



Holy Trinity, Penn with Forty Green & Knotty Green and St Margaret's, Tylers Green

PARISH NEWSLETTER

EASTER
2025

A time for transformation

The world can seem to be a dark place. Headlines of political intrigue, tragic accidents, and seemingly endless strife have a tendency to weigh on our hearts, especially when we are concerned for our own health, families, jobs, and finances. All of this is emotionally enhanced through the darkness of winter, and this December was apparently the 4th darkest we've had in the last century with the joy of sunlight seeming more a treat than something which could be assumed or expected. However, for all the darkness of the world there are signs of hope and growth; shoots are appearing, snowbells have introduced daffodils and primroses and people's moods seem to be lifting as we get stuck into the fullness of life in 2025.

It's perhaps an odd contrast to then look at what the Church is up to. In the darkest parts of winter we anticipate the arrival of the Light of the World, God himself come among us as the baby boy Jesus. Long after the Christmas decorations have been put away in the loft, the Church continues with her Christmas theme until the 2nd of February with the celebration of Candlemas. While everyone else is looking for signs of new life and spring in the flowers of February and March, the Church turns from a season of joy to a time of reflection and fasting, announced with one final blow out of tastiness on Shrove Tuesday with pancakes galore - *which you would be most welcome to join us for, March 4th in the Sanctuary!* - only to then quietly and somberly be marked with a cross of ash on the forehead.

Why is the Christian year like this? Does the Church have to be countercultural at every point? I think perhaps the image of the caterpillar is worthwhile here. It's not that the Church is not also looking for signs of new life, after all Lent leads to Easter and the revelation of a life which shall exist beyond death. Rather it's that the Church is preparing for the process of new life. A caterpillar begins by eating everything it can (if Alfred's *The Hungry Caterpillar* book is correct, this includes apples, pears, plums, and other fruits as well as Chocolate Cake and Swiss Cheese!) so that it might be suitably nourished for the process of transformation. At that point they prepare for themselves a cocoon in which they can be metamorphosed and become the butterfly they were destined to be. The joyful flight of a butterfly requires prior preparation and a period of hopeful waiting.



Likewise, Lent is a time which symbolically exemplifies the Christian understanding of spiritual transformation - this transformation can happen at any point in the year, as and when we find ourselves drawn into the story of God's love for the world and all that he created, including ourselves. Yet the pattern of a lenten fast and a period of preparation in anticipation of God's act of salvation through Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection from the grave is nevertheless a worthy one which we here at Holy Trinity and St Margaret's shall be embracing once again. We shall do this by intentionally reflecting on our lives and asking God to be present not just in his love but in our needs and struggles. There will be a special service of penitence on Ash Wednesday where we remember, as one modern theologian deftly put it, 'our human propensity to *stuff* things up' and to ask for forgiveness. Throughout Lent there will be an 'Exploring... Lent' course for anyone that would like to come along, and then we'll have a range of services through Holy Week in the run up to Easter Sunday on April 20th.

The hope is that along the way we shall grow in our understanding of both ourselves and our place within God's creation, that our hearts and minds may be nurtured by the knowledge and experience of God's love for us in Jesus Christ who came into the world to save sinners. As such if your hearts are weary and your souls are heavy laden, come and find out about the one who says to us 'I will refresh you' (Matt. 11.28). Let us, like the hungry caterpillar, 'taste and see that the Lord is Good'. (Psalm 34.8).

Every blessing,
Samuel S. Thorp
Vicar of Penn and Tylers Green

www.holytrinityandstmargarets.co.uk

Medieval Wall Paintings (Part 1)

Dr Clive Rouse was a medieval archaeologist and the leading expert on English wall paintings. He was called in to report on the Penn Doom when it was discovered by chance in 1939. He knew Penn Church well and wrote illuminatingly about it. I was privileged to meet him at his house in Gerrards Cross to talk about Penn Church and its many interesting aspects. Fortunately, some of his expertise is summarised in his small (60 page) book *Medieval Wall Paintings* in the Shire Book series which is well worth acquiring for those folk who enjoy visiting historic churches. I have summarised a few of his observations below.



All medieval churches in England were more or less **completely painted**, constantly being replaced as dilapidated or unfashionable, but all were **obliterated by lime wash** at the Reformation and subsequently replaced by texts, of which we have a few in Penn. But the disaster was the Victorian **stripping of plaster** to 'show the beautiful stonework', thus paintings survive more in the south east because there is no easily accessible building stone as there is up north. Stone rubble and flint are not improved by stripping the plaster. Penn avoided this fate

because of our flint walls whereas the interiors of neighbouring Amersham and Beaconsfield were badly damaged.

The **painters** remain unknown, probably journeymen moving from place to place. Their paintings were not for artistic merit, but for **devotional reasons and teaching**. There were no printed books, 80% plus were illiterate and books were anyway in Latin and French. The paintings on the church wall were a great teaching aid for the parish priest to impress the Bible story on his illiterate flock – the *Biblia Pauperum* or Poor Man's Bible, as they have been called. They were like the visual aids of modern education. They had to explain themselves by their pictorial content alone and to achieve this.....:

A complete **code of signs, attributes and gestures** was developed. Good people had haloes and were beautifully drawn. The *blessing* with thumb and two fingers symbolised the Trinity, *Condemnation* was the single finger pointing, *prayer* or supplication was hands together, adoration was hands and arms outspread lower down, and so on...The soul was represented by a small naked figure with rank indicated by crowns, mitres or tonsures. There is an arising soul with a tonsure awaiting judgement in our Doom painting. *Bad people* were often made deliberate caricatures with hook noses, hump backs, comic hats and clothes. The slit nose on **Richard II's nave roof corbel** was a medieval judicial punishment for stealing, so it is a caricature in support of Henry IV who deposed his cousin Richard.

Widespread evidence of wall-painting was found when steam cleaning the nave walls in 1952. The red band behind the pulpit is part of a very **typical medieval decorative dado pattern** representing a skirting along the lower part of the wall. There is also a typical six-petalled flower. Holy drawings, of Christ, the Saints or the consecration crosses, were protected by being put higher up, out of easy reach.

Miles Green, Jan 2025

To be continued in the next newsletter

Saffron Buns and Upcoming Swedish Themed Evening

We hope you enjoyed the Saffron Bun Recipe for St Lucy's Day, the Vicarage certainly did! In the Summer we shall be having a 'Taste of Sweden' evening with food and activities on June 28th - details to follow next issue!



Lent and Holy Week Services

Service	Date	
Shrove Tuesday	5pm 4th March The Sanctuary in St Margaret's Parish Rooms	Prepare for Lent's season of fasting with a 'feast' of Pancakes! Come and choose your own toppings.
Ash Wednesday Communion with Ashing	7:30pm 5th March St Margarets	Lent begins with a special service which includes receiving the sign of the cross on your forehead in ash, a reminder both of our sinfulness but also of the pledge of God's love revealed on the cross.
Palm Sunday Communion	Usual Sunday Timings	This marks the start of Holy Week.
Holy Monday Compline	9pm Holy Trinity	Reflective Services exploring the themes of Holy Week.
Holy Tuesday Compline	9pm Holy Trinity	
Holy Wednesday Compline	9pm Holy Trinity	
Maundy Thursday Communion with stripping of the Altars and the Watch Gospel	8pm Holy Trinity	A powerful service of Holy Communion which concludes by dramatically sweeping away all decorations and listening to the narrative of the arrest of Jesus in the garden, by candlelight.
Good Friday Reflections	2pm St Margarets	A moving service reflecting on the Crucifixion of Christ. Lasts about an hour.
Holy Saturday Vigil Readings	8pm St Margarets	A service reflecting on the anticipation of Easter from through Old Testament readings
Easter Day		
Sunrise Communion Service Followed by Breakfast	6am at Holy Trinity	We start with a fire outside, and watch for the sunrise before moving through the Church for different parts of the service.
BCP Communion	8am Holy Trinity	Traditional Easter BCP Service, with Homily.
Holy Communion	9:30am St Margarets	Easter comes to St Margarets with much joy!
Holy Communion	11am Holy Trinity	Joyful Easter service followed by Easter Egg hunt in Churchyard.

What do you believe the Cross symbolises?

The cross, with its vertical and horizontal beams, stands as that axis – that pivot – upon which all reality stands, hangs and is defined by. In a very real sense, there is no other moment so 'real' as when the weight of death and sin in its entirety hurled itself against the Son of the living God; that moment when it eagerly clutched at that final, loud sigh escaping Jesus' lips as he gave up his spirit and, for our sakes, let go of life. In the storm that bore witness to this death, the cacophony of thunder and howling winds seemed to gleefully declare a victory for the darkness.

Yet that cross which we see in our churches stands empty.

There is no body adorning this homage to death because this most real of moments in history is not as finished and final as death would like to propose that it should be. The bloodied corpse was speared and the cross lowered. The nails were wrenched out of shattered heels and wrists, and

the body wrapped in cloths and placed in a tomb – walled in by a boulder. The corpse was there in a darkness so deep that solitary would be too kind a word for it. Yet it is precisely here in this place that the Holy Spirit of the Lord reached out in love to brush away the shadows of sin and to pour into Jesus life. It was this corpse which gasped and took another breath beyond the sleep of death. It was this corpse's flesh which was knit back together and whose heart began to beat the eternal rhythm of love to which life dances.

It is this man and no other who died for us for the forgiveness of our sins, and it is this man who lives for us, and lives still, so that we might be called Friends of God and have the hope of eternal life with him. It is because this man, Jesus of Nazareth, lives that our crosses are bare – there was death, and we remember it; but there IS life, and we should remember that even more.

Penn Ringers

If you've ever wandered past Holy Trinity Church in Penn and heard the majestic peal of bells, you might have wondered: who's behind this captivating soundscape? Spoiler alert: it's not a group of monks in a candlelit tower solemnly pulling ropes. Instead, it's a lively group of modern-day enthusiasts who keep the ancient art of full-circle bell ringing alive and well.

Welcome to the world of the Holy Trinity bell ringers – a motley crew of jolly campanologists (fancy word for bell ringers) from all walks of life, teachers, data analysts, technology gurus, ex-military, gardeners and the happily retired, who enjoy bringing rhythm, skill, and a healthy dose of humour to every pull of the rope.

As a humble learner in the world of full-circle bell ringing, I've often felt like a fledgling in a flock of graceful swans. My teachers, with their impeccable rhythm and ability to recite blue lines as though quoting poetry, made ringing seem effortless. Meanwhile, I'm over here, fumbling my rope and praying to the ringing gods that I wouldn't send the treble bell into orbit.

I've been ringing for two years now, and to be honest with you, I thought I'd learn the art of pulling ropes very quickly, the opposite turned out to be the truth. This may put some people off, but for me, I was up for the challenge. Yes! I wanted to learn how to control a bell, the size of a small car, with a single rope.

Once you get the hang of it, though, the magic starts.

You're not just pulling a rope; you're part of a team creating intricate patterns of sound. Each person is responsible for one bell, and together, you weave a tapestry of rhythm and melody that's both challenging and deeply satisfying.

These patterns are called Methods in the world of bell ringing and what a mystical art they are.

The first method you learn is Plain Hunt. You start in what we call Rounds where the bells ring in order, 1 2 3 4 5 6 (we have six bells at Holy Trinity). Once Plain Hunt is called, bell 1 will move places with other bells as it works its way to the back (last bell rung) With no time to waste, once at the back, it's time to work your way back to the front. All the other bells are doing the same thing, at the same time, but they all start at a different place. Mind blown? Mine was, and this is the first method to learn.

I'm reassured, constantly, that from here on in all other methods are based on Plain Hunt with added little moves thrown in. I hear phrases like, make 3rds, 4/5 up, 4/5 down, the list seems endless.

Let's face it: as a learner, trying to master multiple methods at once can feel like attempting to juggle while riding a unicycle while doing a tax return.

With this in mind, our Steeple Keeper (the person who looks after the bells), Andrew Williams, has come up with a plan: Single Method Practice.

The concept is wonderfully simple: take one method and



dedicate focused practice time to it. No bouncing around from Plain Bob to Grandsire, leaving your brain to resemble the spaghetti code. Instead, you get a clear roadmap for mastering one thing at a time. Every session is geared towards drilling the method into your hands and head.

For this to be achieved, many competent ringers are needed, so one beginner at a time can wield their attempt at the new method, with a gentle, encouraging voice from behind guiding the way.

So Andrew devised yet another plan, to join forces with the ringers at St. Mary and All Saints Church, Beaconsfield.

These additional practices will take place mid-week, alternating between both churches.

I'm looking forward to getting my head around method ringing and must thank all the ringers involved, that give their time freely to help us learners along the path. There is always room on the path if you'd like to join us. Simply contact Peter Barrett (Tower Captain). 07720 594880.

Well, that's my first ever article written. If I'm allowed back I'll let you know how I got on at the single method practices.

David Byrne.

Christmas Recap

I hope that your Christmases were good ones, and I thank all of you who have shared parts of the Christmas Season with us at Holy Trinity and St Margarets' in various different ways - we were thrilled to have so many people join us and have both a good time but also perhaps to have the space to reflect. Our Midnight services were clearly much appreciated, and the Lessons and Carols at Holy Trinity was packed to the gills. It was great to have the support of Penn Parish and Chepping Wycombe Parish there with representatives doing readings for us, as well as having His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, Countess Howe take part. We tried something new with the Blue Christmas service, and shall be offering it again next year because a quiet moment to safely recognise that Christmas can be hard for many of us in our community is worthwhile.

Our other new service was the Christmas Jumper Service, which was a superb conclusion to the Christmas Tree Festival and gave us the opportunity to announce the winner of best Christmas Tree to a live audience; once again, a big congratulations to our joint winners: Little Oaks at Forty Green and the Flower Arrangers. In 2nd place were

the Bell Ringers and in 3rd place were Hazlemere, Penn & Tylers Green Sew Crafty. It was fantastic to see more than twenty local community groups represented.

Our Christingle and Crib Services at St Margaret's were very much enjoyed and of course it was a delight to welcome the Schools and Little Oaks in for their Christmas end of term services as well.



Countess Howe

The community really did show out in force for the Carols on the Common, both the Children's Carols and the regular one. It was a privilege to be able to support the PTAs of the Schools as they take on this long standing tradition and carry the torch into the future.

Samuel S. Thorp

Easter Monday Walk

Do you want to enjoy our lovely countryside and meet friends of all ages, as well as our pets?

Come long on Monday 21st April, for our Easter Monday walk, we meet outside The Sanctuary opposite St Margaret's Church at 10-30am for a circular walk to Hit or Miss Pub, Penn St (about 1.5 hrs there & 40 mins back) for yummy Lunch.

If you prefer to drive are very welcome & should arrive about 12-15pm.

Places must be booked so please phone me to book on 07753 162683 and obtain a menu for pre-ordering your meal.

We would love to see you there.

David Winder
Churchwarden



“Exploring... Lent” Course and Reflections

This lent we shall be offering lent groups for people to be able to engage afresh with the Gospel of Mark as we prepare ourselves for Good Friday and Easter. We shall have two groups, one on Monday Evenings at Holy Trinity Church Hall and one on Wednesday Afternoons in the Sanctuary at St Margaret's Parish Rooms. If you would like to join a group please contact me on vicar@holytrinityandstmargarets.

co.uk with the subject line: Lent Group.

As last year, the email list shall have a Daily Lent Reflection sent out each morning. If you're not on the email list and would like to sign up for a weekly update and reflections through Lent then you can sign up on holytrinityandstmargarets.co.uk or holytrinityandstmargarets.substack.com/

From the Registers

November 2024 to January 2025

St. Margaret's

Baptism

Neal Sudhir Shepperd 22 December

Burial of Ashes

Mary Roberts 04 January

Holy Trinity

Baptism

Evelyn Anna Charlotte Farrow 01 December

Wedding

Emily Marshall and Henry Taylor 14 December

Funeral

Edna Frankish 28 November

Email Newsletter

Did you know we have a weekly email bulletin which keeps you up to date on what's happening in our Churches? If you're interested then you can sign up on the website or at <https://holytrinityandstmargarets.substack.com/>

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St Margaret's Parish Rooms:
Mary Coker: 812162

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Gail Wellings 813254

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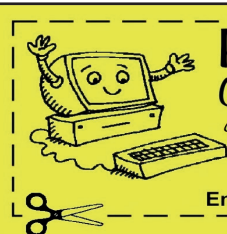
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Kids and Young People at HT&SM

We have been busy the last few months. At the end of November we had our Christmas Crafternoon and made all kinds of decorations on the theme of Reduce - Reuse- Recycle, We also had a pinata, games and a few too many sweets! The best way to kick of the Christmas season!



We also took part in the Christmas Jumper Service at Holy Trinity with one of our group doing a reading.

Coming up we have our first Youth Service of the year. The band is getting ready and two of our group have already written a sketch for the occasion. It's a more informal service and full of energy! It's taking place on 23rd February.

Lent

We have two events during Lent. A Pizza and Games Night at the beginning and a Pizza and Film Night at the end in Holy Week. Check the website for more details if you would like to come.

WHAT'S ON?

If you are new to the community you may not know yet all that is happening in our churches. The best way is to have a look through our website (www.holytrinityandstmargarets.co.uk) but to summarise events during the week...

MONDAY TO THURSDAY

Morning Prayer at Holy Trinity 8.30am

Evening Prayer at St Margaret's 5.00pm

MONDAYS

Bell Ringing Practice at Holy Trinity 7.45 - 9.15pm.

Ringers meet in the bell tower. Contact Peter Barrett 07720 594880

TUESDAYS

Coffee in the Sanctuary

Please drop in any week between 10 and midday for coffee at St Margaret's Sanctuary. Everyone welcome!

Afternoon Home Groups

Every 1st and 3rd week, 4.00pm at various venues. Contact Hilary (816438).

SUNDAYS

Service at 8.00am Holy Trinity 9.30am at St Margaret's with TYGRE Club 11.00am at Holy Trinity

COME AND JOIN US AT TYGRE CLUB!

Tygre Club is church for children! We share Bible stories, sing, play games and do crafts. Why not pop into church to see some of our colourful creations? We meet every Sunday during term time, except the first Sunday in the month. We meet in St Margaret's Church at the start of the 9.30am service before going across to The Sanctuary. We come back to rejoin the adults during Communion. If you are very young, we have a creche, with toys for you to play with. Parents are welcome to join us or remain in church during the service. If you are twelve years old or younger, come and join us to find out more!

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St. Margaret's Church, Tylers Green

Dementia Cafe



All welcome

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