

trinity times

easter 2023



# Who Does What

<b>Chaplain</b>	Charlotte Sullivan 06 83 08 59 67
<b>Reader</b>	Richard Medcalf
<b>Youth Worker</b>	Joy Van Staalduinen

<b>Church Wardens</b>	Christine Salisbury David Bean
<b>Church Council Secretary</b>	Didier Trufanow
<b>Chaplaincy Assistant</b>	Jenni Gibson

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Contact person</b>
Address List	Jenni Gibson
Book Stall	Sarah Masset
Buildings/ Grounds	Adrian Parr
Charitable Giving	Hesry Marshall
Choir	Rachel Meuriot
Coffee Rota	tinyurl.com/ TeaCoffeeHTCML
Ecumenical Group	Christine Salisbury
Electoral Roll	Elizabeth Bean
Flower Rota	Fiona Dabas
Guiding	Christine Salisbury
Intercessions	Elizabeth Bean
Lesson Readers	Elizabeth Bean
Little Fishes	office@htcml.com Coffee morning every Tuesday at 9.30 am for pre-school children.
Organist	Joan Bauman

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Contact person</b>
Planned Giving	Robert Manterfield
Prayer Net	Edith Briard
Safeguarding	Alice Auperin
Scouting	contact@maisons- laffitte-scouts.fr
Sidesmen	Patrick Gautier- Lynham
Sunday Groups	LJ Desmeulles
Treasurer	Bob Hughes
Trinity English School (TES)	trinityenglishml @gmail.com
Trinity Times	Nancy Huguet
Web Site	office@htcml.com
Youth Group	Joy Van Staalduinen & Johanna Devlin
<b>Bible Study</b>	
Tuesday a.m.	Nancy Huguet
Wednesday evening by Zoom	8.00 pm: Bible study 9.15 pm: Compline.

# Chaplain's Corner



I know I am writing for the Easter edition of our wonderful Trinity Times but I wonder if you would forgive me for taking a look back over our shoulders into Lent.

As many of you know, the theme of our lent course this year was Failure, based on the book by Emma Ineson. I found the theme had a profound effect on me, possibly because I was on holiday for the first two weeks of Lent so had more time than usual to reflect.

I began to realise how deeply the fear of failure affects me and thought "perhaps it's not just me"! Let me first say, fear is not in God's will for our life, but God knew we would have to deal with fear, that is why the phrase, "fear not" is mentioned 189 times in the Bible.

Someone who understood failure first hand was the apostle Paul. In his 2nd letter to the Corinthians, he gives them, and us, advice on how to deal with the fear of failure.

Paul begins by saying, "We often suffer, but we are never crushed. Even when we don't know what to do, we never give up. In times of trouble, God is with us, and when we are knocked down, we get up again." (2 Corinthians 4:8-9).

The first thing we need to learn about failure is this - everybody fails.

Second, we all fail often. Nobody has failed just one time. Failure is something we experience almost on a daily basis.

Third, we will all continue to fail until we die.

Unfortunately, the fear of failure can cause us to be indecisive. We can become so worried that we will make the wrong choice, we can't make any choice at all. The problem is we over-exaggerate the effects of failure. Failure is not the end of the world. We are not going to die from it, but the fear of failure is a lot more dangerous to your life than the failure itself. Remember, we can choose to move beyond failure and leave it behind, but if we choose not to then we take the fear of failure everywhere we go.

The difference between a failure and a success in life is simply this: successful people fall down, but they get back up and they keep on going. Successful people don't let failure cause them to quit and they don't let the fear of failure prevent them from trying or from trying again and again.



Think about it. How did we all learn to ride a bike? We got on it and we fell off. We got on and we fell off again. The reason why we finally learned how to ride a bike was because we kept getting back on until we learned to ride.

Listen to how the apostle Paul finishes his letter. "We never give up. Our bodies are gradually dying, but we ourselves are being made stronger each day. These little troubles are getting us ready for an eternal glory that will make all our troubles seem like nothing. Things that are seen don't last forever, but things that are not seen are eternal. That is why we keep our minds on the things that cannot be seen." (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

Paul actually rejoiced that he was staring into the face of failure, because he knew that one of God's primary tools in making us what He wants us to be is failure and he knew that every failure is only temporary.

It is not a tragedy to fail. It is a tragedy when we fail and don't use that failure for our benefit and learn from it. There is such a thing as a successful failure, because anytime we learn from a mistake, we have turned a failure into a success.

This season please remember that 'We are Easter people', we should not allow fear, especially the fear of failure, to steal our joy or our peace. Be assured that God never fails. Don't fail to receive the grace of God, because the grace of God can help you to overcome any failure.

***Rev. Charlotte Sullivan***



**SUNDAY 26TH MARCH 11H00**

We are delighted to welcome the **Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell**, to Holy Trinity Church, at our 11am service on **Sunday 26th March**. The service will be followed by a vin d'honneur and buffet lunch. See [htcm.com/26MarchLunch](http://htcm.com/26MarchLunch) to find out more.

Holy Trinity Church, Maisons-Laffitte

*Our Chaplaincy Council report with thanks to Didier Trufanow.*

## Highlights of Recent Council Meetings

*All Council meetings have regular updates about spiritual development matters, Eco-Church initiatives, Safeguarding, our Church building and our financial situation.*

Since the last issue of Trinity Times, the Chaplaincy Council has had two regular meetings (in November and January) and a special Reflection Day on a Saturday in December.

Various topics arose during the Council meetings, including the following:

**Sunday group, First Communion group and Youth group:** the leaders reported that all was going well and that the sessions were well-attended. Details were provided about the respective programmes. For example, the Sunday group had been reviewing key points in the Old Testament. In addition, Council members discussed the Confirmation programme and arrangements for the Bishop's visit to Holy Trinity for the Confirmation service in November.

**Environmental:** Council members continued to discuss ways that our church can improve its environmental responsibility, for example our recycling actions and the possible long-term plan to install solar panels. These discussions are continuing despite the fact that the position of Environmental Link Officer **is still vacant**. (The role of this position is to ensure the Chaplaincy's commitment to environmental issues and to liaise with the Environmental Officer for the Anglican Diocese in Europe). If you are interested in taking on this role, please speak to our Chaplain!

**Financial:** Bob Hughes, our Treasurer, presented the financial accounts for 2022 and proposed a budget for 2023. Both these items were examined in detail. He will provide a full account of our finances at the upcoming AGM on Sunday 16 April at Holy Trinity (after the 11.00 am service).

**Outreach:** Council members spoke about the possibility of setting up a "Community Fridge" or "Frigo Solidaire" at Holy Trinity. The purpose of this new Outreach initiative would be to help the needy in our local community. General information about this type of initiative can be found in the Wikipedia articles about *Community Fridge* and *Frigo Solidaire*.

**Church buildings:** Adrian Parr, our Building & Grounds Coordinator, reported that the roof drains had been inspected by a specialised company. Fortunately, no serious problems were detected. Council members continued to discuss other maintenance matters for both our church and vicarage, including the roof of the church.

**Organisation:** the practical aspects of the Christmas Fête, Christmas services and Rev. Elisabeth Dean's 30 year ministry celebration were also discussed.

During the recent Council meetings, considerable time has been spent on thinking about Holy Trinity's path into the future. As the world is constantly changing, it is important to give thought to our future initiatives and organisation. In addition to discussions in its regular meetings, the Chaplaincy Council also had a special *Reflection Day* in December to think over these matters.

As Christians, our aim will always be to "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.*" And to "*Love your neighbour as yourself*". To this end, a considerable part of the Council's recent discussions have centred on our future endeavours for the following points: (i) Our Spiritual Life, (ii) Our Missional initiatives and (iii) ensuring adequate Organisational Support. As you might imagine, there is a lot to think about and our discussions are continuing!

**Date of Annual General Meeting (AGM):** Sunday 16 April at Holy Trinity after the 11.00 am service. The AGM is an opportunity for you to find out about all the wonderful things going on in our church community... and to ask questions ... and to put forward any ideas you may have. Please try to attend this once a year event!

**Date of next Chaplaincy Council meeting:** Monday 17 April.

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Phyllis Darbois, who sadly died in February, was a wonderful person and a great friend.

She worshipped at Holy Trinity for many years. During that time, as well as many other activities, she sang in the choir, was an infatigable member of the book stall team and provided numerous pots of delicious lemon curd for the jam stall!

All our very sincere condolences to her family and friends. May she rest in peace.

One Sunday in May, the church flowers will be in Phyllis' memory. If you would like to contribute there will be an envelope at the back of the church to this effect or please see Sarah.

*Katrin Dubreuil shared her incredible and inspiring faith journey at the women's breakfast.*

## **Women's breakfast**

I love a good story. Today I want to share my own - this is the story of God's faithfulness to me.

I was raised in a little town in the mountains of southern California. My parents were both high school teachers and faithful Methodists; my mom is still the choir director at our church. I didn't like having to wear a dress every Sunday, but I did like Vacation Bible School and church camp. I never had anything like a personal relationship with God, though - I didn't even think that was possible.

My first true encounter with the Holy Spirit happened during university, even if I wasn't mature enough to grasp it fully. It came during a praise and worship service with United Methodist Campus Ministries. Out of nowhere, the Spirit grabbed hold of my heart; it was like stepping into blazing sunshine. I didn't know what to do with it.

There followed a period of awareness of God, awareness I had not known before. I remember calling my mom and marvelling at my newfound understanding of the nature of reality. It was a true spiritual high; I don't know why it didn't last longer. Probably because I wasn't ready for it yet. I had other priorities - like getting straight A's.

My junior year, I went on a semester abroad programme to France, and it turned my whole world upside down. Paris just cast a spell over me; I never wanted it to end. So when the programme did end, I announced to my parents that I had found my calling - and that my calling was France. They didn't like the idea, but as good Americans they knew how to recognise someone with a Big Dream, so they grudgingly went along with it.

It took several miracles to get me back to France of course. I had no job, no apartment, no contacts ... but I wouldn't take no for an answer. I prayed to God for help, which He provided, again and again. But I have no recollection of pursuing Him for His sake - only for my own.

Years went by. Years of tumult and triumph. Years of joy and pain. I became an adult in France. I fell down a lot. Bruised my knees and my heart. God always picked me up, though, even if I rarely recognised it or thanked Him for it.

But there were moments amid it all, moments when the veil of reality lifted just a bit, revealing a glimpse of eternity beyond. Each time I was left in wonder. It lingered a little while and then gradually subsided. I let God slip through my fingers; I still wasn't ready to receive His fullness.

Which is ironic, because as the years went by, and my battle to remain in France was gradually won, I couldn't help but notice a *gnawing emptiness* inside. An emptiness that I thought France could fill. Or that the right job could fill. Or that the right man could fill. Or that the right home could fill. Or that motherhood could fill.... But no, as I ticked off the boxes on my "stuff to achieve" list, I systematically found myself dissatisfied. Unfulfilled. There was this chasm within me that would not be remedied, no matter what I threw at it - whether experiences or activities or people or an entire country.

Saint Augustine famously wrote, "You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You." That was me. The restless heart.

Oh, I did take some comfort in New Age spirituality. I read Louise Hay, Eckhart Tolle, *The Secret*. I visualised my goals, wrote affirmations on the wall, meditated, went for long walks in green places. I found some semblance of inner peace, but I was still deeply thirsty.

And then one day, something (or rather, Someone) drew me to the American Church in Paris. Easter had just gone by; there was a beautiful cross made entirely of origami butterflies behind the altar. Praise and worship music filled the air. At one point, as I gazed at that cross, God's truth flooded my heart. And I just *knew*. God wasn't a philosophy or a lifestyle; He was real.

This time ... it stuck. I began going to church regularly. Got hooked on Christian music. At last, the seeds of faith planted over all those years began to take root. Time went by. We had our first child, moved to Maisons-Laffitte. I started reading C.S. Lewis. And then one afternoon, I came across the blog of Guillaume Bignon, a French philosopher, whose incredible conversion story pointed me to the apologist William Lane Craig. And God's grip on me tightened.

William Lane Craig blew my mind. I knew nothing of apologetics outside of C.S. Lewis; I had no idea that the Christian faith could be defended with evidence and arguments and philosophy and science. Because that's what apologetics is - it's the discipline of defending Christianity using reason and logic. And it just *fascinated* me. I watched all of his debates, bought a bunch of his books, and a bunch of other apologetics books. It really became a passion.

And in addition to reading ABOUT God, I finally began to read the Bible seriously. Slowly, I began to lean into Him: I brought my questions; I called out in prayer; I sought His face. And brick by brick, day by day, my faith grew. A few more years went by. We had our second child. My faith was still largely intellectual, but apologetics had made it strong.



Then, I turned forty. It was time. Time to leave the wilderness, time to quit circling around and around the Promised Land and to finally enter into it.

But the gateway was of the most unexpected kind - a pandemic. A pandemic that took everything wrong about my life and amplified it. The whole world shut down. The schools closed. My clients disappeared. My husband was home ALL. THE. TIME. The quiet and solitude I need to stay sane were impossible. The atmosphere in our house was unbearable. I literally had nowhere to run from the painful truth. And the truth was that despite how hard I'd worked all my life, all the blood, sweat, and tears, all the accomplishments ... I had failed to achieve the *one thing* I wanted the most: completion, fulfillment, the kind of love that truly satisfies.

But I wasn't going to burn it all down and start over, despite the very real temptation. So what was I left to do? I prayed to God. I said, "God, I can't do this anymore. I have tried everything. But I can't fix my own brokenness. I can't fill my own emptiness. My marriage can't fill it; my kids can't fill it; my works can't fill it. You say, 'Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.' Lord, I want to come to You. I am so weary. But I don't know how to let go; I don't know how to surrender ... *show me.*"

And wouldn't you know, that one little step toward God, that one little crack in my façade of self-sufficiency? It was enough; God came *rushing in*. In the weeks and months that followed, this indescribable sensation of warm, radiant light filled my inner being. I could sense His presence; it was almost palpable. Everything in me reached for Him. Reached and reached. And His response to me was, "My beloved child, I have been waiting for you."

Here, on the other side of being born again in the Spirit - because that's what it was - I am just *captivated* by the light. God has gone from being an intellectual interest to an *all-consuming fire*. He is my passion. Books upon books, podcasts, sermons, YouTube videos, Facebook groups, THE CHOSEN.... He is first on my mind when I awake and last on my mind when I fall asleep; I cannot get enough.

God has healed me.  
That gnawing emptiness? It's gone.  
And in its place ... is *love*.  
In its place is *God Himself*.

And what I want to say is this - when I look back on my life thus far, I can see now what I couldn't see before. God is so FAITHFUL. He has pursued me my entire life. Rescued me from the darkness over and over. Picked me up and dusted me off again and again. He has been patient beyond all patience, waiting for me to let Him in - the Lord of the Universe, waiting for *me*. But then, God is

a gentleman. As C.S. Lewis wrote, “He cannot ravish; He can only woo.” And He will allow us to run from Him for as long as we so choose.

People ask, “Where is the proof that God exists?” And that’s a notion I can’t even fathom anymore - which is surprising, considering how much I love apologetics. The *proof*? Where do you want me to start? Now that I can SEE, I see His glory *everywhere*: it’s in the stars shining from the heavens, in the sunlight filtering through autumn leaves, in my children’s laughter, in the warm smile of a stranger ... and in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, our Great Captain, the very face of God - *who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the Father.*

God is not a fickle, vindictive old man frowning down on us from some cloud; He is a lovesick Father who will do anything – ANYTHING - to reconcile us, the prodigal children, to Himself. His Word is engraved upon our hearts - the same hearts that bear a hole the exact shape of Him. *A hole that nothing else can fill.*

And the most beautiful part of my coming to know God is that the whole time I was looking for Him (without realising it of course), He was looking for me. Like a shepherd ... in search of that one lost sheep.

I want to close with just a few words by one of my favourite singers, Brandon Lake. I feel like they were written about me. The song is called *Graves into Gardens*:

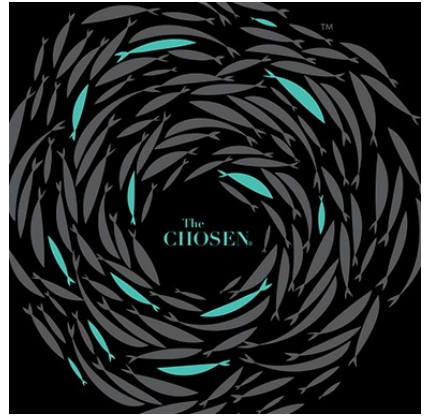


*I searched the world  
But it couldn't fill me  
Man's empty praise  
Treasures that fade  
Are never enough.*

*Then You came along  
And put me back together  
And every desire  
Is now satisfied  
Here in Your love.*

**AMEN**

**K.D.**



Gabriel has been watching *The Chosen* with his mother, Katrin which is where he found the inspiration for the fish in this drawing of Day 5 of the Creation story. The 13 fish swimming against the current represent Jesus (the fish wearing the crown) and the 12 disciples, like in the opening credits of *The Chosen*.

## The Rev. Elisabeth Dean's 30th anniversary celebration

On Sunday December 18th the Rev. Elisabeth Dean celebrated her thirty years of ministry at the morning service in Holy Trinity.

Both Rev. Charlotte and Rev. Elisabeth conducted the service and Rev. Elisabeth gave a very interesting sermon explaining how she came to be ordained.

She told us of her childhood in a Christian home in Melbourne, passed very quickly over her “wild” teenage years and continued to tell us how she eventually realised that she had a calling to the Ministry. At that time in Australia, women were unable to be ordained. However, she trained to become a deacon and eventually the rules were changed and thirty years ago she became one of the first women priests in Australia. You can read the whole of Elisabeth’s sermon below.

The service was followed by a champagne cocktail party and then a delicious family lunch during which Elisabeth was presented with a picture of the beautiful stole which had been ordered for her to commemorate the occasion.

***What does it feel like to celebrate 30 years of ministry? Elisabeth Dean shared some of her memories at the celebratory service at HTC in December 2022.***



Well! What a great day it is today! Not only does France get to play in the final of the World Cup this afternoon - and I do hope that they win - but I get to celebrate 30 years of ministry as a Priest, that is celebrating 30 years of living out God's call to me. With you dear people of Holy Trinity Maisons-Laffitte, such a great thing to do, and I do thank Charlotte from the bottom of my heart for inviting me. So I guess the question is: 30 years on, how did I get to this day?

A good question to ask, particularly on this Sunday, the last Sunday in Advent, this time of preparation, of waiting and re-calling and anticipating as we race towards Christmas, so today I'd like to share my story with you.

Unlike Joseph in today's story we just heard from Matthew's Gospel, no angel appeared to me in dream. God's call came by way of many angels who appeared in many different ways.

My journey began way back with my parents as a small child growing up in the 50's, both were professional people and totally involved in our local Anglican church. Dad was a church Warden for as long as I can remember - no women allowed in those days - and Mum ran the Mother's Union Group and the Ladies Guild. They both ran the Youth Group, organising dances and camps. Plus they ran the Church Fete!

Our Sundays were always spent at Church and our Sunday Lunch was always the occasion to invite anyone who would be on their own to join us. Mum and Dad also took responsibility for two children from the local St John's Children's home who lived with us every weekend and during the school holidays and became part of our family. Evening meals during the week were always times when we shared what had happened in our lives and talked about and discussed world events, and my brother and sister and I were encouraged to have an opinion and were listened to. And each night I remember so well how we would have a time of prayer at bedtime recalling what had happened during the day and giving thanks to God. Yes they were angels and I heard and received the message that God was with us.

During those early years we had a wonderful parish priest who ran special after-school events for children during Lent and Advent, taking us on marvellous journeys using colour slides through the Holy Land, following the footsteps of Jesus to tell us the story. I was transfixed and loved these times - another angel with a message. I was confirmed when I was 13 and remember well when the Bishop laid his hands on my head, getting a real sense that something had changed. On that occasion my parents gave me my first prayer book, a tiny Book Of Common Prayer, which they had written in, quoting from 1 John chapter 4 v 10. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us'... both messages for sure.

Of course as I grew into my teenage years, despite some times of wildness - for example I was a Rolling Stones fan and glued giant posters of Mick Jagger all over my bedroom walls, ruining the beautiful wallpaper, not to mention the times I used to climb out of my bedroom window to go to the local dance, but that is a another story...

So, as I was saying, as I grew into my teenage years I in turn took on responsibilities with our local church, helping to run the youth group, and the Girls' Friendly Society, a strange name today, but not like it sounds, it was actually a group of young women that raised money for missions. I did discover through that involvement in a very real way that there were people who lived in a very different world to my well-heeled comfortable life in the leafy green suburbs of Melbourne where I lived, people who really struggled with life both financially and psychologically and even had no roof over their heads and ... shock, horror they actually lived just on the other side of the river. Some more angels had certainly spoken! All that time I remember thinking or feeling that life or something was leading me somewhere else... but where and what....

Well, time passed and life continued, and as a young women in my 30's I continued with my involvement with another Anglican Church community, this time running the youth group, becoming an altar server - a new thing for women in those days - running a women's Bible Study Group, running Parish Camps, being on the Vestry, and I was even Parish Treasurer for a time, which was a struggle because, as my husband Noel will tell you, maths is not my strong point.

It was not long after that when another angel appeared on the scene....

I had been through a bit of a hard time in quite a few different ways and was really struggling with the big questions about what, where and when, and wondering where I was being led. This angel was actually a locum looking after our parish when we were in Vacancy and he really helped me through that period.

It was at that time that women in Australia were first being ordained as Deacons - not Priests as yet - and after many, many conversations he suggested that what was going on for me was that I was called to be a Priest! Suddenly, a bit like a flash of lightening, I realised that he was right, he had named what was in my heart and what and who I was meant to be, who I was called by God to be.

So how? given at that stage women were not being ordained as priests, but there were murmurings that it could be possible in a few years' time. That dear angel suggested that I do a year's CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) at INSTEP which was a Parish-based programme where you are given a supervisor and meet with a group outside the parish each week for theological reflection and engage in some purposeful Parish Ministry. He suggested that at the end of that time I would know for sure that I was being called and should then offer for ordination.

And what a year it was! My supervisor was Sister Mary, a Sister of Mercy but she didn't have much it seemed to me as my life was taken to pieces and put back together again. Theological reflection is a wonderful thing and at the end of the year I offered for ordination. Of course what followed... after submitting my life's story, and interviews with an examining chaplain and a psychologist and then an invitation to attend a whole weekend at a selection conference with five

others also offering, a whole weekend of more interviews ... was a letter that arrived from our Archbishop accepting me as a candidate to the priesthood.

The Church had affirmed God's calling! A few angels there that is for sure! The Archbishop pointed out in that letter that it was not possible to ordain women to the priesthood at that time but he was hoping that it would not be too long away. So I was to start my training immediately, which meant back to University to obtain a degree in Theology, including four years of priestly formation plus Parish placements at the same time. Morning prayer and Evening prayer each day at Trinity College, plus the College Eucharists three times a week and three silent retreats a year. A very busy time but what a joyful journey. It was like a wonderful gift as I learnt more and more and more.

Trinity College is at Melbourne University and the Theological School is part of the United Faculty of Theology which brings together the Jesuit Theological School and the Uniting Church Hall as well as us, so a wonderful ecumenical milieu for learning. Yes a wonderful gift.

At the end of those four years women could still not be ordained as priests but we were able to be ordained as deacons. Normally deacons are ordained priest twelve months later. The guys in our group told the Archbishop that they didn't want to be ordained as priests until we could be, but we insisted that they should and when they were priested the following year they insisted that we process into the Cathedral with them and sit with them, which we did: a joyful but painful experience with lots of tears and hugs to follow.

The debates were running hot in our Synod and General Synod about whether women could be priested at that time and some very unpleasant comments were being made by those in opposition, both publically and personally. It was not an easy time for us, for women, or for the church and it was getting a lot of press coverage. At the time I was actually appointed as a Curate responsible to the local Bishop in charge of a parish in Inner City Melbourne. I had become passionate about social justice issues and this parish was the place I really felt called to be, and although I had the total care of that parish I had to have the help of a retired priest in the congregation to do the priestly bits when we conducted services. There were four of us in Melbourne who were in that same position.

Anyway finally, joy of joys, the day came and the General synod of our church met in Sydney and voted Yes! It needed a two-thirds majority vote to pass and each Diocese could make up its own mind. And so just a month later in December 30 years ago, there I was. There were 33 of us ordained priests in three separate services, all women! Joy exploded and spilled out into the streets of Melbourne, flowers were thrown before us as we processed out of St Paul's Cathedral, the applause was deafening. Life had changed: at last women were being treated with equality by our church.

A wonderful service was held in St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne this week to celebrate the 30 years since women were priested and I was able to be there via live stream. Archbishop Keith Raynor who ordained us, now in his nineties, sent this very special message which was read out and I quote:

‘What a joy it was in December 1992 when, after a long wait, 33 women were for the first time ordained to the priesthood in this Cathedral. Today, thirty years

later, I rejoice with you. Those 33 brought a variety of gifts which enriched the ministry which the church has been able to offer to its own members and to the world at large.

But those first ordinations were very significant not only to that first band of women ordinands. Since then there have been many women who have been able to respond to God's call to priestly ministry without the anguish which was the lot of those pioneers. And there has been the effect of breaking down the atmosphere of pervasive masculinity which had dominated the governance and ministry of the church. It has led to a gentler, more inclusive church, better attuned to the needs of the age.

In the midst of our rejoicing let us not forget that these things were accomplished by the pain and great suffering of many women and others in the years of struggle that preceded the achievement of 1992. That is God's way. The pain of the cross precedes the joy of the resurrection. "God is good. Let us praise our God."

As priests we were given three gifts by Archbishop Keith on that night by the power of the Holy Spirit as he laid his hands on our heads, gifts that all Priests receive; The authority to forgive people's sins; The authority to bless in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; And the authority to preside at the Eucharist to say those very words that Jesus said at the last supper: "This is my body, This my blood" and the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, Immanuel—God is with us. An awesome responsibility and a real honour.

As to the rest of my story... well, 30 years of ministry! Seems amazing to me today: three parish appointments in Australia, all in the Inner City, one chaplaincy appointment here in France, countless committees on various subjects, marriages and funerals, locum ministry, time spent working in Egypt with refugees, in the Philippines on a rubbish dump with the Jesuits where people tried to live out their lives, in Thailand with a programme rescuing children who had been sold into prostitution and more... I have had the honour of sharing in some of the most intimate experiences of people's lives, of meeting some wonderful people - just like you - all because of those angels who in the end made God's call to me loud and clear and unable to be avoided. And through all those 30 amazing years I have had the incredible support of my husband Noel, another angel for sure, it is no easy thing being a clergy spouse!

There have been good and bad times and it's still a struggle in some places for acceptance and that can be hurtful, still places of male dominance that would want to put me and other women in a box. But today there are not just women priests there are women bishops and even a woman Archbishop in Australia, all living out God's calling. And it's such a good thing that here in the Diocese in Europe we now have a Dean of Women's Ministry. It's such a good thing that our Deanery has a woman as Area Dean! Yes, as Archbishop Raynor said God is good. That's certainly been my story. This week our Gospel story about Joseph has a message for all of us because we all have stories to tell and we are all encouraged to listen to those angels and to name Jesus to the world as God with us. That's the call we have all received and really if you think about it that is why we are all here today because as Christians it's a call that can't be avoided.

*Noreen Riols, at age 96 was awarded an MBE, which she received at the British Embassy in Paris. Jeanne Halpern reports on this special event.*

## **A Cup of Tea, an MBE, and the Finest Bubbly for Noreen at the Embassy**



The 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023 was a very special day for Noreen Riols, a long-time member and worshipper at Holy Trinity. This was the moment when she was to be awarded the MBE insignia (Member of The British Empire) at the British Embassy in Paris after being recognised by King Charles III in his New Year's Honours List.

It was an exciting afternoon for me as well, alongside our chaplain Charlotte, and five other church members. Noreen, at 96 years old, was to receive this prestigious award for her outstanding wartime service in the SOE (Special Operations Executive) alias Churchill's Army.

After tea served in delicate gold-rimmed porcelain cups, we were ushered into the Throne Room for this very moving and unique ceremony. This room, bathed in crimson and gold where portraits and statues of previous monarchs reflected an aura of pageantry, had as its centre-piece. The Throne upon which many historical figures of the past had sat in great solemnity.

After the 50 or so guests, mainly Noreen's children, grandchildren and friends of the family had taken their places, we were welcomed to the 'Residence' by the Ambassadors herself, Menna Rawlings. In her introduction she emphasised Noreen's determination, courage and self-sacrifice in the latter years of World War II, 1943 to 1945. Although only 17 years of age, but completely bi-lingual, she had applied to join the WRENS, her destiny did a complete volte-face. She was talent-spotted for the SOE whose mission was to support various resistance movements in German-occupied Europe. She was one of six women who worked to train people at 'The Finishing School for Secret Agents' in Beaulieu, South-west England. She tested and trained potential agents for their top-secret errands to France and debriefed them on their return. The Ambassador described Noreen as working tirelessly, and often at personal emotional cost. She knew her agents personally and the dangers they faced when they were parachuted clandestinely into enemy territory. Of the 430 agents sent, 104 never returned.



The Ambassadors obviously referred to Noreen's late husband Jacques, who died in 2018, and would have been so proud to see his wife receive this honour. Noreen's work didn't stop at the end of the war and she has since written ten books, been the guest of honour at many conferences worldwide to educate others about the reality and trauma of war and lectured on the SOE and the role of women. She has always been and always will be an advocate for peace.

Finally the following formal words were spoken before presenting the MBE decoration to Noreen.

“It is in recognition of these valuable services that His Majesty the King has appointed you to be a Member of the most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

It is with great pleasure that, on His Majesty's behalf, I present you with the badge of The Order . May I congratulate you on this prestigious award.”

Noreen then stood up, supported by one of her sons, to receive the award which was pinned onto her jacket by the Ambassador.

After the Investiture Ceremony, at the invitation of the Ambassador, Noreen turned towards the seated guests and with great modesty and suppressed emotion said how honoured and deeply touched she felt on receiving her MBE insignia. Then:

“Thank you for coming to support me. It means a great deal to me. I feel that the honour was more for the 104 who didn't return though. I dedicate this medal to them.”

To conclude the afternoon, Noreen was escorted back to the Reception Lounge, where in an ambiance of joyous celebration we drank champagne to toast this very special lady before dispersing. We all had the conviction that something very necessary had just been accomplished on this sunny afternoon of the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

*With Noreen*



**J.H.**

*Rachel Meuriot relates the story of her ongoing relationship with*

## John Tavener's 'The Lamb'

If you attended our service of Nine Lessons and Carols last December, you will have witnessed a very special moment when the choir performed "The Lamb" by contemporary British composer John Tavener. I am so grateful to them for their willingness to take a leap of faith into unknown musical territory. "The Lamb" has accompanied me now for over 35 years and is an essential part of who I am today. As a teenager, it opened up a gateway for me from music to faith and it still speaks to me now every time I hear it. This piece contradicted everything I thought I knew about sacred choral music - and even at eighteen, I had already sung a lot of that! There is no organ accompaniment, no bar lines, no verse or refrain. The voice parts circle round and intertwine and step on each other's toes.



And then I was lucky enough to meet the composer himself and everything I had been struggling with fell into place. I am absolutely certain I had come face to face with pure spirituality. You can use Google to see and read about John Tavener. What Google cannot tell you is what I saw radiating from him in a muddy car park on the North Cornish coast in July 1988. He was dressed all in white, his skin was tanned to a deep bronze and he SHONE. From him came something invisible but as tangible as incense. It was gentleness and benevolence and love, and it was like an open embrace into which I knew I was invited. It was nothing to do with John Tavener the contemporary British composer. It came from somewhere else and it reached me through his music.

To me, "The Lamb" will always feel like music in its purest form. Tavener was a member of the Russian Orthodox Church and so we hear only voices, our God-given instruments. If you listen carefully to the final notes you will hear the resonating bass of the orthodox priests. The music is constructed out of very few notes, a naïve and simple melody which we hear at the very beginning. This melody meanders gently around the note G or Sol, never straying far, and always coming back to the G which is a constant unchanging presence throughout the piece, just as Christ is a constant and unchanging presence in our lives.

The mathematicians among you will enjoy listening to the way Tavener repeats this same melodic motif backwards, upside down or in a slightly changed manner, with one voice or with two voices moving together or even moving in opposite directions. I just enjoy the way that wherever this melody takes us, it always remains attached to – and comes back to – the same note: that constant G.

The piece consists of two different sections, each of which comes twice. The first section is built around that simple melody which feels so naïve and pure, but which is then pitted against the mirror image of itself to create the harsh and unpleasant sounds that musicians call "dissonance" (0'10" and again at 0'33"). Something darker and more sinister is already at work... This juxtaposition of

the gentleness of a lamb with the piercing discomfort of dissonant chords has always made me shudder, as if some of the horror and violence of the cross was being transmitted down through the ages to me. This effect is only heightened by William Blake's bucolic words.

As you begin to wonder how much more disturbing the music is going to get, the second section arrives (0'52'') and Tavener takes pity on our Western ears, allowing us to wallow in more digestible harmonies. This section speaks to me of healing and of balm, but also of the way Christ meets us where we are, with the difficulty we have to fully embrace pain and discomfort, and our constant need to be soothed and loved. We can hear our own horrified crying out to Christ in the repeated musical representation of a lamb's plaintive bleating (on the words "little lamb" each time they come, for example at 1'07").

Whenever I listen to "The Lamb" I find myself asking "What more is there?" This is a piece of music that says it all. It speaks of innocence, of suffering, of faith and redemption and of love. And it speaks all these things in such a primal way that we cannot help but listen. This isn't music that expresses faith, this is faith transformed into music. So maybe take another few minutes to listen again and wonder with me at how God has used the immense talent of John Tavener to reach out to us all through this tiny and simple piece.

*Little Lamb who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?  
Gave thee life and bid thee feed.  
By the stream and o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing woolly bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice!  
Little Lamb who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?*

*Little Lamb I'll tell thee,  
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!  
He is called by thy name,  
For he calls himself a Lamb:  
He is meek and he is mild,  
He became a little child:  
I a child and thou a lamb,  
We are called by his name.  
Little Lamb God bless thee.  
Little Lamb God bless thee.*



(Flash the QR code to listen)

**R.M.**

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*The Trinity Times committee would like to thank  
Shantha Delaunay for the beautiful cover design of this issue.*



*Caitlin & Robbie Gibson showcased their acting skills in La Belle et la Bête at the ML chateau, late 2022. If you missed it, there'll be a repeat performance end 2023. Naomi interviews her sister about her experience.*

## La Belle et La Bête

### **What did this experience consist of?**

It was an immersive “spectacle” of Beauty and the Beast which happened at the castle of Maisons-Laffitte. The public had to walk around to watch the different scenes. I was in the very first scene, playing the young Beauty (Belle) in a kitchen area.

### **How did you find out about it?**

My mum discovered it on Facebook and asked me if I wanted to take part, and I accepted! I only expected to have a non-speaking part, as most children my age who participated did. I am very grateful that they gave me the part of Belle.

### **Did you enjoy taking part? What is the memory that stuck with you?**

I really did love it because it was a once in a lifetime experience and I got to meet lots of new people. I don't have a precise moment that I remember because I enjoyed all of it.

### **What did this experience bring you?**

It has definitely helped me boost my confidence and I am now more prepared to speak in public than before. It will definitely help me in the future.

### **Do you think you will be doing this again soon?**

They will be repeating this experience next year, and for three more years after that, so I hope to take part in it again.

**N.G.**

*Sarah Masset's chocolate cake is perfect for every occasion.*

## Chocolate Cake for Easter—Serves 8

### Ingredients:

200g butter or margarine  
200g cooking chocolate  
75—100 g sugar  
(depending on the sweetness  
of the chocolate)  
4 eggs (beaten)  
4 heaped tablespoons of flour  
1 pinch of salt  
1 packet of baking powder (levure)

### Method:

Melt the butter and the chocolate together  
Add sugar and eggs  
Fold in the flour, baking powder and salt  
Mix well and place in a greased tin  
Cook in oven pre-heated at 180° (20–30 mins).  
When cool cover with chocolate icing  
and decorate with sugar Easter eggs.



**S.M.**

*Amazing Grace must rank among most popular hymns ever.  
But what do you know about the life of its author?  
Nigel Bartram has investigated the backstory.*

## An Amazing Backstory



The words of Amazing Grace shout out somebody's distress, guilt and hopelessness at being a lost soul who, through the undeserved Grace of God, is saved in body and soul, and can't contain himself in wanting to sing God's praises. As it's one of my favourite hymns I recently took a few minutes to research who wrote Amazing Grace, and how it came to be written.

The lyrics of what became Amazing Grace were written by John Newton. Born in 1725, Newton was a difficult child and his father shunted him off to sea, as an ordinary sailor. Aged 19 he was forced to enlist

in the British Royal Navy where he served as a crewman aboard a man-of-war ship. He rebelled against the severe discipline, was desperate to find a way back to Mary, his sweetheart, so quickly deserted. He was recaptured, flogged, chained in irons, and eventually discharged. Newton later described himself at that time as arrogant, rebellious, and living a recklessly sinful life: "I sinned with a high hand," he wrote, "and I made it my study to tempt and seduce others."

Newton then took a job with a slave trader on an island off the western coast of Africa. He was treated so brutally that later he remembered the time as the lowest point in his spiritual life, recalling himself to have been "a wretched-looking man toiling in a plantation of lemon trees in the Island of Plantains." He had no shelter, his clothes went to rags, and to curb his hunger, he resorted to begging for food.

In 1747 he escaped, taking work aboard a ship based out of Liverpool. By this time, Newton had begun to read the Bible again. The following year, as the slave-laden ship was bound for home, it encountered a violent North Atlantic storm. On March 21<sup>st</sup> 1748, Newton was awakened in the night to find the ship in dire trouble, with one sailor already washed overboard.

Attempting to bail out the ship, Newton was convinced he would soon meet the Lord. Recalling Bible verses about God's grace towards sinners which he had learned from his mother, Newton whispered his first prayer in years. For the remainder of his life, Newton regarded this as the date of his conversion—"the hour he first believed."

It wasn't a straight line to him writing the lyrics, however. His new-found faith erred and it was only after falling ill with a violent fever did he surrender wholly to God. Newton claimed that from then on, he experienced a new kind of spiritual freedom. After returning to England in 1750, he married Mary. Yet notwithstanding his new-found devotion to God, he served as captain of two different slave ships during the next five years. But eventually, Newton came to abhor slavery, profoundly regretting his involvement and fought fiercely against it.

He became a passionate supporter of William Wilberforce in his campaign to end slavery in England. 1755 saw Newton abandon the maritime trade to take a well-paid government post. He started attending church meetings in London, where he became acquainted with John Wesley. At home, he studied theology, Greek and Hebrew.

Aged 39, in 1764, Newton was ordained an Anglican minister and took a parish in the small village of Olney in Buckinghamshire. He thrived as pastor: preaching, singing, and caring for the souls of his flock. During his 16-year tenure, the church grew so crowded it had to be expanded. During this time, Newton began writing his own simple, heart-felt hymns, many of which were autobiographical in nature. Often, he wrote hymns to complement his sermons, or to speak to the needs of a specific church member.

Newton wrote *Amazing Grace* in 1772, and it was published seven years later as part of a collection of hymns. That same year, he was invited to become rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, one of the most esteemed parishes in London, where he remained until his death in 1807, aged 82. All across England and beyond, people flocked to hear him preach, sing his hymns, and receive his spiritual advice.

John Newton's life story is captured in the words of *Amazing Grace*. From his conversion until the day of his death, Newton never stopped marvelling at the amazing grace of God that had changed his life so radically. As his eyesight faltered and his body grew frail, friends encouraged Newton to slow down and retire. But in reply, he declared, "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Saviour!"

Newton's words were set to a variety of tunes, made their way across the Atlantic where, in 1835, William Walker, an American composer, put *Amazing Grace* to a traditional tune called "New Britain", the one we are familiar with today. In the years since, its popularity has grown massively to the point it is estimated to be performed ten million times annually, and has appeared on over 11,000 albums.

As well as being an evergreen favourite of many Christian denominations, *Amazing Grace* has been rendered in blues, jazz as well as gospel genres. Among many others, Diana Ross, Judy Collins, the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, Joan Baez, Aretha Franklin, Rod Stewart, Andrea Bocelli, Mahalia Jackson, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Ray Charles, Whitney Houston and Willie Nelson have recorded and sung it in public. It was performed at Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday, at Woodstock, at Barack Obama's inauguration...

So, what explains the enduring popularity? If you love *Amazing Grace* you'll have your own reasons, but I think part of the pull is its simplicity yet profundity, its clarity and the hope it so powerfully conveys. It tells a story of redemption born from the life of a man who knew what forgiveness truly meant. It echoes truths we know and truths we want to know. This is why we know it, we love it, and it has such staying power.

***N.B.***

*Jeanne Halpern says that poetry helps her in her walk of faith with God.*

## Covenant

The Father knocks at my door seeking a home for his son.  
'Rent is cheap,' I say.  
'I don't want to rent. I want to buy,' says God.  
'I'm not sure I want to sell, but you might come in to look around.'  
'I think I will,' says God.  
'I might let you have a room or two.'  
'I like it,' says God. 'I'll take the two. You might decide to give me more room some day. I can wait', says God.  
'I'd like to give you more, but it's a bit difficult. I need some space for me.'  
'I know,' says God, 'but I'll wait. I like what I see.'  
'Hmm, maybe I can let you have another room. I really don't need it that much.'  
'Thanks,' says God. 'I'll take it. I like what I see.'  
'I'd like to give you the whole house but I'm not sure...'  
'Think on it,' says God. 'I wouldn't put you out. Your house would be mine and my son would live in it. You'd have more space than you'd ever had before!'  
'I don't understand at all.'  
'I know,' says God, 'but I can't tell you about that. You'll have to discover it for yourself.  
That can only happen if you let me have the whole house.'  
'A bit risky,' I say.  
'Yes,' says God, 'but try me.'  
'I'm not sure – I'll let you know.' 'I can wait,' says God. 'I like what I see!'

Sister Margaret Halaska

Dearest Father,  
We ask for a gift of hope, that hope which causes us to trust in You, to trust You when we are suffering.  
You will be with us, helping us to be patient, waiting for the outcome, no matter how long, and persevering in believing in Your goodness.  
You are always good, and we are always loved.  
Amen

**J.H.**

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*A joke for Easter:  
What do you call a row of rabbits hopping  
backwards?  
(A receding hare line!)*

*Carolyn, Edith, Nancy and Sarah wish you  
all a very happy and meaningful Easter.*

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*Johanna Devlin shows how the local Anglican and RC communities come together in prayer.*

# Christian Unity



We gathered together at Holy Trinity on Friday January 20th for the week of Prayer for Christian Unity that was observed in January. Upon our arrival, all present were given a stone. Two symbols were used in the worship service: water, representing our baptism into new life and stones representing our personal and ancestral history.



The ecumenical celebration was led by Rev. Charlotte Sullivan and Jacques Hervier from the Catholic church, from the parish of Maisons Laffitte / Mesnil Le Roi.

Jacques Hervier opened the celebration asking us to unite in prayer before God quoting Martin Luther King Jr : *“Open our hearts that we may be bold in finding the riches of inclusion and the treasures of diversity among us. We pray in faith.”*

Charlotte’s very thought-provoking sermon on unity reminded us that although we all belong and are members of a beloved community, the path to being totally united is still long. We, as a Church, are called to social justice: simple, but not easy. Although it is hard, we have to keep trying, and together, follow Christ’s example.

**J.D.**

## Dates for your Diary

<b>Sunday 26 March</b>	<b>11.00 am 12.30 pm</b>	<b>Archbishop of York’s visit Vin d’honneur and buffet lunch</b>
<b>Sunday 2 April</b>	<b>11.00 am</b>	<b>Palm Sunday and Service of First Communion</b>
<b>Thursday 6 April</b>	<b>7.00 pm</b>	<b>Maundy Thursday Eucharist Service</b>
<b>Friday 7 April</b>	<b>7.00 pm - 8.30 pm</b>	<b>Good Friday Service of Prayer and Reflection</b>
<b>Sunday 9 April</b>	<b>9.15 &amp; 11 am</b>	<b>Easter Sunday Services</b>
<b>Sunday 16 April</b>	<b>12.00 pm</b>	<b>Annual General Meeting (AGM)</b>
<b>Saturday 27 May</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Summer Fête – Save the Date!</b>

Keep an eye on our website for service times and events: <https://htcml.com/>

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*The policy of this magazine is to publish articles of interest provided they are neither illegal nor immoral. The content of the magazine does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial committee.*