

# TRING TEAM **TT** TIMES

ALL SAINTS  
ST CROSS  
ST JOHN THE BAPTIST  
ST MARY  
ST PETER & ST PAUL

Edition 23

April 2009

## No doubt about it, times are tough...

No doubt about it, times are tough... If you're retired and living on a fixed income from interest, that's all but disappeared; if you want to move house or change your mortgage, it's well nigh impossible; if you're working in almost any industry you care to name, each week that passes seems to bring more and more worries about security and continuity. And it's not just us, as our own Dear Gordon (the saviour of the world!) points out. Everyone in the world has woes and worries. In times like these there are two ways to go. Batten down the hatches, pull up the ladder and prepare for the siege or open up your heart, enjoy the blessings of each day that comes and look for opportunities to help others. Of course, Christ's position in such matters bounces off every page of the New Testament like a shaft of light.

It's also true to say that the history of the human condition is that in times of hardship many people in most communities are more helpful and generous and think more of the needs of others.

Where does that leave our community at this time in this place? Throughout this edition, the subject of money will be boldly presented and debated. In his article 'Sacrificial Giving', Huw sets the tone that should inform our Parish view.

The information in the article 'Where Does the Money Go?' clearly outlines what happens to the money given by the community through Parish Share, collections and donations. You'll also find full information as to what the diocese does with its 'Parish Share' income.

As a community, we have the same choice that each one of us has as an individual. We can shut up shop, batten down the hatches and bemoan our fate, or we can give more, care more, share more and do more. It isn't going to be easy for the community or for the individual. However, I think it's perhaps humbling that one of the younger members of our community gets the message dead right in her article, 'Why I Choose to Serve' - as she puts it, 'because it is essential to praising God, getting involved, joining the community and life'.

Serving and giving to the community blesses those who give as much as those who receive. The Lord loves a cheerful giver.

*The Editor*

## IT'S GOOD TO GIVE!



## Money matters in this edition:

*Sacrificial Giving • Where Does the Money Go? • What Does the Diocese do with it All? Making the Most of Mission • Lifelong Education and Spiritual Growth • The Team Scheme Comparative Values • The Good Things our Money Buys*

## The View from Here...

### *Huw's Views on Money (and other subjects)*

I am proud to be a member of the Church of England - that is something I should say more often. And I am also immensely proud to be part of the Tring Team, and I find it amazing when one realises the extent of our members' commitment to each other and to our community and society.

Which other groups do you belong to that are made up of such a diverse age group (from a few days old to over 100 years old) or come from such diverse backgrounds? A coffee morning in one of our churches is always guaranteed to provide a varied and interesting discussion. It is humbling to join a faithful 8 o'clock congregation made up of those who have worshipped faithfully for decades. It is enlivening to be part of a Toddler Worship service and see young children learning to worship. It is challenging to try and communicate the faith to two hundred bored teenagers on a Monday morning. These are the things we do as a Church. We are a community of people who meet to worship God and to try and work out what it means to serve Him and our neighbours. We pray together, we share each others joys and sadness and we try to make our world a better place. Being a member of the Tring Team is about listening to God and serving God and our neighbour by responding to God and doing what He is calling us to do. Our Vision for Growth comes from us being a community of prayer which is energised by faith.

However this wonderful organisation of which we are members needs money to continue doing the work that we do. This year we have a projected deficit of £21K. In this magazine you will read a lot about money. There are articles from our treasurers and from the Church of England. You will be able to see what we spend our money on. As you do that you will realise that we have a very lean budget - we cannot cut our expenditure any further. We shouldn't have a target of just meeting our deficit, we should be looking to increase our income so we can do more as a church, such as having a minister to work with young people.

We are often reticent about talking about money - maybe it is an Anglican thing. But maybe it is very important to talk about money. When I meet wedding couples they are often surprised when I ask them how they manage their money. It is amazing how many couples are prepared to commit to sharing their whole lives together but will not share their finances. They do not like the idea of losing their independence, which is seen only in financial terms. Society too is like that, we don't remember to value the love which we freely receive from God and think only of our own value in terms of money.

**If we were to give in accordance to how much we receive we would never need to have a giving campaign in church.**

*Continued over...*

Tring Team Times is the magazine for all the Parish. If you know anyone who'd like to receive a personal copy, please let the circulation editors know.

**The Rock -**  
What does it mean to you?



# MONEY IS JUST THE FUEL WE U

## The View from Here (continued)

... In a financial downturn one of the first things to go is our giving to charity. But it should be a Christian duty to continue giving. We are used to talking about Christian Discipleship in terms it being 'costly' and 'sacrificial' but we don't give sacrificially. However, the heart of the Gospel is about sacrifice leading to new life. Why don't we think this when it comes to our money? One of the amazing lessons I have learnt from our parish project to build homes in Kyrgyzstan was that we gave a little to help those in great need, yet when our builders went to Bishkek they were overwhelmed by the hospitality they received. The people they were helping gave more than they could afford.

I'm not ashamed to talk about money in this magazine, nor am I ashamed to ask you to review your giving, because I am proud of our church and the work that we do and the vision which we have. Hopefully you too believe in your church and value it.

Huw Bellis



# Stewards in a Slump

(Adapted from Material by John Preston, CofE National Stewardship Officer)

## A billion isn't what it used to be!

1. £500,000,000,000...or around £8,000 each. £500 billion is a conservative estimate of what taxpayers, you and me included, are paying to bail out the UK banking system.
2. £20,000,000,000...This is the amount of taxpayer cash that has gone into the coffers of the Royal Bank of Scotland. This is the equivalent of £333 each.
3. £1,800,000,000,000... £1.8 trillion is the cost to the global economy of the credit crunch. Such a vast number is difficult to grasp, but in the same report, the Bank of England valued the UK economy, the fifth biggest in the world, at £7 trillion. So it has so far cost about a quarter of the value of our entire economy.\*

Whilst these numbers are huge, though, the Credit Crunch and recession affect all of us, but in different ways. Some may have lost their jobs, others will have seen pension funds significantly reduced in value. If some of us are relying on savings income, that will have reduced significantly as the Bank of England base rate is at its lowest since the Bank was founded in 1694, others may find it hard to renegotiate loans or mortgages. Whoever we are, however much or little we have, we are, and will be, affected by the current recession.

## Starting Points

Our faith means that we start from a different place from others. Let's have a look at some of the things that might make a difference to how we view our money during a recession.

Firstly, in one sense, it isn't our money! It's God's money. The Bible tells us that everything belongs to God. Psalm 24 begins "The earth is the LORD'S, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."

God's ownership is different from human ownership, though. Human ownership is a jealous ownership. If it's mine, it isn't yours!! Hands off!! But God's ownership is a shared ownership – it is God's, but it is also ours to enjoy, to take care of, or as we might say "to steward".

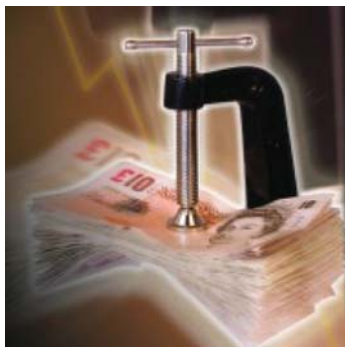
Secondly, God promises to provide for our needs - not necessarily our wants, but to meet our basic human needs.

Trusting him to do this can be hard, particularly if we've become very self reliant. Matthew records Jesus telling his audience not to worry about the material things of life, what we will eat or drink, or our clothes, or even our health.

Conversely, if we can appreciate all that God has given us, we can become thankful. He has provided for us in many different ways, and our gratitude and thanksgiving needs to take a broad perspective if we are to appreciate the breadth of his grace.

## Taking Control

Most of us hate the idea of budgeting. Indeed, reaching the point where we no longer had to budget, would for many of us be seen as a financial dream.



Yet if we don't, a number of undesirable things are likely to occur. Money tends to leak, largely as a result of successful marketing, creating desires we never thought we had, which we immediately fulfil, often with money we don't have! The prophet Haggai describes putting money "in a purse with holes in it".

We tend to find that as our income rises, so does our level of spending. As many people get wealthier throughout their lives, there seems a natural response for our desires to move in line. We want the more expensive car, larger house, branded clothes, gadgets and foreign holidays. Our view of what constitutes 'a luxury' changes as we have more disposable income.

Budgeting enables us to take control, and to be better stewards. When things are tight, it enables us to keep track of our spending, when times are good, it enables us to identify whether there is some money available to use for other things such as saving, giving or treating ourselves.

Budgeting doesn't limit our generosity or how spontaneous we are with our giving, though. Perhaps quite the reverse. If we keep track of money coming in and out, we will find it easier to think through a generous gift - one of the advantages of giving away a proportion of our income is that it is precisely that - one pound to give away, for every nine that we keep, (or whatever proportion we use.) in good times and in difficult times.



# SE TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN...

## Treasure

Christians should have a different world view from others. The world places a high store on wealth, and links it to possessions. It suggests that the more we have, the happier we'll be, the greater fulfilment we'll have and it implies we'll be a better person.

Advertising bombards us with messages about ownership and consumption – just spend a little more, achieve the bigger house, faster car, newer phone, designer gear... And you'll be a better person for it; they seem to say!

Jesus challenged his listeners about where they stored up treasure. Matthew records him saying this: Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. In his New Year message at the start of 2009, the Archbishop of Canterbury said "Jesus said where our treasure is, that's where our hearts will be. Our hearts will be in a bad way if they're focused only on the state of our finances. They'll be healthy if they are capable of turning outwards, looking at the real treasure that is our fellow human beings."



## Questions

And so the recession is a particularly appropriate time to challenge ourselves with these questions. There is no intention of causing any guilt – to some extent we are all focused on money – we cannot isolate ourselves totally from the culture we live in, and nor should we – as stewards we need to have an appropriate focus on caring for the money that has been entrusted to us. But it may be that we can identify an area of our spending where we are perhaps too heavily focused on money – unhealthy so. Now when income drops and times are tough, we need to work hard to bring in the money we need for our families or ourselves. That isn't unhealthy at all. What is unhealthy is when we find that we are placing our faith in our money and our power to earn. It's when we think "I'm OK – I can spend myself out of any difficulties that arise" that the alarm bells might start to ring.

And that's why the Archbishop of Canterbury is right to ask some questions about the place of materialism and consumerism at the heart of wealth creation. We can enjoy good things – they are a blessing from God. But if that turns to excess we need to review it. As we take stock of our money, we can also take stock of our lifestyles – the amount of frenzied activity we cram into a week. Perhaps on reflection we might simplify how we live a little?

A billion isn't what it used to be, but God is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is faithful and has a love and care for each one of us. It is quite possible that a financial downturn may help draw us closer to God both individually and as a nation. Certainly some churches have seen an increase in the number of people calling in for quiet reflection and prayer. It is often the case that people draw near to God when times are challenging and there is sadness in their lives, than when times are good and everything is going well. Possessions, money and happiness can shield us from our need for God. Whilst none of us want to go through hardship and difficult times, there can be good things that emerge from them.

\*Source: [http://timesbusiness.typepad.com/money\\_weblog/2008/12/post.html](http://timesbusiness.typepad.com/money_weblog/2008/12/post.html)



## Christian Giving and the 6 'S's' - the steps to 'sacrificial giving'

- 1. Survival** "I give a bit when I'm asked because the church ought to be there in case I need it." The need is survival and there's a chance that the church might help. The relationship with the church is that I know it's there if I need it - all being well, I won't.
- 2. Supermarket** "I'm happy to pay towards the cost of the bits of the church that I want and enjoy." The need is safety and by treating the church on my terms I feel safe and unchallenged. I see myself as a customer.
- 3. Support** "The work of the church is important and so I'll support it." I have a need for belonging. I see myself as a member of the supporters' club.
- 4. Subscription** "I see myself as a member and I wish to contribute to my fair share of the costs" The need is identity - I'm recognised and playing my part.
- 5. Submission** "My understanding of being a disciple is that I should put God first in my life." I see a deeper meaning in life and my giving responds to God and not just the needs of the church.
- 6. Sacrifice** "My Christian calling is to be Christ-like and so naturally I give joyfully and sacrificially" – following Christ.



## A New Rectory

The new Rectory is a magnificent house and will be an asset for the Team into the future. Despite being relatively modern, the old Rectory was proving expensive for the Diocese to maintain and was also expensive to heat, so the parsonage committee of the Diocese were keen to take the opportunity to sell when the old Rectory became vacant. The principles they worked on were that any move should be self-funded and that a new property must both comply with national guidelines on clergy housing and cost less to maintain. With the reduction in clergy the parsonages board are also keen to sell unused clergy housing to pay for improvements to existing housing, for example new heating and double glazing in Aldbury Vicarage.

Come and see how well the money has been spent, visit us 2 The Limes, Station Road, Tring (next to the Cricket Club).

## Befriending the Bereaved

What do you say to someone who is grieving? All too often we resort to bland statements such as 'time is a great healer', or worse sometimes we hear people use dubious theology and say 'God only chooses the best'. It is never easy sharing someone's grief but would you like the opportunity to discuss and learn some more pastoral skills? After Easter we will be running a course on befriending the bereaved. This course, being run by Reverend Canon Robin Brown, Local Ministry officer for the Diocese of St Albans will be suitable both for those who would like to consider a formal ministry with the Tring Bereavement Visitors and those who would like to learn more for their own personal Christian Discipleship. For more details please contact Malcolm Nobbs.

Revd Huw Bellis

# ACTION AROUND THE

## Who's Ready for Some Action?

### An Update

If there is one key aspect of our Team we are trying to develop then it is 'collaborative ministry' – enabling enable all people to exercise their Christian vocations and discipleships. In the last issue of the Tring Team Times there was a call for Action Groups in areas of our team life – so what has happened since then?

Some of the groups were already in existence (mission and finance) and are working well. Others have been revitalised. The main activity which has taken place is:

### Pastoral

1. Baptism. We are revitalising our baptism preparation groups. We had slipped into a situation where all Baptism visits were conducted by the clergy. This meant that families were visited by the clergy but not a huge amount of baptism preparation happened. Mike Watkin is going to be leading the Baptism preparation evenings with other volunteers. All baptism families are to be encouraged to go to these evenings. Those leading the evenings will get to know the families and can be at the baptism and meet families when they come to church on a regular Sunday to be welcoming and supportive. The clergy will still visit but the ministry will be shared.

2. Bereavement. The Reverend Canon Robin Brown is coming to lead four sessions on 'Befriending the Bereaved'. To be able to care properly for all the bereaved in the Tring Team, both church goers and non church goers, is a huge task, but under Malcolm Nobbs' leadership the bereavement visitors have been revitalised.

### Spiritual Growth

Rev'd Joanne Wetherall is leading our spiritual growth group. A questionnaire has been distributed to find out what is already happening and to find out what people would help people to grow in their faith.

### Vision for Giving

A group has been formed to look at how we resource what God wants us to do as a parish (as opposed to managing the finances).

### Education... Watch this space

Although there have been many education events we are aware that the education committee needs to be revitalised to come up with a programme of events. Using our reason and debating our faith is one of the important hallmarks of Anglicanism. If we want to engage with the world and have lively meaningful faith we must be prepared to continue learning as Christians throughout our lives. Also, there has not been much development on a young peoples group, apart from the excellent work that already happens.

## News from All Saints

We have just heard that we have the necessary permission to go ahead with installing new heating in All Saints. We will be installing new Quartz Ray heaters at a cost of £7,600. It is hard to be believe that the coldest church in Christendom may soon be tolerably warm!

This is to be paid for by a legacy. The new heating will be invaluable for developing our Toddler Worship, our Evening Celtic style Service, and the Sunday Club. It may also mean we can think about starting a coffee morning at All Saints too.

After 10 years of running the Sunday Club at All Saints, Elaine Smith has decided it is time for her stand down. She will be replaced by Jeannie Jenner who will continue to be supported by Maria Adams and Elaine. It has been Elaine's enthusiasm and effort which has brought so many children to All Saints, especially at the Christmas Crafts and the Christmas Nativity. I'm sure Elaine won't miss having to organise it all but we will certainly miss her input – thank you Elaine. Elaine was recently one of our builders in Kyrgyzstan and her husband Mark is keen to go back taking their son with them this time.



### Evening Worship

Many bemoan the demise of evening services, especially Choral Evensong. However, do you know what is on offer in the Tring Team already? Every Sunday at 6 pm there is a short service at All Saints in the Celtic tradition, using material from the Iona community. This is a meditative service and an excellent way to finish a Sunday. But this is by no means the only evening service:

1st Sunday of the month 6.30 pm- BCP Evensong at St Cross Wilstone

2nd Sunday of the month 6 pm - Taize evening prayer at St John the Baptist

3rd Sunday of the month 6 pm - Meditative Holy Communion at St John the Baptist

4th Sunday of the month 3.30 pm - BCP Choral Evensong with a choir at St Mary's.

So if you enjoy evensong it is available twice a month and there is a range of other services too. If you oversleep why not come along later in the day - or you *could* even be daring and go to church twice in one day!

# PARISH – AN UPDATE

## News from St Peter & St Paul

Two of the major issues which are concerning the DCC at the moment are: how do we make the church building welcoming as a house of prayer. The church is a magnificent building but can be intimidating for people to come into for private prayer. A group has been looking at what might be possible and have also been developing prayer resources to be made available. These will be presented at the AGM.

There was also lively debate at the All Age Worship planning meeting about who we are targeting. Reflecting on the Healthy Churches imperative that a healthy church makes room for all and in particular “children and young people: are helped to belong, contribute and be nurtured in their faith” we want this to be the one Sunday service each month which is suitable for children and young people and which also welcomes newcomers into the life of the church and at which enquirers are encouraged to explore and experience faith in Christ. We will be working on this through the year and look forward to taking part in the Deanery All Age Worship conference in October.

## Helpful Information from our Friend in the North

Christian Stewardship is “what we do after we say we believe”. It is a tool to help both individuals and churches grow in depth of discipleship, and in generous response to the love of God. Christian Stewardship is illustrated by a throwaway comment made by Luke in his gospel. As Jesus and the disciples are teaching in Galilee, they are accompanied by a group of women who “use their own resources to help”. Even before there was a church, it seems that the mission of Jesus depended on the resources of his followers.

Those of us who have struggled with our weight know well that it is not simply a case of going on a diet for the odd week, but of changing our eating habits to transform our situation and bring about a permanent improvement in our health. Similarly we should look again at the way we understand stewardship. Too many still regard it as a means of extricating a parish from its financial problems, as a “crash diet” for a week or two, and not as a way of life in response to God, a steady programme of growth in Christian discipleship. Christian Stewardship may be defined as the response which we, the Church, collectively and individually, are called to make to God for all that he has given us and done for us, above all in Jesus Christ.

Our response in Christian Stewardship is therefore active: As we respond to God in praise and thanksgiving – as we look on the universe as God’s creation – as we treat the earth and its resources as God’s provision for the needs of all mankind – as we seek to consecrate our personal wealth to God – as we regard our lives, our powers and possessions, our money and material wealth as gifts from God to be enjoyed and used in his service – as we seek to be “Stewards of the Gospel” and to share in Christ’s mission to the world.

Part of our Stewardship responsibility relates to what we do with the finance God provides us with. Someone once joked that the ‘Good News’ was that there was no financial crisis and there was plenty of money to do what we wanted. The ‘Bad News’ however was that it was still in our pockets! Before Victoria and I left Hertfordshire I was asked to look at the way the Berkhamsted deanery divided up the Parish Share that each parish pays to St Albans Diocese. In doing this I came across some interesting statistics which I thought would be good to share. It is easy to produce statistics that could prove anything but I share these with you as a bench mark that you might want to take into consideration as you decide what contribution you might make financially to the Tring Team as a part of your ‘stewardship’. On average in the Tring Team the amount collected per head (not just from ‘Planned giving’ but including collections) amounts to £433 per year or £8.33 per week. Using government statistics this represents 2.3% of the average weekly wage of all those who live in the Tring Team area. For the Berkhamsted deanery as a whole the average numbers are £10.2 per week and 2.9% of average weekly income (with a range of £7.48 per week up to £15.03 per week for different parishes in the deanery).

Now I realise that using statistics hides all sorts of anomalies, but if for instance we were able to lift our giving to reach the Deanery average of 2.9% of average income we would be able to decide on what, as a Team, we could spend an additional £35,000 of income. If we reached the level of giving of the most generous parish in the Deanery of 4% we would increase our income by a staggering £99,000. One bit of guidance given by the Church of England on the thorny question of tithing is that 5% of our income could be given to the Church leaving the other 5% for other charitable causes. If we achieved a level of giving of 5% we would have an even more staggering £157,000. Unless our money gift has cost us something, it is not really a thanksgiving but more like a tip. And one of the tensions in our discipleship lies in whether we live our life and give to God the odd crumb, or whether we give to God first, and then manage the rest. If the Christian disciple does the first, he will never be satisfied: If he does the second, he will always have enough.

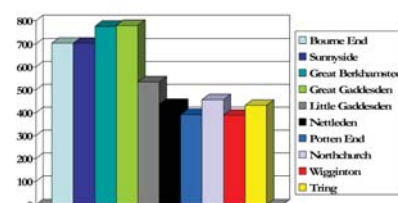
*Reverend Martin Macdonald*

### COMPETITION WINNER – IT’S MAUREEN AGAIN!



Once again our competition winner by a short head was Maureen Livingstone, who receives a bottle of fine wine. The runner up is Amber Armstrong in the junior section with ‘Didn’t I tell you you’re fired?’. She receives a goodie bag of sweets.

Income £ per annum per head by Parish



# 'Who's Who' a

Contact details for the Pari

## Tring Ministry Team

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## Team Church Contacts

### St Cross Wilstone

|                               |                                       |              |                         |
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| Andrew Minter (Church Warden) | 19 New Road, Wilstone HP23 4NZ        | 01442 823605 | anna@nildram.co.uk      |
| Ian Doley (Treasurer)         | 2 Chapel End Lane, Wilstone. HP23 4NY | 01442 823587 | iandoley@btinternet.com |

### St Mary's Pottenham

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| John Barron (Church Warden)      | Lock Cottage, Pottenham HP23 4PT                     | 01296 631351 |                                  |
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| Eunice Hall (Secretary)          | Avebury, Tring Rd, Long Marston, HP23 4QL            | 01296 668267 |                                  |
| Ernestina Matthews (Treasurer)   | Old Church Farm, Chapel Lane, Long Marston, HP23 4QT | 01296 662181 | o.c.m@btinternet.com             |

### All Saints, Long Marston

|                              |  |              |               |
|------------------------------|--|--------------|---------------|
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### St John the Baptist, Aldbury

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### St Peter and St Paul, Tring

|                               |                                    |              |                            |
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Friends of Tring Church Heritage Presents:



10am - 4pm, May 9th, St Peter & St Paul Parish Church, Church Yard and Church Hall

# nd 'What's On'

sh - keep them by the phone!

## What's On

| Date             | Event and Venue  | Time           |
|------------------|--|----------------|
| Fri 10th April   | Good Friday  |                |
| Sun 12th April   | Easter Sunday  |                |
| Tues 21st April  | Befriending the Bereaved course starts.  | 8.00pm         |
| Wed 22nd April   | St Peter and St Paul, Tring. Annual Church Meeting.  | 8.00pm         |
| Thurs 23rd April | Tring Bereavement Visitors Meeting.  | 8.00pm         |
| Sun 26th April   | Bishop Wood School. Mediterranean Jazz Brunch. Children free. Tickets from Barry & Vivianne Child.   | 12.30 - 3.30pm |
| Sun 26th April   | St Mary's, Puttenham. BCP Sung Evensong. Service at 3.30pm, followed by tea and cake.                | 3.30pm         |
| Mon 27th April   | The Rectory, Tring. Mission Committee meeting.   | 8.00pm         |
| Tues 28th April  | Befriending the Bereaved session 2.  | 8.00pm         |
| Wed 29th April   | Parish Hall, Tring. Annual Parochial Church Meeting.   | 8.00pm         |
| Fri 1st May      | St Mary's Puttenham. May Day Madrigals from the tower, followed by full breakfast in Cecilia Hall.   | 6.00am         |
| Sat 2nd May      | CCT Prayer Breakfast.  | TBC            |
| Mon 4th May      | Aldbury May Fayre with Church Stalls.  |                |
| Tues 5th May     | Tring Rectory, Team Wardens Meeting.   | 8.00pm         |
| Wed 6th May      | Parish Hall, Tring. Men's Society meeting.   | 4.00pm         |
| Wed 6th May      | Visit to the Natural History Museum Laboratory. Meet at the Zebra Café.                              |                |
| Fri 8th May      | Parish Hall, Tring. Friends of Tring Church Heritage Annual General Meeting.                         | 8.00pm         |
| Sat 9th May      | St Peter and St Paul. FOTCH Family Fun Day. Fun for all, in and around the church yard. All welcome. | 10am - 4pm     |
| Sat 9th May      | Cecilia Hall, Puttenham. Friends of Puttenham Church Jumble Sale.                                    | 2.00pm         |
| Sun 10th May     | St Peter and St Paul, Tring. Service for those we love and see no more.                              | 3.00pm         |
| Sun 10th May     | St Peter and St Paul, Tring. Friends of Tring Church Heritage Friendship Service.                    | 6.30pm         |
| Tues 12th May    | Befriending the Bereaved session 3.  | 8.00pm         |
| Tues 19th May    | Befriending the Bereaved session 4.  | 8.00pm         |
| Sat 16th May     | Tring School. "Evil and Suffering. Does God Care?"   | TBC            |
| Mon 1st June     | Tring Rectory, Rota Planning Meeting   | 8.00pm         |
| Wed 3rd June     | Sunday Club Leaders meeting.   |                |
| Wed 3rd June     | Men's Society Visit to St Lawrence's Church, Abbots Langley. Meet at Frogmore Street East Car Park.  | 6.00pm         |
| Sat 13th June    | Children's Society Box-Opening & Garden Day, Greenways, 88, Grove Road, Tring                        | 10.00am        |
| Sun 14th June    | Marsworth Steam Rally with tea tent run by All Saints.   |                |
| Wed 1st July     | Parish Hall, Tring. Men's Society meeting. Rev Huw Bellis, Tring Team Rector.                        | 8.00pm         |
| Wed 8th July     | Parish Men's Society meeting. Summer Lunch with the Ladies.  |                |
| Sun 12th July    | Family Games at Astrope, Puttenham.  | 2.30pm         |
| Sun 9th Aug      | St Mary's, Puttenham. Patronal Festival. Churchyard entertainment and cream tea.                     | 2.30pm         |

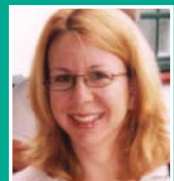
## Family Fun Day - A Focus for All

Now I know that there are an awful lot of you out there who receive this publication via the wonderful communication pipeline that is "the School Book Bag". I know that this method of "outreach" is effective in speaking to an audience that may, actually, have very little to do with St. Peter and St. Paul's church. But I also know (or rather would like to think) that those of you who do read this, but are "non church goers", would be deeply saddened, maybe even outraged, if OUR beautiful church and grounds, the visual heart of Tring, were to be flattened and turned into a multi-storey. Don't worry, yet. Enter the Family Fun Day! Enter You! You see, as you have children attending our local schools it is for the likes of you that the Family Fun Day is run and it is for those children, and those children's children (echoes of a Ribena advert me thinks!) that we, as Friends of Tring Church Heritage (FOTCH), continue to support and fundraise on behalf of the church. Let me be clear. The fundraising that we do as FOTCH has nothing to do with the "religious" goings on within the church. It is purely about the fabric of the building itself and the preservation of the grounds for the church.

**So what can you do? Firstly put a date in your diary Family Fun Day - Saturday 9th May, 10am.**

Aim to be there, and aim to bring along as many family and friends as you can muster. The day always proves to be an enormous success in terms of opening doors (physically encouraging first timers into the church) and giving Tring an annual event that outsiders comment on as providing a true platform to show its community spirit. Secondly, enjoy it, it's great family fun. It is also enormous fun to for those involved with running the day. This is where you can come in too. We need new ideas, new blood and new bodies (oh! that is just me then!)

If you are available and would like to contribute in any way with helping at this event then please do contact me. Remember: The heart of Tring needs you! - **Libby McKerrow - 01442 824087 / libbymck@btinternet.com**



# WORKING TOGETHER

## Why I Choose to Serve

For me a question like that is exactly the same as 'Why would someone be a Christian?' which was coincidentally a GCSE religious studies question I was asked to answer. In an exam there are certain things that have to be written because that is what the examining authorities want, but I don't think the editor would appreciate that this time.

The fact is that no type of service is a chore. Being in the choir, and now the group, my 'service' is doing what I enjoy, singing and praising God. There isn't much point in trying to praise God when you don't enjoy it as all it means is that you are not praising. What is done unwillingly is worthless.

From the first Sunday I turned up at church after leaving the choir I was urged to become a server (I'm still unsure how much was my own decision). Either way I'm thankful to the two individuals who encouraged me. Being a server is an entirely new involvement, one that I'm not entirely used to – those who sit in the first few pews may be aware of this by the nervous grin I wear throughout the service. Despite the drastic fear of dropping the Bible I absolutely love the closer involvement in the service, it is only in the last few weeks that I realised how much is going on, things which I was previously oblivious to in the choir when I was probably too busy trying to find the next hymn number!

Yet service is not exclusive to the church, it is something that I try to do everyday. FOTCH is one of the most obvious ways of doing this.



With FOTCH the church is brought out into the community, a tremendous task for some, but a chore for none I'm sure. Soon I will be going to university and moving to a new city, my involvement with St. Peters and St. Pauls will be considerably reduced even though I fully intend to carry on when I am around. Nonetheless while I am away I will be fervently searching for other such opportunities to get involved in a church and with the community, I only hope that wherever I go can match the standards of Tring!

I may repeat serve, server, and service but these words don't deserve any of the negative connotations sometimes associated with them. Why I choose to serve is because it is essential to praising God, getting involved, joining the community, and life.

*Emily Wood*

**Editor's Note:** *As with so many things in church community life, Emily's article clearly identifies the great pleasure and satisfaction that comes from involvement – serving and giving to the community blesses those who give as much as those who receive.*

## A New Vision for Spiritual Growth - Together

I always have a profound sinking feeling in my stomach whenever anyone asks about my vision...

It's not that I think having vision is unimportant, quite the opposite, in fact I think vision is vital to ensure that any congregation has energy and purpose. Vision ensures growth, both for the individuals within it and the congregation as a whole. So why the sinking feeling? Well, I believe that vision is not a vehicle for imposing one person's ideas about where we are going and how to get there, hoping everyone else will come on board, but involves a process through which the views and needs of the different travellers can be gathered.

I do have thoughts of my own about how we can use the breadth and depth of resources already existing within the Tring Team to create a route for our spiritual development programme. Among these are;

The use of our five beautiful churches as places of hospitality, pilgrimage, silence, story. Discovering how we can use our churches to provide a specific "Sacred Space" for prayer and reflection, a process St Peter and St Paul's have already begun.

Fun – including time in the glorious countryside around us, not to mention the pubs! (Many a good theological debate can take place in the time it takes to drink a pint).

These are developments to come, but we can all begin our journey toward spiritual growth. The Bible is sometimes described as a road map for Christian living, Acts 2:46 tells us; "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God."

This verse gives us an insight into the life of people who formed the early Church and provides a starting point for our own spiritual lives – "every day"; "together" and "with glad and sincere hearts, praising God". There is a lot of common ground with what we need today to help us develop and grow spiritually.

Encountering God daily, in prayer and through reading and reflecting on the Bible. Worshipping with other Christians formally and informally and Enjoying our Christian faith.

I appreciate that having a rhythm of daily prayer and bible reading is a dream for some people, it's difficult to spend "every day with Jesus" when juggling the demands of work and family life. For a long time my own spiritual life was captured in a fridge magnet caption;

"Lord help me to remember that nothing is going to happen today that YOU and I together can't handle". We all have to find what fits into our lives and it will change as our circumstances alter. So, although I do not set out a fast moving vision for spiritual growth, I can identify an aim. This is to provide an itinerary for a "stopping service", one which will enable people to choose the appropriate stages which will strengthen their own journey of spiritual growth.

*Jo Wetherall*



# R AS A COMMUNITY

## We're all in this Together

There are some phrases that just should not be used - like 'are you alright?' when you see a good friend with his / her arm in plaster. Of course they are not alright. Their arm is broken in three places; shoelaces have been transformed into an instrument of torture and they can only open a bottle of the Chateau Plonk du Tring with the aid of an electric corkscrew. Or consider the words of your GP when he / she announces 'this might hurt a little bit' when what is actually meant is 'you're going to be in agony for days'.

The title of this piece definitely falls into the 'should never be spoken' category in the humble opinion of yours truly. For a start, what is 'it' and why am I in 'it' with the entire universe? Would you think me incredibly rude if I said that I really don't desire to be in such close proximity to so many people, 'it' or no 'it'? As I write this article, Fred 'The Shred' Goodwin is clinging with grim determination to his pension whilst the government which authorised it demands to know how and why he has it. I suppose the now unemployed Fred does have a little in common with former staff at his place of work, in that a large number of these individuals no longer have a job either, but I am sure that his £693,000 per year will somewhat soften the blow for 'The Shred'. And then there is the Cameron family, coping with the loss of a son and brother - a sudden massive void in their lives. How can I say that I am in 'it' with them? I have never cared for a handicapped child. Watched him suffer. Known that he would die young and then still been shocked when the inevitable happened, because in such circumstances even the most rational person hopes and believes that miracles happen.

How can anyone truly understand the feelings of another? When my mother died, a neighbour told me that I could not fully understand my father's loss; that only those who had been in the same position could really comprehend his grief, and she was right. Just as he could never totally relate to my sense of loss - his mother died when she was 88. Not for my father all of the stupid, self-imposed milestones I have to pass. For example, I have now been married for longer than my parents ever were - milestone passed. I won that one. I am well aware that most people - those with more robust parents - don't even think of such things. But I do - and I'll let you know when I make it past the next one.



We're not 'all in it together'. We do have to find our own way through life. But just as the Camerons have expressed gratitude to all of those who have sent them messages of condolence, so I remain eternally thankful for my emotional scaffolding - the friends who have been around to stretch out a helping hand (or prayer) to me when I needed it most; those who provided a cup of coffee at the right time (with optional hanky). But please don't tell me that 'we're all in it together' because sometimes what is really required are people who are on the edge; strong; watching me and reaching out to steady me when I need it most - *Liz Wood*

## Who gets The Rock? - It's Nomination time!

As announced in the last edition of TTT, 'The Rock' award will be given to an individual who has been steadfast in building up the Parish and Parish life. Lets celebrate our successes, send your nominations to the Editor, Tring Tram Times. Please let us have your nominations, addressed to The Editor, Tring Team Times. Please nominate an individual or individuals who you consider has delivered outstanding support for the Parish in creating a strong sense of community in any aspect of our Parish life. *This is as an annual award. Winner will be announced in the next edition. The judges will be the Rector, the Team Vicar and the Editor.*



**Jesus said: "A new command I give you. You must love one another as I have loved you. If you love each other, everyone will know you are my disciples." John 13:34/35**

There is an emphasis, throughout this issue, on the health and wellbeing of the churches in our parish. Others have written about growth of spirituality, finances or mission, but as I write this at the beginning of Lent, I can't help but think of Maundy Thursday and what Jesus did for his disciples. He loved them so much that he humbled himself and washed their feet. The early church was built on such actions.

St Paul said that the church is made up of many members, and that we cannot work as a healthy body if we do not love, support and care for one another.

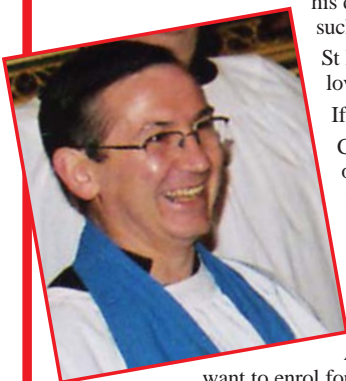
If the sign of a healthy church is in how we love and care for each other, how do we show that today?

Caring for each other (Pastoral Care) comes in many forms. For example, I know that there are some members of the community of the church who shop for others, visit those who are unable to get to church, support those in difficulties, comfort the bereaved, guide the younger members, welcome visitors - and more. This is not just a job for a few - and certainly not just for the clergy and ministers; Jesus' call is to everyone. When we do not respond, our neighbour in the pew is left feeling alone and rejected.

One of the reasons people give for holding back from this ministry, is fear of saying the wrong thing. We have been asked for training in this area and so we are putting in place some courses to better equip ourselves for Pastoral Care. The first one will be on "Befriending the Bereaved" and will take place on four Tuesdays: April 21st and 28th, then May 12th and 19th. These courses are open to everyone. Please contact me if you

want to enrol for this first one, or would like more information.

"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of it for someone else." Charles Dickens (1812 - 70) - *Malcolm Nobbs*



# WHAT DO WE DO WITH IT, W

## The facts about Tring Parish Team Scheme

### (The Stewardship Planned Giving Initiative of Tring Parish)

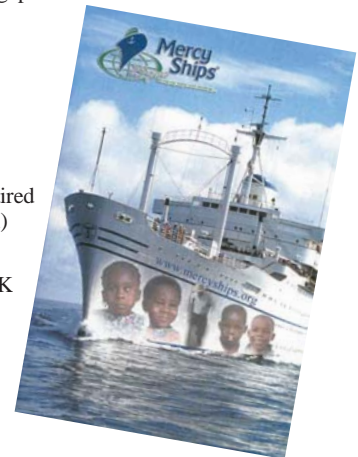
- More than 500 people on the electoral roll
- 189 in the Team Scheme (38%)
- Team Scheme 2008 = £76,459 plus £20,339 gift aid.
- So, £7.77 each a week (£9.85 inc the gift aid)
- Or £405 each a year (£512 inc the gift aid)
- Half have not changed their giving level since joining the scheme.
- 13 people (or couples) give more than £1,000 (exc gift aid). These people represent 36% of the total planned giving.
- 40 people (or couples) give more than £500 (exc gift aid). These people represent 61% of the planned giving total.
- £10 a month more from everyone (£20 from a couple) would yield £22,680 which would close the gap!



### Where does the money go?

#### What we spend it on

- Our plan for 2009 is to spend £173K
- £102K is for Parish Share. This pays for our current ministry (inc their stipend and housing), for retired clergy, for Ministers in training and for the Diocesan resources and structure that we are provided with)
- £12K Mission Giving (inc all mission giving, not just the mission committee)
- £38K running the 5 churches - insurance, utilities, candles, general maintenance, churchyards. (£10K utilities, £10K insurance, £2K church yards, £8K maintenance, £7K running services)
- £12K wages and associated expenses
- £8K running the church halls (Puttenham and Tring)
- £1K education



### What if we had all the money we wanted?

If we had more money there are so many extra things we could do...

- Ministry for young people
- More Education
- More Mission
- More support for our church schools.
- Upgrade the Parish Hall to a better standard.
- More hours for an Administrator to help with communication, run our expenses (even) more efficiently and remove some of the Admin burden from the clergy team to free them up for patronal work.
- ... More of the things that make us a Healthy Church.

*The PCC Treasurer*



## Planned giving donations and collections deliver the essential energy for the Parish to function and grow.

The majority of our current expenditure goes on paying our Parish Share. This goes direct to the diocese and in return we have our current ministry and support the training of new ministers and the pensions of retired clergy.

More fuel in the way of funds would give us extra energy to do all those good things we strive to achieve as a Parish. It would give our community stronger links and help us serve the whole community in which we live more effectively.

*It would make us even more a 'healthy church'. - The Editor*

# HAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

## The Team Scheme

### What is it? what does it mean to me?

The Team Scheme is the planned giving stewardship scheme of Tring Team Parish. Planned giving – especially with Gift Aid (which adds approximately a third more with no cost to the individual) is by far the best way of a Parish community supporting itself. It allows the treasurers, the wardens and the PCCs to build their programmes of activity with some certainty and confidence.

The Team Scheme is almost ten years old and is open to every member of the Parish community and everyone on the electoral roll. Currently less than 40% of all the members of the Parish contributes to the Team Scheme. We'd like to improve that significantly for the good of all.

#### Three Simple Steps - ask yourself these questions:

- 1) I am a member of the Team Scheme – should I review the amount I give and can I ensure that it is Gift Aided? Yes  No
- 2) I am not a member of the Scheme but I could be if I chose – should I join? Yes  No
- 3) Do I know anybody in the Parish community who I could encourage to become a member of the Team Scheme? Yes  No

If you answer 'yes' to any of these questions, you will hopefully be in a position to **do something about it**. If even half the people who read this say yes, all our aims and objective as a Parish community will be fulfilled and we will have the energy and financial fuel to practice the works of the caring, sharing, giving community that we all desire.

For further information on any aspect of the Team Scheme, please contact Huw, Jo, your treasurer or any of the wardens.

*Grahame Senior*



## Is this You?

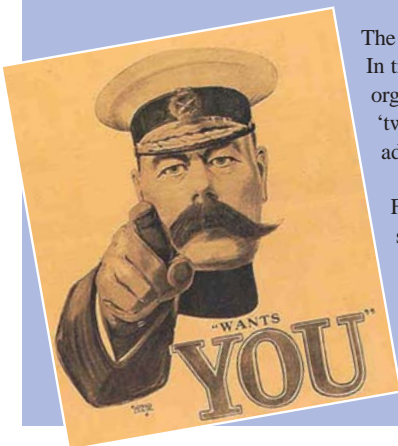


Dedicated, committed, focused on developing young people, keen to take on a vital new role and fill a gap in our Parish life.

The children who attend our 'Sunday Clubs' are a vital resource for the future of our Parish life. In times past, the gap between Sunday Club education and joining our Youth Group was filled by an organisation called Pathfinders. Pathfinders was an exciting way of involving and supporting 'tweenagers', so that an engagement with the Christian community continues as they grow into adolescence.

For some years now, we have not had an organiser team willing to provide this very valuable service. If you would be interested in exploring this, such things as times of meeting and all other logistical aspects are very much open to individual preference. What matters most is that we do not lose the energy and involvement of our brightest young people.

If you feel you would like to be involved in keeping that connection going, please contact Huw Bellis or Jo Wetherall.



# TRING TEAM **TT** TIMES

ALL SAINTS  
ST CROSS  
ST JOHN THE BAPTIST  
ST MARY  
ST PETER & ST PAUL

Edition 23

April 2009

## When the going gets tough...

There's no doubt about it, the going has certainly been getting tougher and tougher on the economic front throughout this winter. The latest headlines in the national press tell of a divided Britain. Young wage earners with large mortgages are hugely better off; retired people with fixed income pensions and savings are hugely worse off. Of course, the reality is not so simple. There are many young adults and families whose jobs are gone, whose livelihood is threatened and who are no longer able to pay their mortgages. There are many older people who still enjoy reasonable incomes. It is never wise to generalise. Our community is made up of individuals, each with their own strengths and weaknesses, each with different problems and worries. **That is also the way our Parish is.**

In my opinion, the most important thing about the current situation is not that we need more money (we do, and it would be really helpful if we could all search our thoughts and come up with it). The big issue is that we have a huge opportunity. As Huw has already mentioned, hard times often bring out the best in people. The sense of pulling together throughout the Parish is stronger. Old divisions are healing. We have a new rector and a new young family at the heart of our Parish. We have a new vicar and her family installed in Aldbury. We have a greater sense of involvement stirring in so many people throughout the Parish.

### Happy Days?

It's undoubtedly the case that the larger community in which we all live is awakening from its relentless commitment to materialism and a search for affluence. History shows that very often people are happier in harder times. Happier with less in the way of material wealth. Happier with more in the sense of shared community objectives and greater time and freedom to relate to each other and to the wider world.

Such a time is now. In my opinion as Editor (and I get a unique opportunity to read not only all the articles that appear but all the various submissions and ideas that are considered) there is a sense of purpose building up and a sense of shared responsibility growing throughout our community. Let's grasp it and focus on what we can do for the community rather than what it can do for us.

### Count your blessings...

The Mothers' Union (so often a wise guide) has been running a 'count your blessings' initiative throughout Lent. The idea is that we enjoy so much that we almost forget to be thankful. We have so many things – and take them for granted – in our world that we forget how rare that is in the wider world. You never know, this might just be the best time of our lives.

*The Editor*

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Fax: 01442 822069. Email: gsenior@seniorpartners.co.uk

## Young People

Our most precious resource

Does your life ever seem in turmoil? Mine does right now. Yesterday I went to a presentation about changes that will be happening for our 14-19 year olds. We have to bring up our youngsters to cope with change and to be prepared to continue learning throughout their lives.

It's my birthday today – sixty two, retired, taking on roles that in my working life I was not able to do. Right now I'm learning how the love of a ninety year old can make him a carer for his frail and confused wife, I'm learning about the constant and skilled care of a neo-natal unit as my firstborn's firstborn son is loved through seven premature weeks – how could I prepare my son for this unexpected anxiety?

I'm learning about how three young children cope as mum returns to work, and how mum & dad cope with the extra pressure this brings. Where does this take us? It is vital that as a society we are willing and able to be there to support others through change, and it is vital that during the earlier years of life we help our young people to find values that will give them "a firm foundation when the sands of fortune shift." Try bringing them the love of Christ and showing them Christian values.

This is what the R.E. initiative is all about, encouraging Tring School students to engage with the deeper issues of life, but also encouraging the local people to look at the school with more inclusive eyes – it is our school that is educating our future. This is one of the reasons why the Lent talks are being held there – have you been to any? – and this is why we are holding events such as the Mastermind evening at the Learning Centre. In May I hope you will feel able to join groups discussing evil and suffering, and next year I hope we shall be able to bring you a concert to lift your hearts as we bring together, through music, the schools in the town. Look out for these events, and make sure you are there!

Discussions on evil and suffering on May 16th 2009

Proposed concert date March 7th 2010.

*Jill Smith*



## Comments and ideas for future editions - The floor is yours

Tring Team Times is designed to be an open forum for all members of Tring Team Parish. Let us have your views and comments and let us know what subjects you'd like covered in future editions. Our rector offers us the prospect of greater openness and involvement at every level in Parish life. Talking to Tring Team Times is one way we can embrace that.

## Spreading The News

If you can think of anyone who'd enjoy reading Tring Team Times or getting further information on Parish activities and opportunities, please do let us have their details. Mike Watkin and Vivianne Child update the circulation list for every edition, so please do pass on any changes you're aware of.