

THE NET

The Newspaper of i-church
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An online Christian community based in the Diocese of Oxford, part of the Church of England.

Times, they are a-changing!

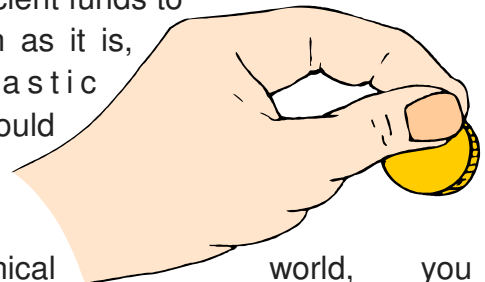
We live in an age of change, sometimes we resist such change quite forcibly, for various reasons, at other times we go with the flow, usually when the change does not directly affect us. Here in i-church we have seen many changes over the last three years. It was three years ago in June, that I heard about the formation of i-church, and applied to join. The next few months saw much behind the scenes work, with our first Pastor Alyson, Richard Thomas, and Russell Dewhurst trying to tie up the loose ends prior to spreading our newly grown wings on the ether.

All good things come to an end, and after six months Alyson left us. At that point Richard Thomas, who's baby i-church was, took over until a new Pastor could be appointed; that Pastor eventuated in the shape of Russell.

Alyson and Richard laid very secure foundations, and when Russell took over he had some very big shoes to fill, and the difficult job of consolidating the work of the others, and then ensuring our ongoing future. Both these jobs Russell has worked hard and long at, giving far more time than he was paid for, being both Pastor and technician. Now we are on the verge of a new era as Russell works to bring the new vista of i-church together before he leaves us.

So we arrive at a truly new starting point for the future of i-Church, a new profile and format, and now, at the end of July, or thereabouts, a new Pastor. The big question is can we afford it, and the answer is no, not unless we can get a lot more support from members. Personally I do not believe there

should be any form of membership fee, implied or otherwise, yet it may well come to that if people cannot find the pence in their purses to replenish fast dwindling coffers. Without those pence there will be no paid pastor in 14 months time; there will not even be sufficient funds to maintain i-church as it is, and a drastic downgrading could well be the result.



In today's technical world, you cannot run an organisation like i-church on peanuts, yet I feel that there are some out there who think we can,. This is the real world, and i-church uses real technology, and it doesn't come free. Even those other internet style churches that don't have a pastor find it very difficult, indeed there have been a number that have come and gone, across the globe, since we first went to air.

Russell is leaving us in good shape in all areas except finance, and that is not his responsibility,

In this Issue

Editorial - Jayne Tite	page 1
New i-church server	page 2
Pastor's Letter - Helen W	page 3
Prayer in i-church	page 4
Perspective	page 5
Ps & Qs with Richard Haggis	page 6
Groups in i-church	page 7
Our official name	page 9
Live chat	page 10
Book Review	page 11
Complacency	page 11
Poem	page 12
Recipe	page 13
Verbosity	page 13
CQ	page 14
How to join i-church	page 14
Financial news	page 15
Worship in i-church	page 15
Service times	page 15

Next Issue will be published on Friday July 6th

rather it is that of the members. If we really want i-church to continue then those that can, and it is realised that some cannot, need to dip into their pockets and help. One of the suggestions made was that people in paid employment should donate the minimum equivalent of a day's pay each year. I wonder how many cups of coffee that would be? If there are 100 members in paid employment, each averaging £350 a week, that would net i-church a minimum of £5000 a year. We need more than that but it would be a good start.

Russell has given unstintingly of his time, and experience while he has been with us. Can we not say thank you to him by putting up our hands and making some form of financial commitment?

Anyway Russell is away at the end of July, and I would like to take this opportunity of offering heartfelt thanks, and I know you will all join me in this, for all that God has given us through him. It has not been an easy time, especially with people like myself whose foot always seems to drop in the wrong place.



Thank you Russell, God speed in your new venture, and as you continue in your B & M Parish duties. We may be the losers, but I am sure St. Frideswide's will be the winners. And don't stay away from us too long, you will always be welcome as a member.

Thus it is with all change, some win, some lose, some don't even notice. I hope that the current changes in i-church will be noticed inside by all our membership, and across the net in general. Much is up to us and whether we want i-church to continue.

Jayne

New server for i-church

Phil Wright

Isn't it frustrating when you can't access your favourite website because of some technical hitch? Sometimes it is due to a glitch in our own computers or a problem at our internet service provider. To compound all that we have had a couple of instances where the i-church server has gone down at just the wrong time and been out of action over a weekend! We have also been experiencing the dreaded "revolving door" problem in our Live Chat rooms, when some folk seem to regularly get thrown out, for no apparent reason. Jon Burdon was especially affected and was beginning to wonder if he was unwelcome!

A decision was taken to move, and thanks to Oxford Diocese we gained permission to load i-church on one of their little used servers. However, you can't just flick a switch and everything moves, so Russell Dewhurst & myself devised a plan to move us with the minimum of disruption, testing everything before the new server became active.

Tuesday May 15th was the big day. Once the 08:00 GMT worship had finished access to the website was switched off. We had two major tasks to complete - move the whole database over to the new site and move all the documents and forums over. Russell tackled the database while I had the task of moving the 400Mb of files in the forums. We decided to backup all the files as well, just in case something went wrong. Even with fast broadband, it was going to take some time!

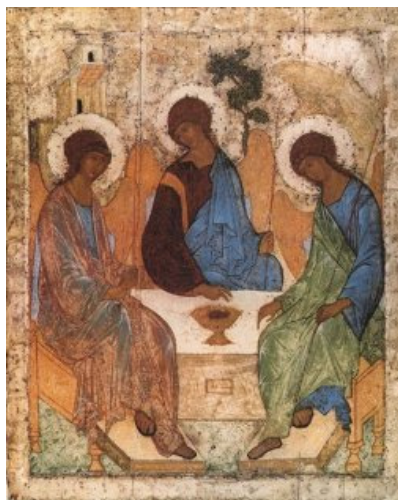
By early evening all the files were loaded on the new server and testing was well in hand. We checked out everything we could think of and finally at around 16:30 GMT we were happy to open the doors to everyone.

The new server has performed faultlessly so far - there have been a couple of small quirks but nothing major. And best of all, we have not seen the revolving door since then, and Jon Burdon has not been able to enjoy Live Chat fully. Job done, I think!

Trinity And Community

Revd Helen Walker

Assistant Pastor's Reflection: Trinity 2007



As you will have read in Jayne's editorial, i-church is in a time of change. We are sad to see Russell, the Web Pastor, go and I echo all that Jayne has said about him, adding my own personal thanks for his support and friendship and for making i-church such an inclusive place. Our community will alter without him, as it does every time someone leaves or someone joins. But we need not be daunted, fluidity AND stability can co-exist.

Thinking about 'community' as we approach Trinity Sunday, not surprisingly turned my mind to the famous Rublev icon, pictured above. The three angels meet outside Abraham's home, under the oak of Mamre and are offered hospitality and given refreshment, bread and milk (Genesis 17). Often this other story within this icon remains unseen as people, seeing three figures, think 'Holy Trinity', but both are right, the one pointing to the other.

From the Old Testament perspective, the angels engaged Abraham, and revealed that great and mysterious courtesy of God which invites humanity to sit in the holy presence and share a table. The New Testament perspective is of Christ at the centre, the Spirit to his left, both inclined towards the Father, nourishing refreshment on the table at which they sit. But this is not a triangular table. It has an empty space drawing us in to complete the circle and be in the community of the Trinity at a common table. From the perspective of the icon, there is space for only one person, yet that person is always the one looking at the icon, any of us, each of us, all of us, bound in togetherness with the Trinity. The Trinity, in embracing the uniqueness of one person, embraces the uniqueness of a community made up of many 'ones'.

In i-church we sit at our computers, drawn into our community from the isolation and solitude of the room where our computer is located. We each have our own screen, but through them we are drawn together into community by all we share beyond the screen within the love of the Trinity.

Wherever Russell is, or any of us are, that bond made between us in God the Holy Trinity endures for ever, world without end. We have each been invited to sit down, and though in many cases, we will not meet together until the heavenly banquet – the presence of the Trinity in each of us draws us deeper into God and through that Community of Love, deeper into community with one another.

God's blessing be upon Russell as he moves on and God's blessing be upon i-church as it moves in a fresh direction. God bind us together in the love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

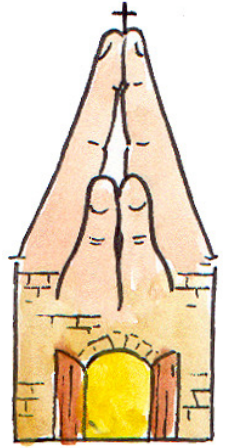
Amen.

Prayer in i-church

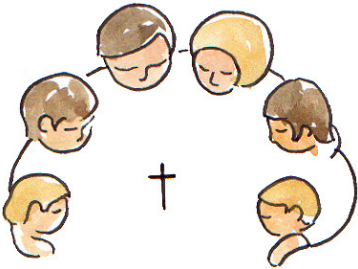
Ailsa Wright

As in B&M churches, prayer is built in to i-church in many ways. Not everyone experiences it or participates in it in the same way, but it is there to be found. Perhaps the most difficult thing is to describe all the ways it is present. In fact, in attempting such a feat I am sure to miss something!

Perhaps the most obvious place to start is in the Prayer Forum. Within that we have a 'Requests for Prayer' sub-forum which is extensively used. Members post their requests for themselves, family members, friends, or situations we have seen in the news. Those requests always receive replies full of love and concern and the assurance of prayer. We encourage those who post to update regularly so that we know how things are going. Currently we are praying for several people with cancer; some undergoing investigations for medical conditions; some looking for a new job or direction in life; some struggling to come to terms with the influence of the past on their present life; for Madeleine McCann and her family, to give just a flavour of the situations raised as needing prayer. In the past some whom we have prayed for have made wonderful recoveries from illness; some have died; for some the situation continues but the support of prayer makes a huge difference in how the person copes.



As Prayer forum hosts, Susanna and I make sure that these prayer requests are listed in our prayer cycle. Brief details are given and there is a link to the relevant post. Also in this cycle, requests from the 'outside' website are included. Many people ask i-church for prayer and it is our privilege to be able to pray for them. All members of i-church are also prayed for every month, with approximately nine members mentioned on each day. To make it easier for those who wish to pray, a list of daily intercessions is also posted in the Prayer forum and I know several people use this to remind them of those who need prayer.



A similar thing goes on in PG27 where we have a topic where people can post requests. As this is a smaller, more intimate group where we know one another much better, members often feel freer to post more personal things than they might where they would be read by about 250 people. Once again, I maintain a list of current prayer needs and we pray for one another on a weekly basis, three members per day.

So is that all there is, lists and lists of names? Some would say that taking a shopping list to God is wrong. Some would question of what value it is to ask God about something when he already knows everything anyway. I don't profess to understand how prayer works but I know that it does and that is enough to make it worthwhile doing.

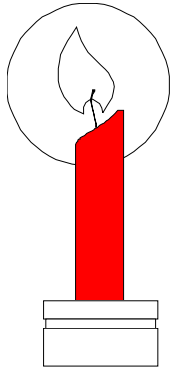
In our worship times in chapel we pray as a group rather than just as individuals. We join together to give thanks to God for all that he has given us. Thanksgiving is in fact a major aspect of i-church prayer, more so than in any other circumstance where I have observed people praying. We each have an opportunity to bring what is causing us concern to God and knowing that others are there with us praying too. Perhaps one of the most mind blowing aspects of this is that those others can be anywhere in the world. By using technology we can wrap the world in prayer. Yesterday I prayed with just two others,



one in the Netherlands and one in China. On other occasions we have had people present from the USA, Europe and Australia. It is a very special experience to feel close to people who are 1000s of miles away as we worship and pray to the same God together at the same time.

The chapel is of course available all the time, not just at set worship times, and I have chatted to several people who go in there alone when they need to be with God. On the face of it this may seem strange—sitting in front of a screen looking at a blank chat room. However, there is a sense of God's presence often there in much the same way that a B&M may have that feel as a result of being prayed in over generations. Some visiting the chapel alone may not type anything but simply be there with God. Others actually type their prayers even though no one else is there to observe what they are writing. The choice is up to each individual. Occasionally someone alone in chapel may be joined by another person and they may pray together.

In January prayer took an unusual form. In preparation for the Vision Day being held in Oxford, between us we decided to have a prayer vigil for 24 hours. The time was split up into half hour slots and members were invited to cover particular times. By the time we began with the midday office, many slots were filled but not all. However, as we got underway, more volunteers came forward and more times were covered. Some who had volunteered, seeing that there was no one to follow them directly, stayed for longer until another person came along. Some times had more than one person present as those who had not volunteered found they had some time and decided to join in. By the time the vigil finished with another midday office, we found that all but about 15 minutes of the 24 hours had had someone in chapel praying for the Vision Day. It seems no coincidence that, despite a packed schedule, the meeting face to face of people who had never met before in many instances, went exceptionally well.



In i-church we have often puzzled about what sacraments there are that we can experience together as a church in our unusual situation of not meeting face to face. Friendship is the one that we come up with time after time. That deep friendship for one another is what shows in our willingness to spend time praying for one another. Long may it continue, especially in the weeks ahead as we face the changes and challenges with which we are now presented.

Perspective

- ◆ If you have food in the fridge, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world.
- ◆ If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish somewhere, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.
- ◆ If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.
- ◆ If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 500 million in the world.
- ◆ If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture or death, you are more blessed than three billion people in the world.
- ◆ If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful, you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.
- ◆ If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder, you are blessed because you can offer healing touch.
- ◆ If you can read this message, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read at all.

Ps & Qs

Puzzles and Quandries on the Way

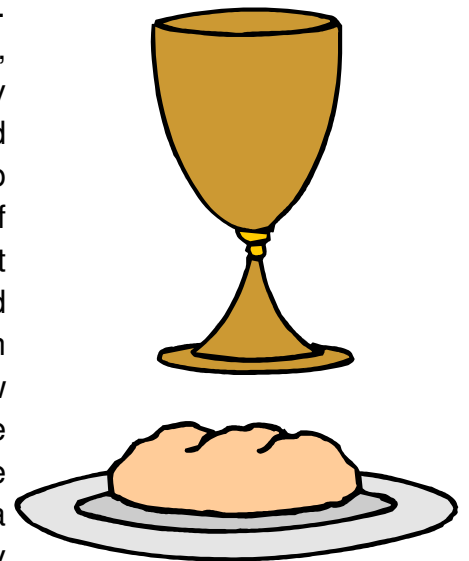
Richard Haggis

What is a Christian?

There is a story that the English novelist Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966) was once challenged by one of his women friends – “Evelyn, how can you claim to be a Christian when you are such a deeply unpleasant person?” He replied to her, “Were it not for my religion, my dear, I would be an animal”. I suppose it’s not a very exalted answer to the question “What is a Christian?” – a Christian is not an animal. Sometimes in our Synods and Conferences, however, one has the feeling that it would actually be rather an ambitious level to aspire to.

The first disciples of Jesus considered themselves “on the Way”. Some of their Jewish and Roman contemporaries thought they were very much “in the way”. Gradually though, they came to claim the title of Jesus for themselves – he was the Messiah, God’s anointed, the Christ, so they were “Christians”, the people of the Christ. In the Acts of the Apostles we are told this name first caught on in Antioch (11:26), within the first decade or so of the life of the Church after the resurrection of Jesus. And so, to begin with, a Christian was simply a follower of Christ. What could be simpler? But of course, as is often lamented on the i-church discussion boards, there is nothing so simple that Christian people can’t make it complicated, obscure, and often twist it completely. Here are two interesting directions that “Christian” label has taken – in doctrine, and in ethics.

From the first, Christians disagreed about almost everything. Sometimes they seemed to disagree just for the sake of it – also, alas, something not unknown on the i-church boards (and I put my hand up – mea culpa!). What direction should you light and extinguish the candles on the altar? Who should be allowed to do it? What time should it happen? I’ve seen people reach a state of hysteria over these things, but we all know they don’t matter. What happens at the altar? Who should be allowed to do it? And should there be an altar at all? – these are all much trickier questions. Can you be a Christian without sacraments? What is a sacrament, how many are there, who can celebrate them, and how do they become qualified? Christians really do disagree about all this, even to the point of deciding that the person on the other side is not really a Christian. I remember once hearing a gorgeously smug and silly prayer at a Christian Union when I was a student. It was for the Dean (principal) of our college, who was also Dean of the Cathedral too. The prayer began “Dear Lord, we do just pray for the Dean, because he isn’t well, and although he’s not a Christian, he has a heavy workload to bear ...” For some of us, a Christian is someone with whom we agree on fundamental points of doctrine.



Over time, as Christianity came to be the religion of the West, its values and ethics started to acquire the label too. How many of us, I wonder, haven’t known the sheer infuriation when, in a moment of anger we have spoken intemperately, and an atheist friend has said, with a sly smile, “Well, that wasn’t very Christian”? Famously – and who knows, it may just be a myth – there is a story of the late President Gerald Ford of the USA at a conference to try to resolve the Middle Eastern mess. He cheerfully told the Prime Minister of Israel and the President of Egypt that he hoped they could sit down and resolve their differences “like good Christians”. But that label too has been open to abuse. There are those who would say it would be impossible for anyone to be

divorced, in a gay relationship or have an abortion and still be a Christian. In some parts of the world, those aspects of social and private morality are very much seen as the “Christian Agenda” – and many non-Christians are happy to line up with a stern moral line. As the world knows, there are alternative points of view, and those who hold them would still wish to be seen as disciples of Jesus. These people might very well take just as stern a point of view anti reasonable profit, the waging of war, capital punishment and the arms trade. And then, there are those whose views fall in between, or pick-and-mix from all sides ...

So, how far have we got? A Christian is: not an animal; someone whose beliefs I agree with; or someone whose behaviour I approve of. The catch is that there may be other people who think of themselves as Christians who don't agree with me, or approve of my behaviour, or care what I think about them! And what are we to do about that? The early church was good on this – it used to pronounce “anathemas”, literally, “curses”. Some of our earliest Creeds are part of Synodical documents which stressed “and cursed shall he be who disagrees with all this”. So that's one way to do it. An alternative is to accept everyone as Christian who claims to be – “He who is not against us is on our side” (Mark 9:40, and yes, I know there are completely contradictory versions of this saying!). In practice, it's jolly hard to do this. I've been trying for years, and I still stumble.

Here's something I take comfort from: an interview during the 1988 Lambeth Conference. The interviewer was Richard Holloway, then Bishop of Edinburgh and Primate of the Scottish Anglicans. The interviewee was the American writer Maya Angelou. He asked her about her Christian faith, and she said “When people say, usually putting their hands on their hearts, “well, I'm a Christian ...” I want to say to them, “What, you mean, already?””

What is a Christian? Perhaps a Christian is a great idea that God had, coming slowly to fruition....

PS – the quotations in this article are dimly remembered from books I don't at present have access to – if you can find more accurate versions, do please let me know!

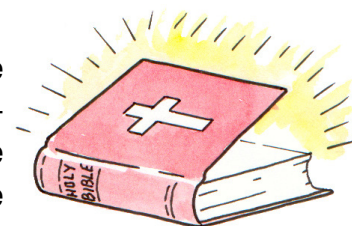
Groups in i-church

Ailsa Wright

It is possible to be a member of i-church and not fully appreciate all that is going on. This is not due to your lack of observation skills but simply because not everyone sees the same thing. Before you throw your hands up in horror and start thinking ‘It's a them and us situation’ let me explain what I mean.

When you first join as a member and open up the forums you will see several groups of forums. At the top of the screen is **‘NEWS & NEW MEMBERS’**. Within this you will find **‘The i-church Times’** where you can read the latest things going on in i-church and **‘New Members’** where anyone joining i-church can introduce themselves.

When you get to the next section, **‘DISCUSSION FORUMS’** things get a little complicated! **‘Prayer’** is the first of these forums and it in turn has sub-forums. These are **‘Sunday and Holy Day Scriptures’** where you will find the readings and collects for particular days, and sometimes a sermon on the readings. Next comes **‘i-church Worship’** where anything to do with worship in the chapel is discussed. **‘Spirituality’** is for sharing about the spiritual aspects of Christianity, maybe posting poems or meditations that might be helpful to others. **‘Requests for Prayer’** is pretty self explanatory but here you can also find the daily intercessions listed. **‘Rule of Life’** is for discussing Christian living as well as the more formal idea of developing your own rule to live by.



The second forum in this area is 'Study', also with several sub-forums. 'Bible Study' is as it suggests, a place to discuss what the Bible says. 'Rough Guide' is designed for those who want to clarify things they may feel are simple but that they really don't understand. It is a good place to get answers but not arguments. 'Theology' is where the really deep discussion goes on. 'The Church and Worship' looks at the church and its worship past and present. 'World Religions' is self explanatory. 'The Religious Bookshelf' looks at all aspects of religious publishing.

'Social Action' comes next. 'Social Action and Mission' considers how we can impact the world as individuals and as a church. 'World Issues & Ethics' tackles sensitive issues. 'Friends, families and relationships' looks at this often thorny subject and how to cope with the various situations that can get thrown at us.



'The Sofa' offers light relief among the reading (not that there isn't often humour elsewhere of course). 'The Arts' contains all sorts of things—poems, prose, pictures, etc. 'This I do for fun' looks at the hobbies of members. 'Social Club' is where we party and celebrate birthdays. It's also the place to go and groan or laugh at the joke of the day. 'General Discussion' is the area to post when you don't know where to post. If your topic would be happier elsewhere it will be moved and you will be informed. 'Amateur Radio' is the latest addition to this area and has gathered interest from both those already involved in this hobby and others who are just finding things out.

'i-church vision' began as we looked at what we hoped for in the future and wanted to be covered at a special Vision Day in January when Pastors and some of the Council plus other representatives got together to find a common mind on a way forward. The forum is still open as vision will continue to be important.

'Process for Appointment' is the latest forum here as we discuss as a church what we are looking for in our new Web Pastor.

The last section on the screen is 'ADMINISTRATION'. The 'Technical Help Desk' is the place to ask questions about anything technical, not necessarily just about i-church. Here you can also share your solutions with others of course.

'How i-church works' is the place to ask more about the workings of our church. If you don't understand something, and it's not technical, this is the right place to post to get clarification.

All that adds up to 10 forums and 19 sub-forums, quite enough to wrap your mind round you would think! However, as I said at the beginning, when you first join you don't see it all. So what else is there?

Under the 'DISCUSSION FORUMS' there is 'face to face'. This was set up to sort out the practical details of the Vision Day meeting in Oxford in January. It is only open to those who were at the meeting and in fact has no activity in it at the moment understandably enough.

There is a whole section, 'GROUP FORUMS' that you will not see initially. Here there are groups which you need to opt in to if you are interested, and some that are restricted for reasons that will become apparent. The first of these is 'Archived Community Matters'. This is only open to those who were Community Members before March 9th 2007. Here there were welcomes to those who joined as CMs and issues about how the community worked, such a voting, were discussed here. This will never be added to again and is of historical interest only.

'Council Area' is only open to members of the Council. Here matters are discussed and voted on.

There is currently another council section in this area for discussing the appointment of the new Web Pastor.

'**Pastoral Group Leaders**' is an area where those who lead pastoral groups can discuss issues that occur in the running of their groups. Currently only the four group leaders and the pastors see this.

There are forums for members of each '**Pastoral Group**' (PG) and only members of a given group can see this. If a member wants to join a PG they can do so and then they will be able to see the group forum.

'**Meet Planning**' is for a group of us who are helping to plan get-togethers for i-church members - this year in the UK, next in the US, 2009 in Australia if all goes to plan. If you are interested in joining this group ask Phil Wright.

'**Newspaper Editorial Team**' is where The NET is put together. If you have an interest in being involved contact Jayne Tite. You will be very welcome to help.

'**Worship Leaders**' is a forum that has just been added. Here those members who lead worship regularly and those who help out occasionally can share resources and advertise if they cannot cover their normal time or if they can cover for someone else. New members are always welcome so do have a word with me if you are interested.

'**MISSION TO SEAFARERS**' is a forum especially for seafarers where they can get the support they need from their chaplains.

In '**ADMINISTRATION**' there is '**The Engine Room**' where those of a technical bent can get together to explore possibilities for i-church. Chat to Phil Wright if you would like to be involved.

'**Moderators Forum**' is the place where forum hosts or moderators can discuss any difficulties or check out decisions. If you feel that you would like to be a moderator chat to Helen W.

'**Finance**' is the group for those who are trying to find ways to raise money to keep i-church afloat. If this is an area where you have an interest or expertise do talk to Phil Wright. New ideas and help are always welcome.

'**Publicity**' is the place for a small group to work on leaflets, posters, etc and to think how we can raise the profile of i-church around the world. The group is at full strength currently but if you have ideas about publicity you could contribute to the thread running in 'How i-church works' or you could contact Jayne Tite who heads the publicity team.



So as you can see, there is a lot more to i-church than meets the eye and the plan is that more groups will come into being as members think of things they would like to be involved with. Do send ideas for groups to Helen W (some have already arrived) and do consider joining some of the groups you cannot currently see if that is of interest to you.

Our official name

Jayne Tite

Over the few years of our existence I have seen i-church written in a number of different ways, indeed I have used several myself. So what is the correct written rendition?

Well we are a registered charity, and our official name is i-church, all lower case. Not i-Church, or I-church, or ichurch or any other combination. So I am going to have to get used to sticking to the one form, even when starting a sentence. Ah, poor old English grammar, what has the internet done to you?

Live Chat -- What's the Buzz?

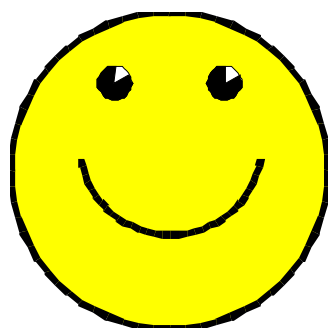
Paula Franke

One of the interesting features about i-church is Live Chat, a place where members can meet for real-time conversations.

Live Chat's Chapel "room" is used several times daily for a variety of scheduled worship services, as well as impromptu prayer and meditation sessions. The Café "room" is a popular place to gather for chat, relaxation, fellowship and fun. On occasion, Café can be downright silly when something strikes those in attendance and a lengthy string of really horrible puns ensues.

All the Pastoral Groups have their own private rooms. New small groups can arrange for something similar as well. Individual members can create a temporary password-protected room should the need arise for a private conversation.

While Live Chat can appear a bit bewildering at first, it's very easy to get it sorted out whilst doing a bit of exploring and experimentation.



It's often been noted that typed communications is rather sterile as it lacks vocal and physical cues. As a result, typed communications can occasionally be misinterpreted. Two Live Chat features help to alleviate that to some degree with smilies and sounds. Yes, sounds! It's always fun to play with the sounds, especially when there's a perfect sound bit for a particular statement. For example, a couple of "yawns" are available for those who are tired and ready to head away for the night.

As I mentioned above, a variety of services are scheduled every day, as well as a few special services throughout the year: Christmas, Candlemas, Easter, etc. We've also had special services for going away for a while and for new babies. Those attending services can take an active part with responses (usually noted with an asterisk "**") and during individual prayers. Participants who prefer to sit quietly are also very welcome to join us.

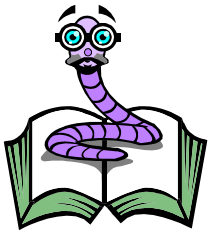
Sometimes a service will include a short Bible reading or meditation, with a moment or two of reflection, followed by a five or ten minute discussion. It has often been remarked that the various points of view that are shared during these little discussions have been helpful in developing a fuller understanding of Scripture. Tuesday Open House at 1900GMT is also an opportunity for longer discussions. Topics range from Bible passages, Rule of Benedict, i-church questions and more.

Getting to Live Chat is a snap. Look to the upper right hand corner of the main forums page and you'll see clickable links for "Chapel" and "Café".

Hint: right-clicking your mouse will bring up the opportunity to open in a new window. Once in Live Chat, look to the pulldown "Options" menu. There, you'll find a variety of options including "sound on enter". Go there and click "on" and then click again and choose a sound.

This is particularly handy should you want to be early for a Chapel service or hang about in Café waiting to see if anyone else wants to chat, while still browsing the forums. You can go back to the forums and a sound will alert you when someone else enters the room. (Make sure you have your speaker volume turned up!)

I and everyone who frequent Live Chat look forward to seeing "new faces" and getting to know each other better!



Book Review

The Shaking of the Foundations—Paul Tillich

Jayne Tite

Paul Tillich was born in Prussia in 1886. A professor of Philosophy and Theology, thrown out of Germany by Hitler, he went to the USA, where he subsequently taught at Harvard University. He died in 1965.

This is not the most modern book published, having first appeared in 1948, and was republished by his wife, due to a constant demand, in 1976. There have been several reprints since then. This is a collection of some 22 sermons designed to relate our faith to everyday living. It is one of those books that remain relevant despite the changes we have seen in society over the past sixty years.

The author sets his sermons against the text of various biblical extracts, relating those extracts to our daily lives. His comments stand out for those who honestly are trying to place the Christianity of today square in the social chaos that we are surrounded with. It is a book that needs to be taken a chapter at a time, and they vary from three pages to fourteen pages, taking time to think about what he says in the context of our personal lives as Christians, and Christianity as a whole.

Not a book for those who want easy reading, but never the less a book that is worth owning and delving into again and again, over the years.

The shaking of the foundations - Paul Tillich - Charles Scribner's Sons 1948, Macmillan Publishing 1976 - ISBN 0 684 7190 X (Paperback)

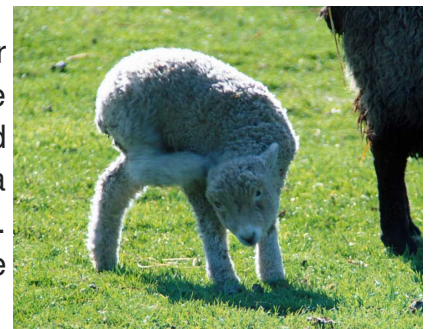
Complacency

Jayne Tite

We can get very complacent about our skills, whatever they may be, and that is when we make mistakes. Often such mistakes are reversible, but sometimes they are not.

Just over a week ago I took in a wee lamb that had stopped eating and just stood around with it's head hanging down, as if it was asleep on it's feet. Naturally it immediately got given the name Sleepy, well why strain the brain when the answer is obvious?

Sleepy was quickly installed in a wee pen, normally kept for calves, or my lawn mowing sheep during the winter. Tucked up warm, a large shot of penicillin, and 400 mls of electrolyte fluid was the best I could do for the wee fella; hope for his future was not high. Monday saw a visit to the vet, diagnosis of vitamin B deficiency, and mild pneumonia. So another dose of antibiotic, vitamin B, and then home, for more electrolyte.



Now I have force fed many animals over the year, mainly calves, but a few sheep. Tuesday and Wednesday saw more injections and regular, three times a day, doses of electrolyte. The latter consists of inserting a thin rubber tube, catheter, down the gullet, making sure that it doesn't enter the lungs, and then slowly pouring the fluid into the gut. By Wednesday afternoon Sleepy was making good progress and on line for a full recovery. At three o'clock I went to give him what was to be his last electrolyte feed. Down the throat with the tube and down I poured the fluid, despite increased struggle which I attributed to his improved health. Taking out the tube and Sleepy collapsed, gasping and choking. - I had filled the lungs!

Upside down I managed to evacuate some of the fluid, and then it was resuscitation, mouth to mouth. At one point I had him breathing again, but it didn't continue. Sleepy was dead, and my own carelessness had killed him. Farm animals do die, but what really upset me was that a wee lamb, that was on the road to recovery, had died because of my own over confidence, my carelessness.

What other times had this kind of blasé attitude caused me to make mistakes? Well when I was young there would have been many, but I had hoped that age had made me wiser. That very hope was in itself a trap. Such traps await us in our spiritual life. We come to God, often slowly, and sometimes painfully, a journey that can take many years. That long journey often takes many years before we reach a faith that is unshakeable, and along that road we make a number of mistakes, often due to our own complacency about our understanding. And it's not just ourselves that suffer from our mistakes.

During our journey we will draw other people into our circle of influence; some will be old hands, others new to the Faith. If we make mistakes affecting our own faith we can, in doing so, affect others. On occasion we can kill off budding faith.

So we have to be very sure on what we say to others, and how we say it, about what we believe, and why, and not make assumptions that we are indubitably right. Always we must be questioning our words and our actions, checking and double checking our sources and our manner of passing on what we believe. It can be easy to flood the newcomer with so much that they choke on what we give them, and the results can be disastrous for that person's spiritual life.

So no matter how sure we are about our actions in life, especially when we have repeated those actions many times, we must always start from the point of great care, as if we were acting for the first time. Only God can claim infallibility.

Poem - Precious Tears

Jill Bunyan

Tears when you're hurting
tears when you're sad.
All tears are good, no tears are bad.
For each tear you cry is a reminder to me
of how much I love you
-why I died on the tree.
You are my child, my precious
my dear one,
there just aren't the words
to express how I feel
when I see, when I hear you
my child, my own.
I cry in the stillness, for your pain,
for your sorrow.
My tears are the oil and the balm that you need.
Let me close, let me whisper
'My child I love you'.
May our tears mingle slowly
and your healing begin.

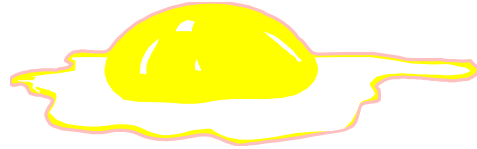


Recipe by Jayne

Sweet Potato Soufflé Jayne Tite

INGREDIENTS:

2 pounds small sweet potatoes
1/4 cup butter (or margarine)
1/4 cup caster sugar
1/3 cup single, (light), cream
2 eggs, very well beaten
Cinnamon and/or allspice to taste
2 cups miniature marshmallows
(You can cut large ones up, but don't eat them all.)
(or 1/2 a cup of raisins + 1/2 cup toasted pecans)



PREPARATION:

* Boil sweet potatoes slowly, (approx 1 hour), drain. Peel the potatoes and mash in a large bowl.

- Add the butter, sugar, cream, eggs and cinnamon; mix well. Spoon into a greased 2-quart baking dish.
- Bake at 350 degrees, (180), for 30 to 40 minutes or until the centre is set. Increase the oven temperature to 475 degrees, (250 - 260).
- Top with the marshmallows. Bake for 3 to 5 minutes or until golden brown.
- An alternative: Omit the marshmallows, reduce the sugar slightly and fold in 1/2 cup raisins and 1/2 cup toasted pecans.

Enough for 8 servings

Verbosity

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of wine they lay down for the night and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes awake and nudged his faithful friend.

'Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see.'

Watson replied, 'I see millions and millions of stars.'

'What does that tell you?'

Watson pondered for a minute. 'Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all-powerful and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, I suspect we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you?'

Holmes was silent for a minute, then spoke. 'It tells me that some thief has stolen our tent.'



CQ CQ CQ

by G8JQH

One of the new features of i-church is the provision for Special Interest Groups. There is an item on all the i-church groups on page 7.

One such Special Interest Group is for fans of Amateur Radio, initially you will find it in the Sofa area but it will soon become a separate group. This forum is open to anyone with an interest in radio, and certainly not just licensed radio amateurs. Anyone who loves tuning the short waves will be very welcome to join us.

As far as I know we have three radio amateurs (or hams) in i-church; Paula Franke is WB9TBU, Peter Watkins is VK3TKK and Phil Wright is G8JQH. Maybe there are more radio amateurs out there, if so, we'd love to hear from you.

You may of course think it a bit strange that in this age of the internet, of Skype, of MSN and of chat rooms that people will want to use radio waves to communicate with each other. After all it is far from reliable and can be quite a challenge to pick out the person you want from the background hiss and noise. Well, it is and that is part of the fun of radio - communication with someone using a piece of radio equipment you have built yourself gives a lot more satisfaction than picking up the phone. Try it!

And by now you have worked out who G8JQH is!



Staying in Oxford?

If you are visiting Oxford, and you need somewhere to stay then read on. i-church member Matt Clayson has fixed up a special deal at the Hotel where he works.

Double/Twin room	£90 (based on 2 sharing)
Single	£80

All prices include tax at the current rate and full English breakfast. Dinner is available for £20 extra per person in our Library Restaurant.

To book, either PM/email Matthew Clayson, check out the web site (<http://www.lintonlodge.com>), telephone +44 (0) 1865 553461 or send us a fax on +44 (0) 1865 559327.

All enquiries must be directed to Matthew Clayson or Karen in Reservations (or you won't get the special rate!). Bookings are subject to availability.

How to join i-church

Not everyone who reads The NET is a member of i-church, and if that applies to you, please read on . . . It is great to find you reading our newspaper. Hopefully reading these pages will whet your appetite to find out more about us.

If you go to our main website, www.i-church.org you will find lots of information about i-church, what we do, when we do it etc and if this sounds like the kind of church you would like to belong to, please do ask to join.

We have members in the UK, Europe, The United States, Caribbean, South America, Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. We are very much a world wide broad church, and there is usually someone around, somewhere in the world 24 hrs a day.

Whilst we are formally part of the Church of England, we have members of many denominations and varied churchmanship. It is our diversity which makes i-church such an interesting place to be. And you can be a member of both i-church AND a more conventional bricks and mortar church at the same time.



Scrooge writes

It pains me to report that i-church has been shelling out money again; but even Scrooge has a heart and I must say it was for a worthy cause.

For some time it has been i-church policy that 10% of all member donations were earmarked for “charitable giving”. Over the months a tidy sum has accrued in this notional account and it was time to use some of it for good causes. And it so happened that in May we had Christian Aid Week.

Christian Aid operates in a way that is different to many charities—it does not employ staff to do the work itself but rather acts as a conduit for funding to meet needs locally. So Christian Aid gets the maximum amount of money to the place where it is needed and engages local people to do as much of the work as possible. Now that is great stewardship and means that donors can be sure that their money does the maximum possible good.

Thanks to the generosity of members here, we have sent a cheque for £400 to Christian Aid. We could have specified a particular project for our money but advice from members who already work in the aid sector said to give the money without any strings—this will allow Christian Aid to use the money where it is most needed now.

Our charitable giving fund still has some money to spend—and it grows each month as members gift money to i-church. Council is currently considering where the next donation might go, but would welcome any ideas from members. Do visit the Social Action forum and make your views known there.

Well, having spent some money I better go and have a lie down!

Worship in i-church

The current times are shown on the right. There is always the opportunity to offer extra worship times. These need not be daily but could be weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

There are a wide range of worship styles on offer so there should be something that appeals to almost everyone. There are still opportunities for new Leaders to come forward—this is not as daunting as it may sound and a number of people have started a new ministry in worship through i-church. This really is a place where every member ministry



Service Times

Keep this guide by your computer to help you remember when all the service times are. There is space for you to write in the local equivalent times:

<u>Worship</u>	GMT
Mon to Fri	08:00
Sat & Sun	09:00
Daily	20:00 & 21:00
As advertised	11:00
<u>Open House - Tuesdays</u>	
Study	19:00
Chat	19:45
Worship	20:00

NB - These are GMT times. Daylight saving, or Summer time changes have affected many countries in March. You can now get services in your local time on the member Home Page. Check it out.