

This Month's Worship in Churches Uniting in Central Sutton

Sunday 5 February

9.00am	St N	Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am	SBC	Morning Worship <i>Revd Mike Dales</i>
	Trinity	Morning Worship Communion <i>Revd Dr David Dickinson</i>
	St N	Holy Communion <i>Revd Justine Middlemiss</i>
6.30pm	SBC	United Service Big Questions 1

Sunday 12 February

9.00am	St N	Holy Communion (BCP ..singing)
10.30am	SBC	Morning Worship Communion <i>Revd Mike Dales</i>
	Trinity	Morning Worship <i>Revd Dr David Dickinson</i>
	St N	Morning Worship <i>Revd Cécile Schnyder</i>
6.30pm	SBC	United Service Big Questions 2

Sunday 19 February

9.00am	St N	Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30am	SBC	Morning Worship <i>Revd Mike Dales</i>
	Trinity	Morning Worship <i>Revd Dr David Dickinson</i>
	St N	Holy Communion <i>Revd Justine Middlemiss</i>
6.30pm	SBC	United Service Big Questions 3

Sunday 26 February

9.00am	St N	Holy Communion (BCP singing)
10.30am	SBC	Morning Worship Communion
	Trinity	Morning Worship <i>Revd Dr David Dickinson</i>
	St N	Holy Communion <i>Revd Justine Middlemiss</i>
6.30pm	SBC	United Service Sally Fox

for help or information please contact

Revd Mike Dales (Sutton Baptist) 07952 231723
mg.dales@blueyonder.co.uk

Revd Dr David Dickinson (Trinity)
Office: 020 8643 6884
Home: 020 8643 0963
todaviddickinson@gmail.com

Revd Justine Middlemiss (St Nicholas)
020 8642 3499
rector@suttonteamministry.org



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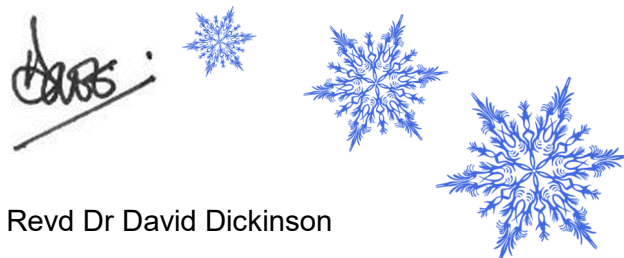
Dear friends

Like most people (apart from the increasing number who use their mobile phones as diaries as well as for everything else – torches, mirrors, cameras, memos and maps), I got a new diary for the new year. Nothing special about that. Except that I am trying out a new style of diary, namely Faber and Faber's Poetry Diary.

So far I like it. For each week of the year, the recto page has the days of the week, beginning with Monday and ending with Sunday. My head tells me that is wrong because Sunday is the first day of the week. It works better for me, though, as my working week leads up to Sunday mornings. The verso page has a poem.

The first of these was Gerard Manley Hopkins's *Felix Randal*, in which the priest-poet hears news of the death of the local farrier. He had been visiting Felix pastorally for some time. Previously a big-boned, hardy-handsome man, Felix had been reduced by sickness and it had broken him. The priest's words had brought him comfort and his anointing touch had quenched Felix's tears. These same tears had touched the priest's heart.

As I grow older in ministry, the tenderness of this powerful poem means more and more to me, but I also see that this poem is about all of us in our three churches who are called to pastoral roles (and that's all of us). Each of us has a caring heart for those alongside whom we worship God week by week. We notice those who come to church with a bound in their stride because they have something to celebrate, and we notice absentees, those who seem to be withdrawing and those who seem burdened. This is what endears (to use Hopkins's choice word) us to each other. St Paul sums up this shared pastoral office as "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). It's simple really: we watch over each other in love.



Revd Dr David Dickinson

News from the Churches



1 March Ash Wednesday

Frugal Supper at St Nicholas Church

Tickets for this simple meal to mark the start of Lent will be available from your church representatives and the proceeds will be donated to Christian Aid. The supper will be followed by the **Service of Ashing** also at St Nicholas

Lent Study Groups

Last year's united **Lent Study Groups** were very successful, with over seventy people taking part, so we are organising more this year. This is an ideal way to prepare for Easter and also to meet new friends from within CUCS and also the Sutton Team Ministry.

Forms are available in each church on which you can indicate whether you would like to join a daytime or evening group and what day of the week would suit you best. We are also hoping for volunteers to host groups of about 8-10 in their homes.

Groups will meet four times, once in each of the weeks beginning 6/13/20/27 March and on Wednesday 6 April all the groups will meet together.

For more details speak to your church representatives:

Trinity: Olwen Edwards and Lisa Dawson
St Nicholas: Jenny Gillbe
SBC: Carolyn Graham

Trinity Overseas Challenge (TOC)

Sunday 12th February

An **International Bring and Share Lunch** will be held at 12.30pm in Trinity Hall. Please bring either a savoury **or** a sweet dish to share with others.

Tickets, price £2 per person, £5 per family, are available from Liz Wood and Sylvia Robinson and include your tea or coffee.

This is to launch our new TOC **Healthier Futures for Women and Girls in Ethiopia** and will be both informative and an opportunity for hospitality and fellowship. More information from Liz Wood: (lizwood833@yahoo.co.uk or 01737 833146)



Come and Sing Handel's Messiah!



Singers are warmly invited to take part in a performance of Handel's *Messiah* by **Trinity Festival Choir** at the evening service on Palm Sunday, 9th April at Trinity Church.

This masterpiece is one of the cornerstones of the choral repertory, and there can't be many people who don't recognise at least one of the many famous choruses from it!

There will, of course, be a series of weekly rehearsals leading up to the performance, and they will take place in the upstairs Parlour at Trinity on Thursday evenings at 8pm, starting on **2 February** (no rehearsal on 16 February). Access to the room is through a red door round the back of Trinity in Hill Road, and up two flights of stairs.

It would be wonderful to have a substantial choir for the occasion, so do invite your musical friends to come along to rehearsals. Even if you are not an experienced choral singer do give it a try—we are a supportive group! Vocal scores will be available.

I hope to see you at the first rehearsal!
Stephen Haylett

5 February Sunday Afternoon Outing

Come and see the snowdrops at Gatton Park and visit an old friend!



Meet at the back of Trinity Church after morning service with a packed lunch to eat at Liz Wood's home before going to **Gatton Park** to see the snowdrops. Entrance is £5 per person, children free.

Afterwards we will visit St. Andrew's Church where **Revd Mark Pullinger** will show us around.

Please contact Liz Wood to say if you will be coming and whether you can offer or need a lift. (lizwood833@yahoo.co.uk or 01737 833146)

Devotions

A Thanksgiving Prayer for a Winter's Day.

On this winter's day
We are thankful for the small things that lift our spirits-
The warmth of another's smile or embrace,
The glimpse of the sun through the clouds,
Freshly brewed coffee,
Newly baked bread,
Hot soup.

On this winter's day
We are thankful for glimmers of hope;
For acts of kindness that tell us
We are not alone
In our sorrow,
In our suffering,
In our uncertainty.

On this winter's day
We are thankful for
All that stirs us into life;
For funny stories and laughter,
For music that sets us dancing,
For words and wisdom that inspire us.

On this winter's day
We are warmed
By the beauty of this place in which we live,
By the company of family and friends,
By our passion for justice and peace.

May the thoughts of our hearts,
the words of our mouths,
the work of our hands,
and all that we do with our lives
speak of grace and truth
as we seek to live in the way of Christ. Amen.

Lynne Frith, Auckland , New Zealand



Regular Events

All members of CUCS are warmly welcomed at these activities

Christian Meditation Groups meet twice a month. Contact Pamela Ford: 8642 5914

Monday	13 February	3.00pm
Monday	20 February	6.30pm
Monday	13 March	3.00pm
Monday	20 March	6.30pm

Saturday Prayer Meeting (1st and 3rd Saturdays)
10.00am - 11.00am at Sutton Baptist Church.

St Nicholas' Mothers' Union usually meets on the **first Wednesday of the month** in St Nicholas Community Hall. All are welcome.
Contact: Janet Little 8715 6843

Women in Touch (WIT) meets fortnightly on a Monday at 10.30am at different venues, to enjoy a variety of activities including coffee, films and outings. It is open to women of any age. For further details of the programme contact: Carole Adams 07711879645 or see: www.trinitychurchsutton.org.uk

Trinity Toddler Group meets on Tuesdays in term time in Trinity Hall, 9.00-11.00am.
Contact: Sheila Booth 8715 0514

Bunker, the youth club for CUCS, meets in Trinity Hall on Sunday evenings in term time from 6.30-8.00pm for young people at senior school. A chance to get to know other young people in CUCS and have fun together.
Contact Jane Oliver: 01883 346261.

Badminton Club meets 7.45-10.00pm every Monday in Trinity Hall.

Sutton Churches Tennis Club can be found between 99 and 101 Gander Green Lane, Sutton. All ages and abilities are welcome. See our website at www.clubtennis.co.uk

Coffee and Craft meets in the Oasis at Trinity, 10.00-11.30am usually on the third Friday of the month. Meet with others and work on your knitting, sewing, paper craft or other project. Beginners welcomed!
Contact: Deborah Wroe: 8642 9064,

CUCS is Sutton Baptist Church, St Nicholas and Trinity URC/Methodist who are churches uniting in central Sutton, and who regularly meet together for prayer, worship and shared activities.



Oasis at Trinity Church is open Monday to Friday from 10am to 2pm for refreshments, light lunches and a chance to chat.

A Fable for Today

passed on by Mike Dales (author unknown)

Once upon a time there was a bunch of tiny frogs... who arranged a climbing competition.

The goal was to reach the top of a very high tower. And so a big crowd gathered around the tower to see the race and cheer on all the contestants.

The race began...

But quite honestly no one in the crowd really believed that such tiny frogs would reach the top of the tower. They were saying, *"It's way too difficult!! They will never make it to the top,"* and *"Not a chance that they will succeed. The tower is too high!"*

The tiny frogs began collapsing. One by one ... Except for those who were a bit stronger and kept climbing higher and higher ...

The crowd continued to yell, *"It's too difficult! No one will make it!"* More tiny frogs got tired and gave up ...

But one continued higher and higher and higher long after all the others had given up and dropped back down to the bottom and he, after a big effort, actually made it to the top!

All the other tiny frogs naturally wanted to know how this one frog managed to do it.

One contestant asked the tiny frog how he had found the strength to succeed and reach his goal! But he didn't hear him, and he shouted the question again but he still didn't hear, so he shouted at the top of his voice, which was really loud for such a tiny frog. But he still couldn't hear him, because he was deaf.

How much more could we do if we, like the frog, turned a deaf ear to all those who say we can't?



Yet Alive? Methodists in British Fiction since 1890

by David Dickinson

*Yet Alive? Methodists
in British Fiction since 1890*
David Dickinson



David Dickinson explains the title of his recently published book in his introduction: *The governing body of the Methodist Church in Britain, the Methodist Conference, meets annually, opening its proceedings with the a cappella singing of Charles Wesley's hymn "And are we yet alive and see each other's face?" Seemingly amazed that they have survived another gruelling year, Conference representatives raise their voices in song.*

He begins by reviewing the way the Methodist Church was depicted in the novels of the 18th and 19th centuries before exploring more recent novels. I hope Justine and her Anglican colleagues will forgive me, but until I came to Trinity in the 1980s, met Anglican clergy and experienced worship at St Nicholas my image of the Church of England was much informed by the *Chronicles of Barsetshire* by Anthony Trollope – such is the power of the novel! So what picture of Methodism can be seen in the novels of the 20th century? Dave refers to sermons in novels that witness to the involvement of Methodists in politics; he cites Iris Murdoch's portrayal of Methodism as *"little more than a cipher for repressive religious conservatism or puritanical hypocrisy"* and suggests that recent novels depict a Methodist faith that is *"compromised in its out-datedness"*.

Dr Gladys Lewis, in the publisher's comment says *"Yet Alive? argues that, despite, or perhaps because of, the process of secularisation, novels depicting Methodists play an important role in literature's ongoing exploration of spiritual, religious and theological themes, and that Methodists have much to learn from the way authors see them."* My reading of Dave's work and recollections of conversations with him make me think he would find spiritual, religious and theological themes in novels and other art forms without the need for overtly religious content. Perhaps we need to be alert to God speaking to us through all our experiences - the arts, science and the natural world and human relationships.

What I will take away most from this book is the discussion of the word *fiction* - yes, we often dismiss stories as being of limited value, even untrustworthy, but Dave reminds us that stories are *"make-believe;" they have the power to persuade and convince.; they can bring hearers and readers into a different world, a different time and a different frame of mind.* Isn't that also what we hope for from worship and sermons?

There were so many novels referred to in *Yet Alive?* that were new to me or which I read a very long time ago. I've made a start on the list by re-reading George Eliot's *Adam Bede* and then I will try *A Month in the Country* by J L Carr, a 1980 Booker Prize nomination. And now a book about the Baptists and Congregationalists in fiction...!

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Paperback £24.99. Online 20% discount code *yetalive20* (even cheaper directly from Dave!)

Reviewed by Olwen M Edwards

From the Editor With the wholehearted support of my husband Robert, I have changed my name by Deed Poll, reverting to my maiden name Olwen Edwards.

I would be delighted to receive comments and suggestions on the future of *Unite!*. Contact me by my new email: olwenmedwards@gmail.com or by phone: **8643 2525**. Copy date for the March issue is 15 February. *Unite!* is also available online at www.trinitychurchsutton.org.uk