

Holy Trinity Geneva Magazine



The Chaplain writes

One of the great bonuses of having Eleanor Catterall with us as our Ministry Experience Scheme (MES) intern has been how much she has inspired us to look outwards in our mission as a church. During the relatively short time she has been here both last autumn and this spring, she has reached out to organisations and other churches who are providing support for those in need. Through the links she has established, she has helped us to see some of the many needs which exist here in Geneva and the vicinity and got us thinking about ways in which we as a church could help.

So, one of our major priorities this year is to do just that. Building on the work we are already doing, we hope significantly to increase the ways in which we provide support and to ensure we do so as effectively as we can. As Christians, we give thanks daily for all that we receive so freely from God and we are called in turn to make God's love visible through the ways in which we give generously of our time and resources to help those in need.

What are we doing at present? Probably the biggest activity is the support we offer in providing Saturday lunches for those in need at the Jardin de Montbrillant. Liz Kernan does a wonderful job coordinating our team who prepare and serve lunches often to around 300 guests, aided by the amazing chef Sandeep.



We also, on Eleanor's initiative, took part in a joint project last Advent to provide shoe boxes filled with Christmas foodstuffs and gifts to refugees in two centres in Geneva. A big thank you to all of you who took part so generously in this appeal.

Other initiatives we've supported in the past year include participating in the Samedi du Partage to help those in need; fundraising by our young people to help the Point d'Eau which provides meals, showers and toiletries to the homeless; and, through money raised at our Lent lunches, supporting 'Save the Children', as well as the Diocese in Europe Lent Appeal for refugee work in the diocese. We also last autumn, provided financial support to an imaginative

environmental project called *Limadol* in the Philippines run by Christine Damary's son to create compost out of waste vegetables without producing harmful methane, by using flies. (See next article)

All this is good. However, as I think we are all increasingly aware, there are growing needs both here in Geneva and overseas, including in many countries represented by our congregation. There is more we could do, particularly bearing in mind the skills and talents of our congregation, both to provide practical help to certain projects and to look at the level of our financial charitable giving as a chaplaincy.

In this issue

The Chaplain writes

Limadol project

An intern reflects

Queen Victoria in Geneva

A question of motivation

*Our Northern Correspondent
and the Universe*

Sausages

Council report

This is why this year we are going to set up an Outreach and Charitable Giving Group at Holy Trinity to help us plan and evaluate projects which we might support locally and overseas. It will enable us to look at areas of need; to discern together projects through which we can really help to make a difference whether through practical hands-on involvement or financial giving; and to encourage those across our congregation, including our young people, to get involved. We need your help with this, so if this is something you would like to do, our Treasurer, Ijeoma Aghanya (IJ) or I would love to hear from you!

As part of this, we'd like to hear about any charitable projects you are involved with at present whether in Switzerland or overseas, to see if there are any it may be appropriate for us to support as a church or you think may be of interest for us to consider.

Over the coming year, we will also be looking at new projects with which our young people can get involved to provide ongoing support.



We will continue our involvement with the Jardin de Montbrillant and new volunteers are always needed and very welcome. So, if you would like to explore this, do contact Liz Kernen through

Michèle in the office. The next date on which we are providing lunch is Saturday 26 July.

Finally, our Community Choir, under Claire Charles' excellent leadership, is increasingly reaching out to the local community. Last Christmas, as well as singing at our Christmas Fair, the choir went to sing at a local EMS in Geneva bringing great joy both to residents and the staff there. This year, more visits to EMSs and similar organisations are planned – if you know of one which might welcome a visit, do let me or Claire know.

Thank you to all of you for the generous support you already give to our social and charitable outreach. I very much hope that you will be inspired to help us in all we seek to do in the coming year.

With my love and prayers

Daphne



An Inspiring Project

by Peter Damary

Let us start by thanking the community of Holy Trinity Geneva for supporting our climate impact start-up using a nature-based solution to food waste. The church community, through the Council contributed to our crowd funding, as did many of you individually. This has meant a lot to us.

We were successful, last January, in raising our vitally important goal of 25'450 francs!

Cecilia (Cej) and I, with our children Tamara and Jonathan (now adults), moved to Davao City in the Philippines (Cecilia's country) in 2013. Cecilia continued working on human rights, first for the Philippine Commission on Human Rights, and then for a high UN position (Special Rapporteur on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)). I continued working as a consultant on agricultural community marketing in various countries around south-east Asia. But we wanted to contribute more directly to the development of Davao City by investing some of our Swiss savings.

After exploring different possibilities, I was reading an FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) report on how, for reasons related to the climate, we need to reduce our meat consumption, and that an alternative source of protein is insects – consumed regularly by 2/3 of humanity. I was at the time travelling in Cambodia where we stopped at an “insect market” with dozens of different edible insects (crickets are very tasty, large spiders not so much).

The hope of finding a market for consumable insects in the Philippines seemed over ambitious. However, in the FAO report there was a paragraph on how Black Soldier Fly Larvae (BSFL) could play a very important role in Solid Waste Management (SWM) of compostable waste which is a problem in Davao City where we live. Indeed, when food waste is dumped in the landfill, it decomposes and

produces methane – a major greenhouse gas. It also happened that an institute at my former university (the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich) had published a comprehensive guide on how to use BSFL to compost food waste.

So in 2019, Cecilia and I decided to invest in introducing BSFL composting to the Philippines. And what an adventure it has been!

Bureaucratic processes here are slow and frustrating, and this of course was not helped by the pandemic. We did some research on the SWM of Davao City, purchased land, built a 250m² building and did various trials (including in our garden). We finally got the process going by May 2021.

Since then, we have been building the team (now 7 members strong) and mastering the technology. Today we process some 3 tons of food waste a week. In 2024 we were able to prevent the creation of 250 tons of CO₂ equivalent in methane.

However, what we were not able to do was develop the market for our two products: the animal feeds – made up of the insect larvae themselves, rich in protein and fats, as well as pro-biotics; and the organic compost, known as insect frass, with high levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (NPK) – very useful to revitalise and make soils fertile.

This is why last year in November, we launched a crowd-funding initiative to help

us raise funds to improve our products and our marketing.

Our primary objective is now to develop the market for our products within six months, so that we can prove our innovation is economically sustainable in the Philippine context. This is essential if we are to scale up this solution for climate-change mitigation and have a real impact on reducing methane. For the larvae (dried or live), we have identified the following markets:

- dried and de-oiled larvae for domestic pet fish – with the advantage that the paying capacity of fish owners is high, but the disadvantage that the market is small

- live and dried larvae for poultry owned by backyard and cooperative farmers

- and for the frass (BooSterFrass) – we will reinforce the sales of our 2 kg bags to backyard gardeners and seek also to sell to farmers of organic vegetables and fruit trees.

With some of the resources from the crowd funding, we have now completed a first market study and have a clearer understanding of how we can better sell our compost to farmers, cooperatives and projects.

We are preparing the various processes to have the frass certified as organic - the inspection will happen on 10 May. Once our frass is certified the doors should open to very interesting markets.

Already we are seeing some success in the sales of our frass

to backyard gardeners, as we now have 4 distributors selling in and around Davao. A number of farmers and cooperatives have also shown interest.

Specifically with the funds provided by HTC we developed a first solar dryer (shown in our photo at the end of the article) to dry the insect larvae. This has proved very efficient and reduces the cost of drying. We will be developing an improved version with a partner university (Mapua University) in the near future.

We also plan to carry out several studies about the use of our animal feeds (live and dried insect larvae) with the University of the Philippines (Mindanao), including market research to better comprehend the fish pet market. For that we are also seeking to obtain approval from the Bureau of Animal Husbandry.

We have designed a number of trials with partner farmers, and should be getting the results soon. Meanwhile, we are working closely with a pet-fish producer (Koi and Goldfish) who regularly buys large quantities of our live BSF larvae to feed his fish, as they grow faster and more healthy, with nice shiny skins.

In other developments, we have obtained some support from a Swiss funding organisation (REPIC) that will help us improve our technology (we will be provided with the technical expertise from those who have written the guide on BSF composting), as well as helping us invest in a new composting centre able to

compost some 6 tons a day, that we will set up in partnership with the city of Davao.

We are also following an acceleration programme for climate enterprises that is teaching us how to enhance the company by developing business plans and pitching to investors. Our first pitching should happen by the end of the month – so fingers crossed!

Thank you again so much for your support – it means a lot to us to know we have a network of supporters of our cause!

Peter and Cej Damary and the Limadol team



Some of the team with the solar dryer (behind!)



Open Hands and Full Hearts: *Reflections from a Ministry Intern at Holy Trinity, Geneva*

One of my favourite quotes from Alice Walker's novel *'The Color Purple'* is *'Time moves slowly but passes quickly'*. It seems a rather fitting phrase to begin a reflection on my time as an intern with the Ministry Experience Scheme (MES), having now completed 8 months on the course, and with a bit over a month left till it ends: time really does flash before one's eyes! I arrived in

Geneva at the end of September 2024, having never properly travelled before, let alone lived in a different country, not knowing what to expect but trusting this alien place would become one of formation by God on my spiritual and vocational journey. And He did not disappoint! As my time in Geneva draws to a close, I find myself deeply grateful for the journey I've been on as a ministry intern here. It has been a season rich in learning, growth and grace—a season that has challenged and formed me in ways I hadn't expected but which I receive with thankfulness.

Whilst I will be leaving Geneva with prayers of thanks for many things, I am particularly grateful to the Lord for the gift of diversity. Or perhaps, to be more particular, the gift of unity in diversity. One of the greatest joys of my internship has been meeting people from all over the world (both at Holy Trinity and at external events), all bringing with them a rich tapestry of experiences, languages and spiritual journeys. In every handshake, conversation, and shared prayer, I have encountered the beautiful reality of the Church as a global body — united not by uniformity, but by Christ. In a world that says peace and harmony are unattainable, we hear the Church shout "unity in diversity is possible when King Jesus is at the centre of everything we do": a powerful, daily reminder to us all personally and as a Church.

What has particularly inspired me has been hearing the stories of those who have prayerfully

discerned God's call and followed Him into some of the most challenging and, frankly, frightening places in the world (for example, Yemen, Ethiopia and Iran). Their obedience, courage and trust have humbled me. These are people who, like Abraham, *"went out not knowing where [they] were going"* (Hebrews 11:8), believing that the One who calls is faithful. Their stories have strengthened my own resolve to keep my hands open to the call of God, wherever it may lead.

Coming from a charismatic background, I have found great beauty experiencing a different church tradition (*-thank you all for bearing with me in patience and answering my many questions!*). I have enjoyed the rhythm and rootedness of worship in the more liturgical expression that Holy Trinity offers. There is something profoundly grounding about stepping into a stream of worship that stretches back through centuries, reminding us that we are part of a much bigger story: the story that is not limited to one set of people, but rather one that all are invited to be a part of.

I have spent a lot of time during my internship pondering what it means to make sure people know there is an invitation to be part of this greater story. Attending international conferences whilst in Geneva (for example, on food insecurity, modern-day slavery and the refugee crisis) has awakened me to some of the very real and present issues our world is facing—climate injustice, migration, conflict,

inequality. It's impossible to remain unchanged when confronted with such need. And so, I've been asking: what is the Church's role in all this? How do we build the Kingdom of God here and now? I believe the answer lies in using everything God has given us—our time, our talents, our positions, our voices, our knowledge of His grace—for His glory. After all, as Jesus said, "Freely you have received; freely give" (Matthew 10:8). This is God's economy: a Kingdom where giving flows from grace, and where every resource is an opportunity to glorify the Giver. Worshipping



in other Churches, volunteering at the Refugee Welcome Centre at Emmanuel Church, and helping out with Christian events that reach young people across Geneva has taught me the importance of Christians working together across traditions and denominations for the sake of the gospel and for God's Kingdom to be built in areas of such injustice and deprivation. I wonder what role you feel you play in the work Holy Trinity does to bring about the Kingdom of God on Earth, and perhaps what ideas you have as a Church to make His greater story known to the least and the lost? I wonder what it means for you to freely receive grace and freely offer it to others?

I will leave Geneva towards the end of June and will return to my religious community in North Devon for a few months before starting to study for an undergraduate degree in theology at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford. As I prepare to return to England, I want to thank you. Thank you for your warm welcome, for your hospitality, and for encouraging me as I've discovered what chaplaincy life looks like. I ask for your prayers as I continue on this journey of discernment. My prayer is to keep my hands open—to offer back to God what He gave first, trusting that He will guide each step. And I will continue to pray for you here in Geneva: that the Spirit of God will be upon you, uniting you, leading you, filling you with courage, creativity and compassion as you seek to be His people in this city.

In Christ,

Eleanor Catterall



Queen Victoria's stopover in Geneva, April 1890

Introduction

A reigning monarch of any nation encountered great political and diplomatic problems when travelling abroad. For Queen Victoria as sovereign of not only Great Britain but also of a worldwide Empire, these were immense. She, or rather her government advisers, devoted much time and effort to overcoming and solving these as best they could.

Her month's trip to Lucerne, Switzerland in 1868 took over three years of delicate diplomacy to organize. She travelled as the Countess of Kent which lessened the problem somewhat for the Swiss. Incidentally this was the first ever visit by a reigning British monarch and the only one until the 1980 state visit by Queen Elizabeth II.

In contrast, for her stays in Aix-les-Bains, France later in the century, although she travelled as Queen, she adopted the pseudonym Countess of Balmoral when necessary to avoid official duties. However, the routes of her journeys had to be carefully planned to avoid all diplomatic misunderstandings and tiresome problems. Her stopover in 1890 at Geneva train station, the subject of this article, is a clear example of this dilemma.

The stopover as described by Queen Victoria in her Journal on Monday 21st April 1890

'We had to leave our comfortable Maison Mottet (which I hear they call now Villa Victoria) & beautiful Aix les Bains, with its glorious mountains, its lovely Lake & delicious air. Drove down to the station with an escort & were received there by Gen: O'Neill, Col: Niel & the 2 other Officers, & many of the notabilities of the town. Lady Somers & Ly Whalley were also on the platform.

Off we went, & the scenery looked so beautiful. The Alps were distinctly to be seen, quite clear of mist. But at Culoz already the sky became grey & sun disappeared, as we entered the fine mountainous part. By

the time we reached Geneva it was raining heavily. Mr Barton & a Deputation of the English were at the station, & presented me with an address, & Ly Emily & her daughter Mrs Barton (my godchild) gave us beautiful flowers.'



Stopover in Geneva 1890

Lady Emily Peel, her daughter Victoria Barton (née Peel) the Queen's goddaughter and her wealthy husband, Daniel Barton, lived in Geneva. If the Queen, who one might have thought would have liked to visit Emily and her family, stepped out of the train on to Genevan soil her visit would have turned, in accordance with diplomatic etiquette, into a State visit to Switzerland with all the pomp and ceremony that it would have entailed. So her advisers, in their wisdom, decided that the solution was for the train from Aix-les-Bains to stop in Geneva and that the Peel family could meet the Queen by conversing either from the station platform or by stepping into the carriage of her train. Thus, a difficult problem was resolved by a typical British compromise. Apart from the diplomatic reason there was another explanation why a prolonged stop at Geneva was not considered at all necessary: the Peels and Bartons had been in close contact with the Royal family while the Queen and her relatives were staying in Aix. The Geneva Telegraph of Thursday April 24 1890 gave a full description of the Queen's departure from Aix-les-Bains and her arrival at Cornavin Station, Geneva where Her Majesty's special train stopped for exactly 9 minutes. Security was always an issue during the

Queen's travels at home or abroad (there were at least 8 assassination attempts during her reign). So, Sir Henry Ponsonby, her Keeper of the Privy purse and Private Secretary, who was in overall charge of the Royal trips to Aix, issued stringent orders regarding admission to the railway station in order that the Queen might be safe and enjoy the utmost privacy during her short halt at Geneva. Apart from Lady Emily Peel, Mr and Mrs Barton and the official deputation, only Mr Stahl, whose family were for many years active worshippers and supporters of Holy Trinity Church (there are many references to them in Holy Trinity Archives), was allowed on the platform.



Lady Emily Peel

Extract from the Geneva Telegraph of Thursday 1 May 1890: -

'All entrances to the railway

station were carefully guarded by gendarmes and within the station was a large number of police and detectives....

Punctually at 6.20 the Royal train steamed slowly into the station. The first to alight was Sir Henry Ponsonby, who grasped Mr Barton warmly by the hand and both immediately went to the door of the Royal Saloon where Her Majesty appeared and greeted our Consul in the most gracious and cordial manner.'

The Geneva deputation from the English Colony was then presented to the Queen by Mr Barton. It was composed of Rev. H.M.E. Desmond (Almoner-in-Chief during the Crimean War), General Alexander Low, C.B., Major-General Crofton, Colonel Thomas, C.D. Cunningham, Esq. Royal Company of Archers, sometime Acting Consul and member of the Church Committee and Rev. J. Last (Chaplain Holy Trinity). Incidentally, despite a search in the HTC Church Archives, it is unknown whether the first four of these distinguished representatives were regular or even occasional members of its congregation. The Rev. J. Last, HTC Chaplain, presented a written version of a loyal address to her Majesty on behalf of the English Colony in Geneva which he was unable to give orally owing to the time constraints of the stopover. It read:

'We, the undersigned, representatives of the British Colony in Geneva, are deeply grateful for the honour Your Most Gracious Majesty has conferred by allowing us in the name of our fellow countrymen here, to present this assurance of our loyal devotion and of our

deep attachment to your Majesty's Crown and Person.

We rejoice to know that Your Majesty's health has been greatly benefited by Your Majesty's residence at Aix-Les-Bains and our constant prayer is that many years of health and happiness maybe in store for Your Majesty, whose life we most earnestly hope may long be spared to govern the great Empire over which God Almighty has given Your Majesty the rule'.

Princess Beatrice wrote this account in her copy of the *Queen's Journal* :-

'When the official deputation withdrew the Queen at once beckoned to Lady Emily Peel and Mrs Victoria Barton to approach the window where they remained in close conversation with Her Majesty ...The train then proceeded on to Lausanne..... Alas! the beautiful mountains & Mont Blanc we had so much enjoyed seeing 5 years ago, were not to be distinguished, & we might as well have been in Holland, as in Switzerland. By the time we reached Lausanne it was quite dark. There, another Deputation presented the Queen with an address, & a sweet little 3 years old girl, daughter of the British Vice Consul, gave her a bouquet. A Band played & the station was decorated with Chinese lanterns. We had some dinner, & after it, I stepped out & brought in Alphonse Mensdorff's 2nd daughter Sophie Kinsky, with her 3 daughters & only son..... They remained about 10 minutes & then left. There were great crowds, who cheered, & sang "God save the Queen".

Concluding remarks

Much has been written about how Queen Victoria enjoyed her vacations spent at the Villa Mottet, an annexe of the Hotel de L'Europe, Aix-Les-Bains in 1885, 1887 and 1890 and her activities whilst staying there. For instance, *The Queen, the Lady's Newspaper*, April 19, 1890 noted that:

'Unless it should persist in being cold and showery, the Queen will remain at Aix until the 22nd. Going from thence to Darmstadt via Geneva. In spite of the uncertainty of the weather, Her Majesty and the rest of the royal party drove and walked most days last week. Princess Beatrice has been taking the baths regularly, resorting to the establishment every morning for the purpose in the usual mode of conveyance – the sedan chair.'

Not so much has been researched into the why and wherefore of the routes taken or the trains used. There is a documentary reference that French Emperor Napoleon III lent his saloon train with his own luxuriously appointed compartments to the Queen for her journey to Lucerne in 1868 and it is probable that this custom continued even after the Emperor's death in 1873. Yet another hypothesis has been suggested that on the frequent occasions when she visited her numerous Belgian and German relatives by rail between 1843 and 1895, she was lent a train by Kings Leopold I and II of

Belgium who were both rail-way enthusiasts par excellence and whose country then had the best rail system in Europe,

What is very evident is that all Queen Victoria's journeys had to be meticulously planned to avoid diplomatic and political complexities and to ensure her safety and privacy. As a consequence, the stopover in 1890 when the chosen rail route from Aix-Le-Bains was via Geneva to Darmstadt so that she could stay with her daughter, Princess Victoria of Hesse, married to Prince Louis of Battenberg, was subject to great security measures.

Valerie Offord, March 2025
Hon. Archivist Holy Trinity Church, Geneva.

Author's note

No reference whatsoever, to date, has been discovered in the Archives/Council Minutes or other records of Holy Trinity Anglican Church of Queen Victoria's two stopovers in Geneva. Even so there are many references to Sir Robert Peel 3rd Baronet and husband of Lady Emily Peel and his prominent role to enable the construction of the church in 1853. Also, their daughter Victoria Alexandrina Barton and her husband Daniel hardly figure in the Archives save for the printed service leaflet of the unveiling of the simple plaque erected in her honour on the south wall of the chancel *'To the Memory of our beloved sister Victoria Alexandrina Barton of Villa Lammermoor, Geneva. Died 1935. Peace was within her walls'*. The Villa Lammermoor had been her childhood home and in 1902 she and her husband bought it from her parents. After his death she lived in it for the rest of her life. The story of the enigmatic quotation on her funeral plaque will have to be the subject of a further article!



Acknowledgements

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Sources

Holy Trinity Archives 'Printed Service Leaflet for unveiling of Victoria Alexandrina Barton's Brass Tablet 1 September 1937'.

Queen Victoria's Journal (excerpts from April 1890) (written in the train en route from Aix-les-Bains to Darmstadt).

*Newspaper articles
Geneva Telegraph 17, 20, 24 April and 1 May 1890 editions.*



MOTIVATION – but what for ?

I have recently been perusing a paper dealing with “student empowerment: psychological insights into education”. Oh dear, I thought, whatever can that mean? Empowering them to do what?

“Empowerment” – Oxford Dictionary: giving authority or power to do something; making somebody stronger or more confident; enabling.

Students are all different and there are probably as many motivations as there are people in the class. However, I soon got the gist of what the author was saying; he was indeed looking at various reasons as to why students were in his English class.

Enough about work! This set me off thinking about the twelve disciples and how different they were from one another. What motivated them to follow Jesus? And how did Jesus empower them in their various missions?

Let's start with Peter. What motivated him – ambition? Maybe not; maybe we could put it down to curiosity. He wasn't always called Peter – he started off as Simon and then became Simon Peter before being known as just Peter. A reading at a recent evening service told us how his brother Andrew and another man were disciples of John the Baptist. Upon seeing Jesus, they asked John who he was and when they were told, “Behold the Lamb of God”, they asked if they could follow him and, indeed, they stayed for the rest of that day. It must have been very important because we are even told that this took place at about four o'clock in the afternoon. Then Andrew went and fetched his brother, saying that they had found the Messiah. Now Simon wanted to **learn** more, so his motivation could be put down to **curiosity**. Simon came and was introduced to Jesus.

Almost immediately, Jesus knew how he was going to empower him – He called him Peter, **the rock upon which his church would be built**.

(Just as a postscript, in the gospels of Matthew and Mark, it says that Simon and Andrew were fishing when Jesus walked by and said “Follow me and I will make you fishers of people!” The expression used for the last 2'000 years is “fishers of men” but we are no longer allowed to say that. The first person to remind me that I must live with the times will get zero points. The exact words concerning Peter's calling don't really make any difference to his story).

Now let's get Judas out of the way. Why did he join Jesus? Nowadays we tend to think that he had been **expecting** a warlike leader, someone like Joshua or Gideon. When nothing happened, he was sorely **disillusioned**, which is how his subsequent behaviour is explained. However, we are told that Jesus knew what was going to happen and that it was inevitable. He said to Judas “go quickly and do what you are going to do”. In fact, we are told that Judas was **manipulated** by the devil. (This tortured soul felt immediate remorse, returning to the chief priests and famously throwing their thirty pieces of silver down on the floor.)

Another of the disciples who was perhaps expecting a warlike leader was Simon the Zealot but Jesus' teachings surely made him **find a better way** to work rather than by taking up arms. Not much is said about him in the Gospels

and he is believed to have gone and worked with Thaddeus (also called Jude) in Persia.

Simon Peter's brother Andrew together with Philip were **networkers**. Andrew it was who found the youngster who had brought five barley loaves and two small fishes with him; miraculously more than sufficient to feed the five thousand people who had been listening to Jesus. Philip got talking with some visiting Greeks and introduced them to Jesus too. Jesus used their friendliness to enable them to **approach** people. Philip introduced Bartholomew, also called Nathaniel, to Jesus. During a discussion with Jesus, Bartholomew was **convinced** and later went on to spread the gospel far and wide.

James and John were fishermen, sons of Zebedee, and Jesus called them "Sons of Thunder", perhaps (but see Luke IX v.54) because of their **enthusiasm**. He said "Follow me!" and they threw down their nets and followed. In his sermon at a recent evening service Humberto invited us to think about what **following** means – James and John physically followed Jesus; today, people on social media have "followers" which just means being influenced to live a certain lifestyle and buy stuff. For us, **following Jesus** must surely mean living by His example as far as we are able.

There was another James, son of Alphaeus, but apart from being listed in the Gospels, very little is known of him; he surely had qualities that Jesus recognized and "empowered". Thomas was another **enquirer**, often asking questions and

wanting to learn from Jesus. He is also known as "doubting Thomas" needing to have real proof of the resurrection. Jesus enabled him to be **convinced** and he went on to do great works, notably in India where today many churches are called after St. Thomas.

Matthew must have been very surprised when Jesus called him to follow. As a tax collector for the occupying Romans, he was unpopular, so being included and valued might have made him feel **gratitude** although nothing is mentioned about this – Jesus said "Follow me" and he just got up and followed. He went on to **spread the gospel**, probably as far as Ethiopia where tradition has it he was martyred while leading worship. His Gospel contains a number of important features, such as explaining the connection between Jesus and the Old Testament, often using expressions such as "this was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet". There are sixty-five references to the Old Testament in this Gospel. Matthew is widely believed to have written the first Gospel, but numerous scholars question this.

Oh, those dreaded scholars, always deflating our certainties! My mother, who was a very wise old bird, told me "There are many things it is not given to us to know". Caravaggio painted three large works: The Calling of St. Matthew, The Inspiration of St. Matthew and The Martyrdom of St. Matthew and you can still see them today in the French Church in Rome. We cannot reproduce them here because they are very dark, but you can easily see them on the

Internet.

But coming back to today, we too, are all very different from one another which makes for a talented congregation made up of a mixed bunch of people, each one of us following Jesus in our own way with our own hopes and motivations. May He "empower" us to do our very best!

Dorinda –

with kind help from Humberto Henderson, to whom many thanks.

Sources: Humberto's sermon, which can be seen on our Holy Trinity website.

Book: The Bible in Outline, ed. Scripture Union, 1988

Websites about Caravaggio and various pesky scholars.



***Our Northern
Correspondent ...
ponders life elsewhere in the
Universe***

The news during Holy Week was particularly bleak this year. On Palm Sunday morning I heard about a bomb attack on the last functioning Christian hospital in Gaza and a devastating drone attack in Ukraine. The week continued in similar vein, bellicose vocabulary being even applied to trade between nations precipitated by the Trump sanctions and finally – at the end of the week – talk of 'wars' between the supermarkets in the United Kingdom. Such language, depressing as it is, underlines the human harm that war in any shape or form brings. And it always brings

that harm to the most vulnerable.

However, the scientific community did have one particularly glowing moment in the news bulletins of Holy Week: the reported long-sought discovery of some signs of life beyond our earth. This is the story of planet K2-18b which revolves around a sun 120 light-years (which is 705 trillion miles) away from earth, so we are unlikely to be receiving any visitors from it just yet! However, some molecules of various compounds found where there is marine life have been shown to exist around this planet. As yet that's about as far as the findings go, but they are exciting a lot of interest.

In fact, it is not surprising to find life outside our own planet. It all depends on how you define 'life'. When I was studying chemistry about 60 years ago, we divided it into 'Organic' and 'Inorganic' – the former dealing with chemicals with a carbon base and particularly complex molecules involved in biological processes, and inorganic basically meaning less complex, supposedly 'inert' molecules. As research has moved on, whilst that division still has meaning, what is now clearer is that at subatomic levels, a *form* of life exists. Subatomic particles are not really particles at all but forces. And some of these energy forces seem to be able to communicate with one another even remotely.

All this before we get into the very difficult areas in astrophysics of dark matter and black holes, where we speculate

about material having such infinite density and gravitational pull, that even light cannot escape from such a black hole – hence the name.

A few months back I read the latest book by the present Professor of Philosophical Theology at St Andrews' University, Judith Woolfe, in which she explored the role of imagination as it impacts upon theology. However, it is not just theologians who need active imaginations, but also scientists – so we can understand the excitement over K2-18b, though the very existence of the Universe is a fact about life – of some kind – outside of our own rather small part of it. It all depends upon how one defines 'life'. We are set in a Universe that God in God's super-abundance and love brings into being and gives life and of which we know but a drop in the ocean. We certainly need much imagination in order to consider the infinite number of possible life forms which may exist in the known Universe – let alone those bounds of the Universe which we have yet to discover. There is - at some level – 'life' out there by the very fact of there being something to observe and measure.

However, that is a considerable way from there being *intelligent life* of a recognisable form. It's true that how we define *intelligent* has a bearing here also, as we now know that even unicellular organisms exhibit intelligence in a very primitive form as they are able to adapt to their environment rapidly and move around it to utilise the nutrients they need for survival. The nucleus of such organisms contains an

extremely long strand of DNA packed tightly but containing a vast amount of information.

So, is it likely that – somewhere in the vast Universe which we inhabit – there are other intelligent beings? The answer probably has to be yes, though such beings may well be very different indeed from us – even perhaps relying on a non-carbon-based biochemistry. Though it has to be said that the current findings from planet K2-18b do indicate such a biochemistry, and we know that there is plenty of carbon around in our Universe – we are made of star dust ourselves!

And turning from that realisation – that we are dust and as Ash Wednesday always potently reminds us it is to dust that we shall return – what impact does the possibility of extra-terrestrial intelligent life have upon our own sense of human worth and prestige? What impact would such life have upon our knowledge of God, on our *theology*?

For as long as philosophy has been known, people have asked questions about the existence of life elsewhere in the Universe. For example, Anaximander (c. 610–c. 546 BC) held that the cosmos is eternal, and that it contains an infinite number of worlds, continually perishing and coming to be. The great Christian theologian St. Thomas Aquinas back in the 13th century speculated upon the existence of life elsewhere, though his conclusion was sceptical of other worlds, as 'not fitting'. Debates continued and it became a mark of orthodoxy to affirm that God *could* create other worlds which might contain intelligent life.

But it has been with the progressive discoveries of the sheer *vastness* of the observable Universe that increased speculation and scientific research has accelerated. We are now aware that our own galaxy, the *Milky Way*, contains something in the region of 100 *billion* stars. And since the announcement by Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz in 1995 that they had uncovered a planet orbiting another star like our own sun, the number of these exoplanets discovered has rapidly grown. More than this, we now are aware that our galaxy is only one out of 200 billion (possibly more) other galaxies, each containing about the same number of stars as our own. The numbers are truly mind-boggling, and it is clear that the likelihood of other life somewhere out there is now fairly high, even if only a tiny percentage of these stars were to support a solar system containing a planet similar to ours.

Where does this leave our theology? It is a huge question, and one which the current Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford University has tackled in his recent book *Astrobiology and Christian Doctrine: the implications of life in the Universe*. Andrew Davison began his research into this field through a project in 2016 at Princeton University funded by NASA to look into the implications of life beyond earth. There is now a centre in the University of Cambridge for 'Life in the Universe' and it runs an arts and humanities programme for students which Professor Davison helped to set up. His book explores the possible implications for



Christian theology across its entire spectrum of the discovery of life beyond earth. Whilst it is impossible here to go into the detail of his work, in his conclusion he quotes Aquinas' justification for theology as thinking about God and all things in relation to God. (*Summa Theologiae* 1.1.7) *All things – including those of which we have but an inkling.*

So where might the discovery of life beyond earth leave Christian theology, particularly with regard to our understanding of God's revelation of Godself through Christ and his work of our Redemption? At one level, the existence of hugely diverse life-forms is well known to us – just consider the depths of the oceans which yield the wildest creatures, some of which are only now being discovered. As Christians, we believe that the sheer diversity of creation is a sign of the infinite resourcefulness of our Creator. The vastness of the Universe was seen by Nicholas of Cusa in the 15th century as a symbol of the infinite God. Whilst he thought that the Universe *was* infinite, that is not the view of scientists today, but its unfathomable vastness remains nevertheless. As we consider the sheer diversity which we encounter already on our own

planet, it is unsurprising that there may be infinitely more elsewhere. Davison makes the point that the revelation of God as Trinity is something that has the potential to stand universally, irrespective of whether an Incarnation of God or some other disclosure of God's being and purpose might be the case for life elsewhere in the Universe. Whilst Christian eschatology speaks of the goal of creation as being under the complete rule of God, that is to say, at one with God, there is no reason to believe that this is less so for other parts of the Universe than for earth.

To gaze into the heavens – even with the naked eye – is to be transported into another world of great majesty and mystery. As Jean Calvin put it in his *Commentary on the First Book of Moses, called Genesis*:

Astronomers investigate with great labour whatever the ingenuity of the human mind can comprehend. Nevertheless, this study is not to be rejected, nor this science to be condemned, because some frantic persons are wont boldly to reject whatever is unknown to them. For astronomy is not only pleasant, but also very useful to be known: it cannot be denied that this art unfolds the admirable wisdom of God.

Perhaps this is a good point to stop in a piece for Calvin's city! But the final word should go to the Psalmist, from possibly as far back as 1000 BC, though it is impossible to

give anything like an accurate date. In Psalm 8 we find:

*O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your
name in all the earth!
You have set your glory
above the heavens ...
When I look at your
heavens, the work of
your fingers, the moon
and the stars that you
have established; what
are human beings that
you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for
them?*

Whatever and wherever there is life, its Creator, his Word, and the Sanctifying Gift inspire in us an awe beyond our wildest imagination as we contemplate his *glory beyond the heavens*. We have nothing to fear but much in which to rejoice!

Alex Gordon

Sausages in the Belfry

Elizabeth Laravoire's amusing contribution to the spring issue of this learned publication spoke about a church described in a French newspaper, and brought back old memories. In that particular church, you will remember, the local farmers were curing their hams in the belfry, and then selling them to raise money for restoring the organ. Indeed, some of those hams even grace the tables of the Elysée.

During the early years of my married life, my husband and I would make regular trips to the south of Italy where Dino's parents lived in a big old house with flights of stairs up to the

flat roof. This warm place was used to sun-dry tomatoes, hang out the washing and grow a few plants. However, in the stairwell, as you reached the top, the breeze reached Beaufort proportions and it was ideal for ... hanging up sausages, curing red peppers and, above all, for the oregano and fennel which had to be dried before being used to give the Italian cuisine its unique flavours.

The house is still there but it belongs to somebody else now and I expect they are continuing to cure their hams and sausages in the stairwell – nothing beats it!

Dorinda



Council Report –February to April 2025

Council met three times during this period, 17th February, 17th March and 28th April.

During the February meeting, Council adopted the 2025 priorities, in line with our three-year Vision & Strategy. A précis of the 2025 priorities and objectives was prepared by our Chaplain, Daphne, and distributed at the AGM. Further copies are available at the back of the church. These objectives shape everything we do. Council hopes to engage with the congregation on the objectives at two consultative meetings which have been set up (11th May and 15th June), of which more details are given

below. Council will review progress towards the objectives at our June Council meeting.

One of our priorities, Phase 2 of our Building Tomorrow project, took up a substantial chunk of Council's time, indeed the April meeting was entirely dedicated to this topic. For those who attended the AGM, Ben Holt gave a complete and compelling narrative of the genesis of the project and how we have reached our present position. He emphasized that from the beginning the project was anchored in our vision of how we could better fulfil God's mission for us in Geneva. Phase 1 of the project, the renovation of the church, has been successfully completed and now we need to embark on the renovation of the existing hall and creating more space for our activities and groups, in particular our flourishing youth groups.

He was followed by Mark Charles who gave information on the costs and funding of the project as well as explaining the situation with renovating the existing hall. The current fire regulations oblige us to create a second external fire exit. The authorities are insisting that this staircase must be built on the current foot-print of the hall, which means we lose space. Similarly, current legislation on disabled access means that the current two toilets will become one disabled access toilet and more space will be lost creating a second toilet. There is also a need for a confidential space/office for the Chaplain to meet with people. Alex Gordon expressed this need a decade ago and it has become more pressing for Daphne. Safeguarding concerns make

the Chaplain's flat problematic for many meetings and the vestry has become smaller and even less suitable. The need for more space has thus become even more urgent. Over the last few years many options have been explored, such as renting space close by, but the only viable option proved to be building a second level basement and thus creating more facilities on our church premises. During the building works, which are expected to last two years, we will lose access to the hall and forecourt.

Pierre Laravoire then spoke about the working group he has been leading to look into providing temporary accommodation for our youth groups, coffee, choir and other activities during the building works. The group has been looking into the provision of six high-quality portacabins (3 on ground level and 3 above). Two congregational meetings have been set up for more in-depth discussion of your concerns and questions. The first after the 10.30 service on Sunday 11th May and the second on our patronal festival on Sunday 15th June, after a joint 10 am service. We do encourage you to attend one of these meetings to interact with your Council and the Building Tomorrow Committee. At these meetings you will also be able to give your comments and suggestions on the Council's 2025 priorities which frame the Building Tomorrow Project. This period saw the handover, as Treasurer, from Michael Gunton to Ijeoma (IJ) Aghanya. March was Michael's final Council meeting. We all owe him a huge debt of gratitude for the work he has done over the years. His mastery of the details

of our finances, as well as the bigger picture overview, was prodigious. Michael was always available to answer any questions or help with a reimbursement. I am sure you will all join me in welcoming IJ to his new role and supporting him.

At the April Council, Mark Faber handed in his resignation to the Chaplain. We were all saddened that Mark felt he could no longer serve on Council but respected his decision, which had clearly been taken with much personal prayer and struggle. We continue to be thankful for

everything he and Ana-Victoria do for the church community.

For further information on Council activities, I urge you to read the Annual Report 2024 – 2025, which was presented at the AGM. It is a full account of the work of your Chaplain, Churchwardens, Council and Archdeaconry Synod. You can find it on our website (News/Annual Reports) and there are also still copies available at the back of the church.

Ursula McGregor



The Ballad of the Carpenter

They crucified the carpenter, as you all know full well;
They took the nails he gave them and drove them in like hell.
They took the wood he made for them, they nailed him to the tree,
and left the poor man hanging there, to look on you and me.

He looked and loved and gave a sigh – his heart was near to breaking
from all the sorrow pressing down, the load that he was taking.
And though that sorrow now is spent, reigning from heaven above,
he shares the burden that he bore – the burden of his love.

Where'er we go throughout the world we take his cross of shame:
It is the burden that he bore, and we must bear the same.
Hard is the task, God's lovers know, to bring this cruel world right,
Yet with us is the carpenter, his strength is all our might.

The wood is green, the wood is old, and all shades in between,
We hear the sound of weeping for the world that might have been;
And yet we struggle forward for the world that's still to be –
the carpenter beside us, the man of Calvary.

Alan Amos 2022

Church officers

Chaplain: Canon Daphne Green
chaplain@holytrinitygeneva.org
 022 734 3817 or 079 945 0605

Assistant Curate: Glen Ruffle
curate@holytrinitygeneva.org

Music Director: Mark Charles
 079 944 5175

Junior Choir: Claire Charles

Church Wardens: Ursula McGregor
 079 346 27 72
 Aylwin Zabula
zabulap@hotmail.com

Verger: Christine Damary
 022 774 2320

Sacristan: Gill Howie
 022 733 83 72

Council Members: Foluke Braimoh, Nicolas Dériaz, Armorel Duncan, I. J. Aghanya (Treasurer), Nicholas Hacking, Makhosazana Khumalo, Paul Mondoia Ngomba, Keisuka Odo, Rawsette Whyte.

Archdeaconry Synod Representatives:
 Clare Amos, Carol Brown, Humberto Henderson, Pierre Ludo Claude, Mary Talbot

Youth Ministry Coordinator: Armel Ayegnon
ayearmel@yahoo.fr

Safeguarding Officer: Carol Brown
safeguarding@holytrinitygeneva.org

Church Office: Michèle Walker, Secretary
 022 731 5155
admin@holytrinitygeneva.org
 Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri. 8h30 - 12h30

Church activities

Please contact group leaders for any alternative arrangements

Holy Trinity choir: practice Thursdays at 20h00
 Mark Charles 079 944 5175

Junior choir: practice Sundays after the 10h30 service Claire Charles

Young people: (11-13 year-olds) contact Innocent Mugabe
mugabeinnocent@yahoo.com

Junior Church: Sundays 1, 2 and 3 contact Anitha Beulah 022 731 4211 / 078 323 8184

Pastoral care: Canon Daphne 022 734 3817
 079 945 0605

Bible Study: Tuesdays 12h30-13h30 in church
 Elizabeth Brown 022 778 40 10

Church archives: Valerie Offord 022 777 1858

Development project: Mark Charles 079 944 5175

Pledge fund: Ursula McGregor
 022 342 3227

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Editorial committee:

Jane Brooks, Jenny Buffle, Margaret Jacquard, Elizabeth Laravoire, Brenda Stewart

Please send letters or articles for inclusion in the Magazine to The Editor,
 either by regular post to Jenny Buffle, 12 chemin La Parisaz, 1291 Commugny

or by email - jjbuffle@gmail.com

Please note - deadline for articles for the autumn issue is 16 August 2025