gallery in the north transept (where the organ loft is now).

As had become current practice in most Church of England churches in the 19th century it was possible to reserve one's seat subject to payment of a small fee. Right from the start, the "Rules and Regulations" of the church, drawn up in a series of meetings in October 1852 under the chairmanship of Charles Lullin, established a tariff determining the amounts to be charged for the seats, varying according to where the pew was situated and the length of time for which the payment would be valid. Provision was also made for the

automatic seating of VIPs, such as the British Consul or a visiting representative of the Royal Family. Fees could be paid annually or for a shorter period. Casual visitors, or guests of fee-paying members, were assessed at one franc per day for each seat.

The rules stated that 'the custode shall enter into a Book provided for the purpose the names of the subscribers for seats.....and attend at the Church every Saturday from two to four p.m for the purpose of receiving applications for Seats'. If a seat was reserved for 12 months it cost 25 francs. Thus, if all the seats were rented from year to year the rentals could bring in a tidy sum, which at the time was the only regular income of the church that could be budgeted. It was hardly likely however that, even during the most prosperous years, such "full house" records would be frequent, which considerably diminished the real income of the church. Little by little the churches in England gave up the pew rental system, replacing it with passing round the collection plate. Perhaps the record keeping became burdensome for such small sums, or for chasing up defaulters. Holy Trinity gave it up only in the 1950s!

With the passing years the physical arrangement of the pews has changed, to accommodate the installation of the organ for instance; and when we acquired the new west window the main entry into the church was altered and the gallery disappeared. By and large, however, the number of seats in the nave has remained stable. Of course, even the best-built pews cannot live for ever, and repairs have had to be carried out. A couple of them, or more, have had to be replaced. They have been subjected to constant

use for over 150 years, and it is not surprising that the Council are now recommending a thorough restoration job. Holy Trinity is preparing for another 150 years of life and service.

Angela Butler, Valerie Offord

March 2010

(research by Valerie Offord)

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Sources

Holy Trinity Archives

Dyne Steel (editor Valerie Offord)

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Sedley Lynch Ware **The Elizabethan Parish in its Ecclesiastical and Financial Aspects**

Note

During a tree-ring dating of the pews, carried out during the last few years, the dendrochronology laboratory investigated 7 oak and 5 pinewood elements from 3 pews. All 12 analyses showed that they were constructed around 1850.

It is useful to have scientific confirmation and backup of our archival and documentary sources namely that the pews form an integral part of our listed building. This solid evidence may well prove crucial in obtaining grants for the renovation and maintenance of our pews.



Reflections in lockdown

Well, here I am shut in my little world bubble,
 Trying to keep well, stay safe, out of trouble,
 In “confinement” – now a daily used word, unlike before
 When reserved for ladies giving birth, in novels of yore.
 Outside of my bubble, life has changed, all is closed, such a cost,
 Most people teleworking from home, others have jobs lost.
 So, how do I feel, lonely? anxious? panicky? or what?
 Will my food order go through, find a delivery slot?
 And when it comes, I face the disinfectant stress
 For the fresh items, quarantine the rest, what a mess!
 It is hard to believe what I hear and see on the news,
 Conflicting messages, no-one really knows, different views
 On what to do for the best, will we get a vaccine
 To enable our lives to resume, get back in routine?
 The days, weeks pass by, all blur into one,
 But those “rainy day” jobs, I don’t get them done.
 How lucky I am, able to take walks, have this chance,
 Unlike my friends across closed borders in France.
 On my walks I park the news, admire nature’s daily changing
 In the gardens and fields, watch the birds nest arranging,
 Keeping my social distance, and controlling my wrath
 When the cyclists claim priority, monopolize the footpath.
 Few planes do I see and hear overhead in the sky,
 Just the birdsong, branches blowing in the wind as I pass by.
 My “world” is so calm, quiet, few cars on the road
 Compared to the local hospital, trying to cope with the load
 Of the sick and the dying, true to its cause,
 All we can do to support is our nightly applause.
 Contacts with friends are confined to virtual for now,
 Messages, video clips, zooms etc. just grow and grow
 Daily, give me comfort but also make me stressed,
 Overload my systems, put my technology to the test.
 But what benefits lie in this surreal Covid situation?
 Waters and skies are cleaner with much less pollution,
 Planet Earth gets a rest, but how long will that last?
 Will the “climate change” laws get finally passed?
 Cases of kindness are many, volunteers abound,
 But will the world have learned lessons and turn life around?
 What will our future be like? for now it’s all a mystery,
 Unwelcome, but amazing to live through this special moment of
 history.

Sue Block-Tyrrell

General Synod 11th July, 2020

As the Church Times reported, the one-day, on-line General Synod was something of a non-event and certainly a travesty of its normal four-day residential happening in York. One or two things struck me:

The presidential address given by the new Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell touched on the fact that he will be leading a group looking at the strategy and vision for the Church of England over the coming years – not again one might say. But what struck me is that the group he has selected to give input to this is, in his words, ‘biased towards young people’ including children. Since both our congregational meeting and Council resolved to integrate young people and children more effectively into the life and activities of the church, it reminded me of how bad we are at asking their opinion when we make decisions. It will also be interesting to see how they shape the ideas.

As you will know, churches in England were completely locked and denied even to clergy during the lockdown in the UK. The exception seems to have been churches that transformed themselves into centres for providing food and other assistance to people requiring the services of foodbanks. Churches were very much in the forefront of helping their communities in these ways. Since the lockdown, the Jardin de Montbrillant has ceased to use its own kitchen and it is encouraging that we have been asked to make sandwiches on our own premises so that food can still be distributed. However, although our situation is different

from the UK, I increasingly ask myself if we should not do more to look outwards and help the community around us.

A great deal of the meeting was taken up with questions on various subjects, a great many ‘complaining’ about the decision to shut churches, some on safeguarding issues. The latter were answered by the new Lead Bishop of Huddersfield, himself a victim of abuse and reassuringly

straightforward and down-to-earth in his replies.

General Synod is holding a one-day physical meeting with reduced numbers in September, to which the European lay team nominated Tjeerd Bijl to represent us. This meeting will simply vote for procedures which allow General Synod to vote and pass legislation online, which is not currently the case.

Mary Talbot

Services at Holy Trinity Church

On Cantonal and Federal advice most services and activities are still on hold until further notice. We will keep this under continual review and Secretary Michèle Walker in the office remains available for contact.

The church is open for private prayer, with the request that numbers are few and social distancing observed.

We are offering an online Zoom service every Sunday at 10.30 a.m. Please click on our website news page for the next service information with links and service sheets

Our normal Thursday morning BCP Eucharist is also available online through Zoom – again, details may be found on the website.

We are also running Evensong at 6pm in the church every Sunday evening – booking is required. Please click on our news page for information.



Summer wanderings

On a drive across France this summer I visited three beautiful abbeys or monasteries. First was the Cluniac Abbey of Mozac near Clermont-Ferrand which boasts three magnificent Romanesque capitals, one of grotesques – the mediaeval ...acrobats in my photo – a second of the three



Maries discovering Christ's empty sepulchre – the sleeping Roman soldier who should have been guarding the tomb – and a third depicting Saint Peter's release from prison – the angel apparently seized him by the chin to pull him out of the dungeon!



Since that capital is described in



the guidebooks as showing only St Peter, I wonder if the person shown on another side of the capital emerging from the mouth of a monster and loosening his bonds as an angel seizes him also by the chin is perhaps a *metaphorical* depiction of Peter's escape, with the monster



representing the horrors of Roman imprisonment.

Mozac also possesses a beautiful enamelled reliquary of St Calmin, described as the biggest such reliquary in the world. It seems that wherever one goes as a tourist one comes across something biggest, oldest ... you could make quite a collection.

The next abbey I came to was the Cistercian Abbey of Aubazine in Corrèze. That possesses the

oldest glass in France, from the 12th century. It is not stained but grisaille and sadly quite unremarkable. What was lovely about Aubazine was its cloister, now a garden riot of wild flowers alive and humming with bees.



The religious community had dwindled into forced dependence and had come into the possession of the Oriental or Eastern Catholics, sometimes called Uniates, who are in full communion with Rome, and are an interesting branch of the Roman Catholic Church. The guide at Aubazine was a splendid white-bearded Oriental Catholic, robed in black with a small pillbox hat, who had an amazing knowledge of church history that filled two hours of his one-hour guided tour. *Pour la petite histoire*, Coco Chanel spent some of her childhood in the girls' orphanage at that time attached to the Abbey.

My third abbey was the truly outstanding foundation of Paray-le-Monial in the region of le Brionnais. This monastery was built mostly in the early 12th century as an offshoot of Cluny

and gives one perhaps the best picture existing today of what Cluny must originally have looked like. It is now a place of pilgrimage and was visited by John Paul II in 1986. It wasn't the oldest or the biggest anything, but it was definitely the most beautiful of all the monuments I saw. It is not too far from Geneva and well worth a visit, coronavirus permitting.

Jane Brooks



Footnote: Cluny was founded in 910 AD, to follow the Rule of St Benedict, in an attempt at reform of already declining monasticism. The Cistercians founded Cîteaux in 1098 with the aim of adhering more closely to the Rule of St Benedict. In the 17th century along came the Trappists with the same objective, and in 1892 the Cistercians of the Strict Observance. Reform follows reform, but do we ever get any better? One has to hope.



What (Corona) virus?

Have you heard the story yet?
Every other news is fake news
Just to make sure you don't forget
Could it be that Corona is a virus?

The Little thing became viral.
It spreads around the world like no other
Some said, this is just banal
Why should we then bother?

More and more people are getting sick.
Before you know it you are locked in
There isn't even a quick fix
And left only with a beer and a tin.

Looking around you, people behave differently
What can we do to get better?
Shops and airports closed unexpectedly
Helping and serving the other more than ever.

There is no other beer than Corona
As it turns out they came up with a new name
It keeps you cool before it gets you
After all this search, who's got the blame?

The Rouble is rolling in every sector
The technology cranked up to perfection
The Research hasn't found the detector
Let's face it, to nobody's satisfaction.

People seem to get upset
We have to behave as if nothing had happened.
There is a new etiquette
And fearing to be doped and subdued.

Edith Tanner



Church officers

Locum Chaplain:	<i>contact through church office</i>
Music Director:	Mark Charles 079 944 5175
Junior Choir Director:	Claire Charles
Church Wardens:	Frederick Samuels 022 738 7326 Mary Talbot 022 736 0052
Verger:	Christine Damary 022 774 2320
Sacristan:	Gill Howie 022 733 83 72
Council Members:	Carol Brown, Mark Charles, Nicolas Dériaz, Mike Gunton (Treasurer), Nicholas Hacking, Gill Howie, Jo Kitson, Amy Martinez, Ann Shazell, Aylwin Zabula, Nicolas Dériaz
Archdeaconry Synod Representatives:	Clare Amos, Lameck Jaston, Ursula McGregor, Swamikan Raja
Youth Ministry Coordinator:	Armel Ayegnon ayearmel@yahoo.fr
Safeguarding officer:	Pierre Laravoire 022 755 2155 *****
Church Office:	Michèle Walker, Secretary 022 731 5155

admin@holyltrinitygeneva.org
Mon, Tues, Thur & Fri. 8h30 - 12h30

Church activities

Holy Trinity choir:	practice Thursdays at 20h00 Mark Charles 079 944 5175
Junior choir:	practice Sundays after the 10h30 service Claire Charles
Craft group:	Fridays in the church hall 14h15 - contact Annemarie Hester 022 782 6689
Small-time worship:	Wednesdays from 09h30 In the church hall, contact Amanda Dawson 022 751 2968
Young people:	(11-13 year-olds) contact Innocent Mugabe mugabeinnocent@yahoo.com
Junior Church:	Sundays 1, 2 and 3 contact Anitha Beulah 022 731 4211 / 078 323 8184
Healing Prayer:	Fridays 12h15 in church Christine Damary 022 774 2320
Pastoral Care:	Christine Damary 022 774 2320 Gill Howie 022 733 8372 Sheila Mathewson 022 774 0469
Bible Study:	Tuesdays 12h30-13h30 in church Elizabeth Brown 022 778 50 10
Social Group:	Gill Howie 022 733 8372 Beryl Allardyce 022 776 1479
Church Archives:	Valerie Offord 022 777 1858
Development project:	Mark Charles 079 944 5175
Pledge Fund:	Ursula McGregor 022 342 3227

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or by email to jjbuffle@gmail.com

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