

June 2022

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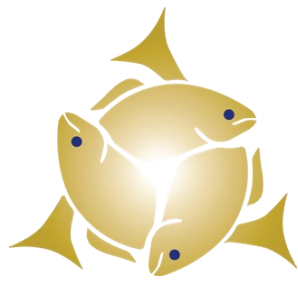


TRINITY TIMES



Lives changed through God's love

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



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The next magazine will be the **July/August 2022** edition
The copy date is 10 June

If any item is left until the very last minute, or received after the copy date, there is no guarantee that it will be able to be included in the magazine.

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Front cover :- Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Holy Trinity Team



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Associate Vicar



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Phil Harper
Children & Families Minister

Making New Memories

After months of anticipation, we are finally about to enjoy all the Queen's Platinum Jubilee parties, events, and celebrations. It is amazing how all age groups can be caught up in these wonderful activities and happy memories built into their lives.

People in their seventies and eighties can still remember the street parties, that were held in Stratford for previous royal events. These show the power of shared community events to bind together people from many diverse backgrounds into one cohesive whole.

Hopefully all the hard work that has gone into preparing for this year's unique events will result in new connections being made between various groups of people, especially through our own Jubilee Crown Project on Sunday 5 June at 5pm. This will be an opportunity for a wide range of local community groups, children and youth organisations to advertise their presence in the town, by displaying their decorated crowns in a procession, and then in church, for all to see.

We will be reminded again of the truly amazing service to our country that the Queen has provided through her constancy in keeping her promise on her 21st Birthday when she said, "I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong." This promise has stood the test of many challenging and difficult years, as well as some joyful events too.

I was interested to read that the new Archbishop of Wales says the challenges facing the world must be overcome with Christ's example of love, service, honesty, and forgiveness. Several of the well-known British institutions began their existence because of Christian values, with many European Universities being founded by the Church.

The Bible and Christian theology have strongly influenced Western philosophers and political activists. The teachings of Jesus, such as the Parable of the Good Samaritan, are among the most important sources of modern notions of human rights and the welfare commonly provided by governments in the West.

We have recently been following a sermon series on "Expressing our faith" in various settings. So perhaps now is the time to trust that God is "doing a new thing" and help to re-build our society after the worst of the pandemic, on a more caring, compassionate, and honest foundation, for the sake of ourselves and generations to come.

Kay Dyer





SUNDAY SERVICES IN JUNE

Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon

5 June - Pentecost

10am - Parish Eucharist ~ *Pentecost*

5pm - Special Jubilee Service

12 June - Trinity Sunday

10am - Parish Eucharist ~ *Patronal Festival with commissioning of PCC and churchwardens*

5pm - Choral Evensong

19 June - 1st Sunday after Trinity

10am - Parish Eucharist ~ *Celebrating Fathers*

5pm - Choral Evensong - FOSC AGM

26 June - 2nd Sunday after Trinity

10am - Parish Eucharist ~ *Joint Service with Methodists - Eco theme*

5pm - Holy Communion - Traditional

St Helen's Church, Clifford Chambers

5 June - Pentecost

9.30 - Holy Communion

12 June - Trinity Sunday

9.30 - Morning Worship Band

19 June - 1st Sunday after Trinity

9.30 - Morning Worship

26 June - 2nd Sunday after Trinity

9.30 - Holy Communion



All Saints' Church, Luddington

5 June - Pentecost

9.30 - Holy Communion

12 June - Trinity Sunday

9.30 - Holy Communion

19 June - 1st Sunday after Trinity

9.30 - Holy Communion

26 June - 2nd Sunday after Trinity

9.30 - Holy Communion

Worship Notes



Conclusions of Review of 5pm Service at Holy Trinity

A few months ago we conducted a survey of the congregation and choir to find out what preferences people had for both the time of the evening service at Holy Trinity and also the type and pattern of services through the month. There was a clear preference for keeping the present start time of 5pm and so the service will now remain at this time.

In terms of pattern, there was a strong desire for the emphasis to be on choral music, with a call for more services of Choral Evensong. The Taize and Healing services are also popular, along with the more traditional Holy Communion services. In the light of this, the usual pattern for each Sunday of the month from now on will be as follows:

1st Sunday	Taizé Service
2nd Sunday	Choral Evensong
3rd Sunday	Traditional (ie Book of Common Prayer) Holy Communion
4th Sunday	Choral Evensong
5th Sunday	Evensong with Ministry of Healing

The pattern will sometimes be interrupted by special or unusual services (see 19 June below) but the above services will be the default.

Some key dates and services in June

Sunday 5 June We start this month with a double celebration: it's Pentecost Sunday and also the weekend of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee! There are special Jubilee services at All Saints at 9.30am and Holy Trinity at 5pm.

Sunday 12 June Trinity Sunday. A special day at Holy Trinity as we mark our Patronal Festival. We shall also be commissioning members of the PCC and our Churchwardens for their ministry and duties in the parish over the coming year.

Saturday 18 June 5pm Memorial Service for the Rev'd Neville Beamer.

Sunday 19 June is Father's Day, and whilst this isn't part of the church calendar (unlike Mothering Sunday) we will nevertheless be giving thanks for fathers as part of the 10am Parish Eucharist at Holy Trinity.

At 5pm there will be a special service of Choral Evensong to give thanks for the work of the Friends of Shakespeare's Church (following their AGM earlier that afternoon in the Parish Centre). The preacher is The Rev. Paul Edmondson, who is a Trustee of FOOSC. Holy Communion (Traditional) will move to the 4th Sunday this month.

Sunday 26 June After a break due to the pandemic, we're delighted to be hosting once again a joint service with Stratford Methodist church, who will be joining us from across the road. Their minister, the Rev. Audrey Simpson will be preaching. This will be especially poignant as Audrey will be leaving Stratford soon to move to a new role.

There will be a service of **Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Communion (Corpus Christi)** on **Thursday 16 June, 7.30pm**. We celebrate the gift of Jesus present with us in bread and wine in this special eucharist at Holy Trinity.

Platinum Jubilee Crowns

If you've been in the Parish Centre over the last few weeks, you may have seen some large wooden crowns taking shape. It's part of a project bringing together different organisations across the town in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Schools and charity organisations have been given a crown to decorate in celebration of the Queen. These crowns will be on display in Holy Trinity across the **Bank Holiday weekend (Thurs 2 – Sun 5 June)** during the church's usual opening hours. Please come and have a look at the crowns and see the hard work that has been put into them.

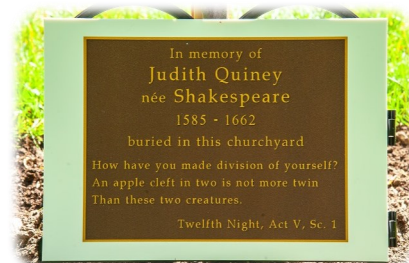
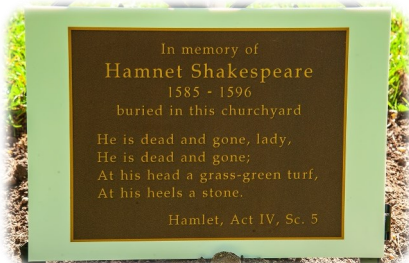


Blank crown ready for decorating

The culmination of the weekend will be on **Sunday at 5pm** when we have our **Hymns and Crowns for the Queen**. The crowns will be processed from the Parish Centre into church and presented to the mayor as we celebrate such an amazing milestone in the Queen's life and the life of this country.



HAMNET AND JUDITH HONOURED



On a beautiful sunny morning, Shakespeare's twins were honoured at last in a moving dedication in the grounds of Holy Trinity Church, when the novelist Maggie O'Farrell

placed branches of rosemary (associated with remembrance as Ophelia notes in the play "Hamlet") on the plaques in front of two newly-planted rowan trees. The audience included the Mayor and Mayoress of Stratford, the Vicar, Rev'd Patrick Taylor, church wardens, Trinity Players, actors from the Royal Shakespeare Company and Annie Ashworth, organizer of the Stratford Literary Festival.

The ceremony came about because when O'Farrell was researching her prize-winning novel **Hamnet**, published in 2020, she realized that no-one knew where his twins, Hamnet and Judith, were buried. The church had a record of Hamnet's burial at the age of eleven, and Judith's burial much later when she was 67, but their graves were never marked. O'Farrell had the idea of planting a rowan or mountain ash, known for their healing properties, for each twin, Hamnet's with red-gold berries and Judith's with pink berries. Like the twins, the trees are similar but not identical and will serve as a memorial for years to come.

After an introduction and thanks for support from the Town Council by Churchwarden Tim Raistrick, O'Farrell explained how important she felt the death of his son Hamnet, at such a young age, was to Shakespeare's development as a writer, as several of his plots are concerned with the death of a child. She mentioned "Hamlet" and "Twelfth Night" as examples of how the birth of twins and then deaths within his family had influenced Shakespeare's writing.

Hannah Young, an actor with the RSC, then read two moving speeches concerning both death in the family and the important bonds between twins, the first from "King John", Act III, scene iv, starting "Grief fills the room up of my absent child, lies in his bed, walks up and down with me". This was followed by a second happier reading from "A Midsummer Night's Dream", Act III, scene ii, when Helena says of Hermia "So we grew together like a double cherry, seeming parted, but yet a union in partition".

The ceremony concluded with Rev'd Patrick Taylor leading prayers and asking that Hamnet and Judith be commended into the hands of Almighty God.

Volunteers in church know that one of the most frequently asked questions is "Why are Hamnet and Judith not buried by the altar with their family, and where are they?" Although we cannot answer that question, we can now explain that the twins have their own memorials in the form of rowan trees.

Judith Dorricott



Photographs by Harry Lomax

Love, Confusion, and Spirituality

The Shakespeare Sermon 24 April 2022
Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon
by Paul S. Fiddes

1 Cor 2:9: The Apostle Paul writes: 'eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.'

There are more than a thousand quotations or close references to biblical texts in Shakespeare, but I want to begin this Shakespeare Sermon with a misquotation. It's deliberate on Shakespeare's part, of course, though not by the character to whom he gives it. Bottom the Weaver, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, wakes up, now relieved of his ass's head, after a magical night spent in bed with the Fairy Queen, and he expresses his sense of the sheer mystery of the experience, which seems to him now *as* a dream:

'The *eye* of man hath not *heard*, the *ear* of man hath not *seen*, man's *hand* is not able to *taste*, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream; it shall be called "Bottom's dream" because it hath no bottom' (4.1.209–12).

This is a sublime bungling of the text from St. Paul with which I began. Yet this muddle, linking hearing to the eye, seeing to the ear and so on, sums up Shakespeare's whole approach to his comedy and its central theme of love.

Shakespeare echoes texts from the Bible like this to colour his characters and develop his plot - but for something else as well: he wants to convey a spirituality which is empty of any dogma. I mean by this first that he wants to show:

(1) There's a truth of love which can emerge through confusion

It's significant that Bottom begins his speech with 'the *eye* of man....' So far the play has been about a disease of the eyes: Demetrius has insisted on seeing Hermia as his one true love when actually she loves another, Lysander, and he ought to be faithful to his first love, Helena. The Fairy Queen and King have had an unhealthy fixation on a little Indian boy. But true love sees with an inner sight, an intuition: it 'sees not with the eyes but with the mind', or with the heart, as Helena declares. So Hermia complains 'I would my father looked but with my eyes' and laments 'O hell! To love by another's eyes....'

The quotation from St Paul is all about love as a sight - and also as a taste, a sound and an idea - all of which is a mystery, whose roots are deep beneath the surface of life. He says:

'eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.'

Paul is talking about love for God, but we know that Paul thinks this can never be separated from love for our fellow human beings.

Now, in the play, and in all Shakespeare's comedies, the confusion in love-sight is only going to be healed by further confusion; order will be restored only by a bit of comic disorder. To get to the deepest truth of love the surface of things has to be blown open by deliberate confusion; a comic explosion is needed, which might be caused by a mistaken identity, putting on a disguise, playing a trick on another, pretending to be someone else or - in this case, a magic juice laid on the eyes while asleep.

The original disorder came from the eyes and it is deepened through the eyes, when anointed by the love-juice. The feelings of the lovers are quite muddled up: Helena, once despised by Demetrius finds herself the object of frantic attention by both male lovers; the Fairy Queen is made to dote on an ass. But through that very disorder comes healing.

When he wakes up, Bottom is right to think his dream has been a profound one. Somehow he feels that the confusions of his dream have had ultimate meaning, if only he could work out what it was. There's a 'transfiguration' of the world of the senses; something new is happening. The comedy has turned the world upside-down so the participants, and the audience can see that it was the wrong way up all the time.

Cont...

Shakespeare is hinting that there is a healing which is deeper even than dramatic comedy, and a love which is more profound even than human love. There's a spirituality of challenging the merely material, and in arousing a sense of something 'other' than the habits of the everyday. And this is going to disturb and even confuse. We may need to be jolted out of the behaviour to which we have got used. We're prompted to say, with the poet of the Book of Job, 'Where *can* wisdom be found?'

This 'other' reality is not in another world; the other can be met only in the bodies of this world. For the Apostle Paul this 'altogether other' can be given the name 'God'.

Shakespeare may think this too, but he doesn't need to tell us it to make his drama work. Bottom is reflecting on an ecstatic experience which is highly erotic, arousing the senses, and yet strangely religious at the same time. The other is *in* the world, and yet cannot be *contained* by the world. So, second,

(2) This truth of love challenges oppressive authorities

Appealing to the sight of her own 'eyes', Hermia is challenging the patriarchy of her father and the dominant authority of her society. This power is focused in the Duke who had said about Hermia's father, 'Rather your eyes must with his judgement look.'

Now Shakespeare isn't overtly a revolutionary; like all Elizabethans he respects order in society where it's possible to have it - but he clearly thinks that love has a prior claim over all institutions and social organizations. In the verses immediately before St Paul's appeal to what 'eye has not seen' Paul declares that the 'princes of this world' had failed to see the true vision of glory (1 Cor. 2:7-8). He writes:

'But we speak God's wisdom, mysterious and hidden, which God had decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the princes of this world have understood this: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.'

If indeed this verse is in Shakespeare's mind as he portrays Duke Theseus, it underlines that love takes priority over established structures of power – the princes of this world.

Further, this Pauline text prompts us to think that there's a parallel to the confusions of comedy within the Christian story itself. In both drama and Christian theology, the healing of human eyes issues from confusion, but perhaps the theological account is even more ironic. As St Paul puts it: the rulers of this age did not understand the wisdom of God, and so (humanly speaking) they were confused and made a terrible error in crucifying Christ.

Nevertheless, God has used this situation to bring about human transformation, and so, while the wise of the world count the cross as folly, God has 'made the wisdom of this world foolishness' (1 Cor. 1:20).

This, as Dante puts it, is the Divine Comedy – or perhaps we should say, tragi-comedy.

It is comedy because it ends well; it is tragedy because there is real suffering that leaves its mark for ever, not least on God. This is what happens when the truth of love challenges the powers of the world. But then it's tragi-comedy that Shakespeare is always writing, whether he calls it comedy or tragedy.

So, third, Shakespeare's spirituality recognizes that

(3) Love's speech is complex

Bottom's speech about his dream is tangled, and yet communicates to us precisely through the muddle. In all comedies of Shakespeare, truth comes to light through confusion partly because the tangled situation gives opportunity for a new kind of speech.

Love and understanding actually develop through the knotty web of the situation, which has been produced by playing a trick or falling victim to mistakes. The confusion within which characters are caught enables them to express their feelings in a way which is powerful and creative through being indirect rather than clear and open. The ironic way they speak of love copes with the complexity of their emotional responses and enables them to explore each other's minds.

Cont...

Love, Confusion, and Spirituality cont...

Let's turn for an example to a play which is part of the RSC's new season this year, *Much Ado about Nothing*. Here are Beatrice and Benedick in their conversation with each other:

Benedick says: 'I do love nothing in the world so well as you: is not that strange?'

Beatrice replies: 'As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you, but believe me not; and yet I lie not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing.' (*Much Ado about Nothing*, 4.1.267–72)

Beatrice and Benedick have been tricked by their friends into believing that they are each loved by the other. Within the framework of their misapprehension they're feeling for a truth with their intuitive senses that their conscious minds won't acknowledge; in their ambiguous use of the word 'nothing' they could either be saying that they value each other at nothing, or at more than anything, and they are moving within themselves from one meaning to the other.

It seems that love can't be recognized without a bit of chaos, because love doesn't operate with normal sight and a purely rational intellect. When Beatrice and Benedick discover they've been tricked into playing the part of lovers, they don't mind at all:

it was only this way that they discovered the truth - they really had loved each other all the time.

Continually in Shakespeare's plays, lovers suffer failure of inner sight; they don't trust the inner, intuitive vision of love and are deceived by the outward appearance of the senses – what Claudio in *Much Ado* calls 'seeming'. They reduce the meaning to the sign. Othello loses trust in Desdemona because of the flimsy proof of a lost handkerchief. Claudio, while railing against 'seeming' shamefully rejects Hero because of the so-called 'evidence' of an overheard conversation at a window.

The point is that only a good shaking up of the situation will get beneath 'seeming' to the reality, and so the speech of love may be strange. In Paul's text about what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, he's stretching language to speak about a mystery, which for him is love for God, and God's response to the lover. Talk about love of God, and God's love for humanity is a strange kind of speech, making everyday words serve for an experience that is altogether other. It's what we are doing in much of this service of worship; the challenge is to find the other in the midst of the familiar, the here and now, and so to love our neighbour. Bottom, we feel, can do this even though he mangles the text.

(4) Love outlasts death

Finally, in his spiritual outlook Shakespeare wants to tell us that love triumphs not only in the present, but into the future. His plays show that there are no temporal limits to love:

in some, undefined way it outlasts even death.

We can say only a little about what Shakespeare means by the indestructible nature of love.

One thing we can say is that for Shakespeare love creates a story that death cannot overcome, and which creates a lasting monument to love, whether in the theatre of Cleopatra's death ('give me my robes, my crown', she exults) or in the statue raised to Romeo and Juliet by their grieving family.

Love lasts too through Shakespeare's own lines of poetry, which he believes will survive when even brass and stone will be worn away. Here we have the testimony of Sonnet 65:

Or what strong hand can hold [death's] swift foot back,
Or who his spoil o'er beauty can forbid?
O none, unless this miracle have might:
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

But there still remains a mystery in Shakespeare's thought about the way that love outlasts even death, a hope which exceeds any rational explanation.

Cont...

Love, Confusion, and Spirituality cont...

In *The Comedy of Errors*, a play in the RSC season that's just ended, the mystery is portrayed as a kind of birth. At the end of the play, when the Abbess discovers her two long-lost children, she presents her lifetime's journey as a process of painful labour toward their delivery, and she invites the onlookers to share her joy at a feast like one to mark a baptism after 'nativity' (the term of the period is a 'gossips' feast):

Thirty-three years have I but gone in travail
Of you, my sons, and till this present hour
My heavy burden ne'er delivered.
—The Duke, my husband and my children both
And you, the calendars of their nativity,
Go to a gossips' feast, and go with me;
After so long grief, such nativity! (5.1.400–406)

With these references to the passing of time, the Abbess is hinting that she's close to the end of her life, given the life-expectancy of the period. Yet this pilgrimage toward death can be experienced as a travail toward birth when love is present - the renewed love between Antipholus of Ephesus and Adriana, the new love of Antipholus of Syracuse and Luciana, and the restored love between the Abbess and her lost husband and children. Adriana cites the author of the New Testament Letter to the Ephesians on his vision of the 'one flesh' of love's union - 'we two be one' she urges in appealing to her erring husband. It's love that turns death into birth.

So Shakespeare is offering a spirituality:
in which love develops out of human confusion;
where love resists oppressive powers;
where love needs strange language;
and where love somehow conquers even time and death.

In the imagery of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* - this is a seeing with the eyes of love. It is love's knowledge, love's wisdom. As we enter the play-space of Shakespeare's comedies, we find that we're experiencing a blend of loving and knowing which blocks all attempts to turn the other person into a mere object, and this is precisely because this love's knowledge is open to mystery. It's a seeing with which 'no eye has seen'; it's a translation into words of an experience which remains finally unsayable.

Those who worship God today, here in Shakespeare's own church, know that with a God of love it's always a question of 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived.'

"Gossips" are godparents, invited, among other relatives and friends, to the feast celebrating birth and baptism.
Eph. 5:31, referring to Gen. 2:24.



Photographs from
Shakespeare Service
by Harry Lomax

Celebrating with Bells

A group of pupils from Holy Trinity School C of E Primary School accompanied by their teachers, Mrs Smith and Mrs Cottrell, enjoyed an exciting and informative bell ringing taster session at Holy Trinity Church last month. The session was led by Coventry Diocesan Guild Officers Mark Sayers and Annie Hall.

It was the first step in training a band for the School's Bicentenary Celebrations, and all pupils showed great promise as future ringers. Well done everyone!

Vicky McCarthy

James said "The bellringing was amazing and I thoroughly enjoyed it. My favourite part was when you pulled the rope and it lifted you up!"

Roberta said "I really enjoyed the bellringing at Holy Trinity church and thought that it was a great opportunity for us. We rang a dumb bell which is a bell that doesn't make any sound. Then we rang a bell that makes a sound. It was really exciting, and I really enjoyed it."



FREEDOM OF THE TOWN

Dame Judi Dench and Sir Kenneth Branagh were given the freedom of Stratford-upon-Avon on Friday 22 April 2022. They unveiled the restored statue of William Shakespeare donated to the town by the actor David Garrick, who himself was made a Freeman of Stratford in October 1768. Having the freedom of the town means, amongst other things, that they can herd sheep over Clopton Bridge. Crowds of people came to see Dame Judi and Sir Kenneth herding sheep in Sheep Street.

Photographs by Harry Lomax



THE SHAKESPEARE PROCESSION 23 APRIL 2022

Inside the church - Photographs by Harry Lomax





Come and Join the
Celebration

PLATINUM JUBILEE STREET PARTY LUNCH

Sunday 5th June from 12:noon - 2pm
in the church grounds

EVERYONE WELCOME



Bring & Share
Prosecco available
to purchase



Please sign up by 29th May
using the QR code,
or via the weekly e-bulletin

with thanks to
 Stratford
Town Trust
at the heart of our community



SOCIAL
EVENTS

For more information please contact
Chris on 01789 204 273

HOLY TRINITY
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This edition appears at a most remarkable point in our national life – Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee – but I will leave it to others to write about that. According to my records it appears that this is the 200th of these columns to appear, so perhaps there is a case for a tiny private "jubilee"?

I began writing over twenty years ago, in a fit of what I must honestly call anger. Coming from a background of socially engaged churches in central London, two of whose parish magazines I edited at various times, I found this magazine inward-looking and overly pious in a way which seemed to me untrue to the Gospel. No doubt that was the arrogance of a newcomer. But, although our church had and still has many traditions which we have rightly preserved, it seemed to me that change was needed and that our horizons needed to be broadened.

And of course, since then, they have been. Our outreach into our own community and beyond has grown remarkably. Few people, I imagine, will remember that one notable and tragically necessary local institution, the Stratford Foodbank, owes its origin largely to this church. Our members have become much engaged in ministry to the homeless and to refugees. Outreach initiatives of different kinds – Hospitality Teas and Coffee Stop, Soundbites, Trinity Players, Trinity Tots, Trinity Voices, our presence at the Ken Kennett Centre, to name but a few – have all started up in the past twenty years. Our contact with missionary partners in East Africa has broadened our sympathies towards a wider Church and world. And now we are engaged in the struggle against climate change and in fundraising for those suffering in Ukraine.

My column cannot claim much credit for any of this. I merely note that over that period the Spirit has led us all into new places, where we have gone in the power given to us through our worship and spiritual life which has also grown in so many ways. All I ever try to do is to offer reflections on wider events in our community and our world, as far as possible avoiding narrowly "churchy" topics and suggesting how the Gospel is relevant to all this messy world of Covid, climate change and war as well as to the spiritual growth of our community and its members.

Where will we go in the next twenty years? It seems likely that those three current challenges, of the climate, the pandemic and the situation in eastern Europe, will continue to be with us for a long time. There are great issues too in terms of the integrity of our democracy; I have always tried also to avoid anything that smacks of party politics, but after recent events we may find that our prayer and our action will need to engage increasingly in the political sphere in one way or another if we are to be true to the vision of God's Kingdom of righteousness and mercy. The strapline of our vision "Lives changed through God's love", remains at the centre of all that we stand for, but those changes must affect the community as well as individuals; "Transforming Communities" is one of the objectives of our Diocese, and that too can change lives as well as our worship, preaching and fellowship.

So at this time of a personal jubilee I thank my readers for your patience over the years, and hope and pray that I can continue on that journey with you for some years to come.



FACES IN THE CROWD - Shakespeare Saturday 23 April 2022



TRINITY LADIES

At our April meeting we were very fortunate to have Alexandra Messervy speak to us about her service in the Royal Household. It was very good to see so many ladies and gentlemen at the meeting and we hope that you will all continue to join us at Trinity Ladies.

On Wednesday 15 June we look forward to having Pru Porretta tell us about the real Lady Godiva. Pru will be dressing up in medieval costume. I think we will all find this talk very interesting and amusing. Pru has recently completed forty years service in the city of Coventry, this occasion was celebrated in the Cathedral.

We will be having a lunch at the July meeting in the Parish Centre followed by a fashion show. The lunch will cost £10.50 for two courses: Lasagne followed by Cheese Cake. I will do my best to make sure that vegetarians and gluten free etc will be catered for. Please let me know if you have a special dietary requirement. Also if possible can you please pay Diane Edwards for the lunch at the June meeting.

Our meetings start at 2 p.m. and are held in the Parish Centre. New members are always welcome.

Gina Lodge

Chair



Memorial Service for the Rev'd Neville Beamer.

Neville died suddenly during the first lockdown in 2020 and so it was not possible to have a funeral service for him in church. However, a memorial service will be taking place in Holy Trinity on **Saturday 18 June at 5pm**. Anyone who would like to give thanks for Neville's remarkable life and ministry is welcome to attend.



WIMBLEDON

Ladies Singles Final
Saturday 9th July in
Holy Trinity Parish Centre
1:45pm for a 2pm broadcast

& STRAWBERRY TEA
served from 3:30pm
Cost £5.50.

Non tennis fans welcome to join us for tea
Please sign up by 1st July
via the weekly e-bulletin

Wimbledon Ladies Singles Finals

SOCIAL EVENTS

For more information please contact
Chris on 01789 204 273

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

FROM THE REGISTERS - APRIL

CHRISTENINGS

8 May Noah Parker and Henry Quaintance
22 May Olivia Dallard

WEDDINGS

21 May Benedict Gallagher and Caroline Burgon

FUNERALS

11 April Duncan Harris
12 April Kenneth John Mutter
26 April Edith Irene Taylor
26 April John Lawrence Elliott
4 May David Leonard Anderton



HOLY TRINITY BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

The next meeting of the Support Group will be on Wednesday 22 June. If you think it would help to meet with other people who are in a similar position at this difficult time in your life please come and join us. Just come to the Parish Centre at 2.30 p.m. We usually finish at about 4 p.m. There is no need to make an appointment. We will be very pleased to see you.

Gina Lodge

Bereavement Co-ordinator

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CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

The meetings begin with a relaxing and stilling exercise, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide us when we pray. We start by sharing some material - usually a bible passage but sometimes

a poem or a picture which may be circulated to members in advance. We then have thirty minutes of silence for prayer. We end with a reminder of the material, say the Grace together and quietly disperse.

The time of silence helps to support each of us as we pray, binding us together as a praying community. We offer this as a contribution to the spiritual life of our Church, and take its effects out into the world with us as we leave.

Anyone interested in joining us – or just trying it out – can speak to Jenny Rowland (415548) or Tricia Hall-Matthews (414182), or just turn up at church (go in through the choir vestry) at 7.30pm.



UKRAINE HISTORY

An ambitious leader invades a neighbouring country which his predecessors once ruled and which he believes still belongs to him. His motives are deeply patriotic, but it is also about his own vanity and the need to leave his mark on history. His supporters idolise him, but others believe he is unstable and bring about his own demise.

This is Shakespeare's Henry V, a king who was ruthless in putting down opponents at home, ready to use whatever violence is necessary to bring off his invasion of France. He has imperial ambitions, to make England one of the strongest military powers in Europe.

Likewise in our time we have witnessed the horrors of the Russian invasion as Putin pursues his bloody path across the Ukraine seeking to build his own empire.

Aside from Putin's political ambitions in the Ukraine it is important for us to understand the centrality of Orthodox Christianity to the renewal of the Russian identity after the fall of Communism and to Putin's own pathological motivations and why myths about Ukraine's past are being used to justify aggression. Within that Russian Orthodox identity, Kiev is absolutely central. In the 10th century Kiev was the centre of Russia and in 988 Tsar Vladimir was converted to Christianity, which became the state religion of Russia. Forever after, even when the focus of Russian Orthodoxy moved from Kiev first to Vladimir and then to Moscow, the Kievan Rus' has been remembered as a golden age.

George Fedotov writes in *The Russian Religious Mind* "Kievan Russia, like the golden days of childhood, was never dimmed in the memory of the Russian nation. In the pure fountain of her literary works anyone who wills can quench his religious thirst; in her venerable authors he can find his guide through the complexities of the modern world. Kievan Christianity has the same value for the Russian religious mind as Pushkin for the Russian artistic sense: that of a standard, a golden measure, a royal way."

For a Russian like Putin with this mindset, separating Ukraine from Russia is like trying to separate Russia from its soul. How then does Putin, the former KGB officer, relate to the Church? Putin's mother had him baptized secretly when he was an infant, and he says that this has affected him throughout his life. In a state television programme in Russia produced by the Church some years ago, and entitled *The Second Christianization of Rus*, Putin stated, "There was a spiritual vacuum after the fall of the Soviet Union. True values are religious values. The return to religion marks the natural revival of the Russian people". These spiritual values are believed to set the Russians apart from the secularising values of the West, and they are having an influence on Russia's policy in Ukraine.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is not only an affront to, and a flagrant denial of, Christian values: it is also an attack on Christianity itself.

In the minds of some around President Putin, including some leading Russian churchmen, it is partly a religiously inspired mission to retrieve and safeguard Kiev as the cradle of Russian Christianity. It is notable that the Patriarch of Moscow has not only refrained from condemning this unprovoked aggression, but appears to bless it as a just cause. This will greatly damage the credibility of the Russian Church in the years to come, especially among a rising and younger generation in Russia and elsewhere. Putin may not care about religion but certainly uses the history as yet another reason for carrying out his brutal aggression. Pursuit of a religious-historical fantasy is a crude justification for aggression and a dangerous intoxication that can only end in disaster.

It is true of course that Kiev is the cradle of Russian Christianity – a common inheritance treasured not only by Russian and Ukrainian Christians, but also by Orthodox and other Christians around the world. In this tragic conflict, Christians are now being pitted against each other, at least in military terms, and hatred is being rekindled, using bitter memories of the way in which Stalin deliberately starved many millions of Ukrainians to death.

The governing body of the Ukrainian church has warned that the war had "dealt a severe blow to relations between the Ukrainian and Russian peoples" and told Presidents Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelensky that the rift could "remain forever" unless the "sin of armed confrontation" was stopped. As has been rightly said "We have got enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another."

UKRAINE HISTORY cont...

We seek peace and justice, and that must end with those involved in conflict not having solutions imposed on them but finding for themselves the way forward to reconciliation and peace.

The earthly peace that we seek, whether by force or by diplomacy, will never be a permanent state until our Lord comes in his glory and all earthly things pass away. Nevertheless, let us give thanks for all genuine earthly initiatives for peace, from whatever source they may come. For only when we truly value earthly peace can we begin to glimpse the reality of that heavenly peace that is to come.

Dr. Roy Lodge MBE.



Ukrainian Refugees

Refugees from Ukraine are now arriving in Stratford. *Welcome Here*, the local refugee support group, is hosting drop-in socials twice a week for refugees and the hosts they are staying with. The drop-ins are on Tuesdays 10.00 - 12.00 and Thursdays 2.00 - 4.00 at Stratford Quaker Meeting House, 37 Maidenhead Road, Stratford CV37 6XT. People can drop in any time for tea, coffee and biscuits and a chat.

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PARISH CONTACTS

The Parish Office, Old Town

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Tel. 01789 266 316

Email: office@stratford-upon-avon.org

Clergy Team

Vicar	The Revd Patrick Taylor	01789 508 155	vicar@stratford-upon-avon.org
Associate Vicar	The Revd Steve Jarvis	01789 296 590	steve@stratford-upon-avon.org
Associate Priest	The Revd Kay Dyer	07857 821 168	kay@stratford-upon-avon.org
Children & Families Minister	Phil Harper	07791 005 696	phil@stratford-upon-avon.org

Assistant Ministers (Hon)

The Revd John Hall-Matthews	01789 414 182
The Revd Diane Patterson	01789 266 453
The Revd Jenny Rowland	01789 415 548
The Venerable Brian Russell	01789 266 316
The Revd Graham Wilcox	01789 551 759

Staff

Operations Manager:	Lola Spetsioti	01789 266 316	lola@stratford-upon-avon.org
Parish Administrator:	Sarah Cushing	01789 266 316	sarah.cushing@stratford-upon-avon.org
Director of Music:	Douglas Keilitz		douglas.keilitz@stratford-upon-avon.org

Church Wardens

Paul Lageu	07434 328 484	Tim Raistrick	01789 509 885
Helen Warrillow	01789 298 928	Sherron Guise	07855 248 610

Village Contacts

All Saints', Luddington	Jane Beeley	01789 269 618
St. Helen's, Clifford Chambers	Pat Woolvin	01789 264 256

Other Contacts

Head Server	Chris Cornford	01789 295 066
Bell Ringers	Charles Wilson	01789 295 467
Bereavement Support Team	Gina Lodge	01789 204 850
Safeguarding Officer	Jane Armitage	01789 297 652
Trinity Ladies	Gina Lodge	01789 204 850
Electoral Roll Officer	Tim Raistrick	01789 509 885
Friends of Shakespeare's Church	Alan Haigh	01789 290 128
Friends of St Helen's Church	Angela Wylam	01789 268 156
Holy Trinity in the Community	Steve Jarvis	01789 266 316
Lay Chaplains	Keith Payne	01789 266 316
PCC Secretary	Elizabeth Roome	01789 565 743 Mobile: 0790 531 4751
PCC Treasurer	Mike Warrillow	01789 298 928
Friends of the Music	Josephine Walker	01789 266 316
Home Communion	Steve Jarvis	01789 266 316
Stewardship Officer	Chris Kennedy	01789 299 785
Trinity Players	Ursula Russell	01789 204 923
Trinity Tots	Phil Harper	07791 005 696
Pastoral Contacts	Parish Office	01789 266 316 or office@stratford-upon-avon.org

Welcome Team	Eve Archer	
Sunday Coffee organisers	Tina Hillyard	01789 551 739
	Diane Edwards	01789 296 396

Churchyard Maintenance Volunteer Team	Lindsay MacDonald	01789 293 110
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