



Senior Citizens' Newsletter – February 2021

Greetings

A River of Faith

At the little inn of the last village before the waterfall, we ate huge cheese rolls as big as small loaves and drank ice-cold lager while Carlo had a long, frenetic conversation with the innkeeper; a dignified figure who wore a white apron over his baggy blue trousers and whose serene eyes belied the ferocity of his black scimitar moustache. There was much gesticulating and the words tumbled out in torrents, both men speaking at the same time. Sheena and I ate unconcernedly. Italian conversations always sound like Figaro without the music.

Finally the innkeeper shrugged his shoulders up round his ears and spread his hands - bad news in any language. Carlo turned to us, his face clouded. "I am much sorry," he said. "Today, waterfall is chiuso."

"Closed." I said unbelievably. "Si. Is closed."

We considered this incredible news for a moment or two. We had seen photographs of the waterfall; a great, white cascade falling hundreds of feet into the valley below. Thousands of gallons of water per minute foaming over the lip of a precipice. And it was closed?

"That's ridiculous," Sheena said. "How can you close a waterfall?"

The answer was the hydro-electric station they had built at the head of the valley, diverting the water through massive pipes to drive the turbines. Only on Sundays was it allowed to follow its natural course and tumble in splendour over the precipice. And today was Monday.

Having come so far, we went on up to the top. Stood in the thin mountain air (in our Wookiee's) on the lip of the precipice with snow-clad peaks all around us, looked at the trickle of water spilling over and tried to visualize it in full spate. It was rather like arriving at Westminster Abbey one day late for the coronation. The surroundings were magnificent – a setting of glory – but the glory had departed.

Suddenly Carlo's eyes brightened. "Is like chiesa, yes?"

"Church?" I said, puzzled.

Si. Church." He grinned mischievously. "Work only on Sundays. In week closed."

It was not a bad image. Upside-down, but not inaccurate. On Sunday, church and waterfall were on display; all the splendour, all glory. The river of faith exulting for all to see. But that was not work; that was celebration. I thought of all that wild, white water harnessed to the turbines from Monday to Saturday, bringing warmth and light and power to the people in their homes. Unseen, unheard, taken for granted. But there. For the Church, as for the waterfall, the real work began when the Sunday display was over.

I grinned back at him. "Yes Carlo. Just like the Church."

**Stuart Jackman is a Congregationalist Minister,
currently working in Melbourn, Hertfordshire**



"God has promised to supply all our needs. What we don't have now, we don't need now."

Elizabeth Elliot

1. *A note from the office*

Dear friends,

Welcome to February – the month of love (Valentine's Day) and the start of Lent (17th February is Ash Wednesday).

You are reading the newsletter prepared by our Seniors Fellowship Tea committee. The newsletter is being sent via email due to not currently being able to meet. The newsletter is usually full of interesting things and we thus thought that it would be a good idea to share it with all Trinity

members aged 70 and over. We hope that it will be just an additional way of helping you to maintain a sense of connection with the Trinity family. It will only come to you once a month, but please feel free to unsubscribe if you do not wish to receive it.

We are aware that there are many people currently facing loss and grief or supporting friends who are facing loss. We would like to share something to speak into that.

Where do we go when faced with overwhelming loss and pain? It is important for us to remember that God's word speaks to us and can give us real and honest hope in these times.

We look to Psalm 13 for some answers:

Psalm 13 *For the director of music. A psalm of David.*

- 1 How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
- 2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?
- 3 Look on me and answer, Lord my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
- 4 and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.
- 5 But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.
- 6 I will sing the Lord's praise,
for he has been good to me.

In this Psalm, King David does not diminish his feelings. In a moment of sheer vulnerability, he prays, letting God know the deepest emotions of his soul. He felt forgotten, betrayed, alone and completely disregarded, and he let God know it. Voicing our grief and pain to God is not only biblically legitimate but also spiritually and emotionally healthy. The bible gives us ample space to voice our grief. But it also assures us that God hears us – Psalm 66:19 & 20 – *'But truly God has listened; he has given heed to the words of my prayer. Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me'*.

Suffering is not God's indifference to us, even although it may feel that way in the moment. We are encouraged to grieve and mourn and voice our distress because we do so in the assurance that the God of all creation is listening with attentiveness.

Times of suffering can also unblind us to see our suffering friend, Jesus, who is always with us in life's harrowing seasons. Suffering gives us the clearest picture of the God who suffers with us, Immanuel. Immanuel is a God who walks hand-in-hand with us through life's intense griefs. He is our 'very present help in trouble' (Psalm 46:1) because he walks with us but also because he knows what grief means.

In verses 5 and 6, David is moved to worship and praise God for his salvation and sustenance in the middle of suffering. He is able to rejoice in the middle of his grief because he is free to voice his suffering, knowing that the Lord is with him and for him through it all. In the agony of grief and loss, our faith binds us to a person (Jesus) who lived for us and who is still living for and with us.

It can be a challenge for us also to know how best to support someone who is suffering. We can learn here from Job's friends – *'They met together to go and sympathise with him and comfort him..... They wept aloud, and each man tore his robe and threw dust into the air and on his head. Then they sat on the ground with him seven days and nights, but no-one spoke a word to him because they saw that his suffering was very intense'* – Job 2. Sometimes not having an answer for life's troubles is okay. In the silence we are given, and we give others, the space to cope and process and mourn without the pressure to 'fix' the wrong.

Please remember that we have staff members and volunteers available to listen or offer prayer to you. Don't hesitate to make contact – 'a burden shared is a burden halved'. Contact Angela on 011 782 0367 or Melanie on 011 888 1740.

Newsflash: Do you receive the daily audio devotion prepared by Trinity staff and volunteers. Many people are finding this uplifting. It is a voice note sent via whatsapp and does not require much data to listen to. If you wish to receive it, please send a message to Angela on 072 843 8452.

Sending you warm wishes and blessings at this time,

Angela.



Red roses: An enduring symbol of passion, beauty and love, red roses are the most popular flower to present a loved one on Valentine's Day.

2. *A note from Estelle*

Hello to all fellow Seniors of Trinity,

Hard to believe we are already entering the month of February 2021.

Trust you are all coping well in this time of 'New Normal' where we lead our lives of isolation.

Trust you are all benefiting from the delightful booklet 'The Twinkle in my Wrinkle'.

This is a real little gem, truly beneficial during lockdown to keep us positive in mind, body & soul.

I should like to encourage all that have this booklet to read it again as the lockdown is not going to leave for a while.

May I encourage you all to do the exercises mentioned in order to keep mobile & your muscle tone in tip-top condition.

I have recently read Luke Ch.7 vs. 1-10 (Jesus heals a centurion's servant) Verse 9 stood out for me...

We are living in difficult times that call for great faith. There is no time to allow for fear or distress to rule us – but we should be trusting our God like never before.

Look for something positive in each day, even if on some days you have to look a little harder!

Prayer: Dear Lord, I reject all fear, anxiety and despair and declare that I believe in You.

I trust you in this season of my life.

I choose to faithfully follow you regardless of the storms that I may be facing.

Thank you for always being only a prayer away. Amen.

Lots of love to you all,

Estelle

The following Seniors Committee members are available should you want to chat:

Estelle Breytenbach	082 821 5359
Ann de Vaal	072 235 7226
Marj Cloete	083 247 3938
Linda Strauss	083 459 5195
Angela Wessels	072 843 8452



Cupid : Cupid, son of Venus, the goddess of love, is another popular Valentine's symbol.

3. *A Prayer for Lent*

Lent Prayers – Xavier University

Almighty and ever living God,
You invite us deeper into your world, your people, your Lent.
May this time be one of onward focus; seeking you in those
we often ignore.
Help us live a Lent focused on freedom, generosity, and
encounter.
Give us hearts hungry to serve you and those who need what
we have to give.



Author unknown

Ash Wednesday 17th February 2021



Love knots : Another symbol that has its origins in ancient times
when ladies used love knots to tie love tokens onto their knights
before they headed off to battle.

4. *A Poem - Come, My Light*

Demetry of Rostov

Come, my Light, and illuminate my darkness.
Come, my Life, and revive me from death.
Come, my Physician, and heal my wounds.
Come, Flame of divine love, and burn up the thorns of my sins,
kindling my heart with the flame of Thy love.



Lent is about becoming, doing, and changing, whatever it is that is blocking the fullness of life in us right now.

Sister Joan Chittister, OSB

5. Bible Verse

*'As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul longs for you, O God.'* Psalm 42:1



During Lent, let us find concrete ways to overcome our indifference.

Pope Francis

6. Birthdays

Numbers 6:24-26 *'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.'*



On this special day, may God bestow all His blessings upon you. We wish you enjoy a great and healthy year.

February

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|---|---|
| 1 Joy Fysh (special birthday: 80 th) | 18 Joan Griffin (special birthday: 90 th) |
| 5 Jeanette Schulze | 20 Colin Barends |
| 6 Alan Wright (special birthday: 80 th) | 20 Margaret Chilton-Jones |
| 7 Gerie Theron | 20 David Matsebatlela |
| 9 Dawn Drane | 21 Judith Kanemeyer |
| 10 Alan Field | 22 Gavin Walters |
| 12 Desmond Thompson | 23 Lynette Lusigan |
| 13 Susan de Bruyn (special birthday: 70 th) | 23 Geoffrey Slade |
| 14 Myrna Mclean | 24 June Weertman |
| 15 Marjorie Baird | 26 Valerie van Deventer |
| 15 Nomsa Mokoena | 27 Rev John Wessels |
| 16 Anna Whitter | 28 Cynthia Bezuidenhout |
| 17 Arlene du Plessis | |



Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty, not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing but because he wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things he now has in store – N T Wright

7. *News from the Seniors Committee*

Marianne Conradie - we still hold Marianne in our prayers. She has been discharged from Milpark after a lengthy recuperation.

Helene Segal – Helene Segal’s son, Jean, passed away during January. We are all thinking of you, Helene, during this very difficult time.



Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.

Desmond Tutu

8. *Date of the Next Meeting*

Unfortunately, during COVID-19, Lockdown 3, we are unable to hold any meetings for Seniors. Our Seniors Committee will keep you updated should there be any change.



‘God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy.’

Pope Francis

The Early History of Valentine’s Day

Valentine’s Day is named after St Valentine, a Catholic priest who lived in Rome in the 3rd century. There are many stories about St Valentine and over time these stories grew into the legend we know today.

At the time of Valentine’s life, many Romans were converting to Christianity, but the Emperor Claudius 11 was a pagan and created strict laws about what Christians were allowed to do. Claudius believed that Roman soldiers should be completely devoted to Rome and therefore passed a law preventing them from marrying. St Valentine began to marry these soldiers in secret Christian ceremonies and this was the beginning of his reputation for believing in the importance of love.

Eventually, Valentine was found out and jailed for his crimes against Claudius. While imprisoned, Valentine cared for his fellow prisoners and also his jailor’s blind daughter. Legend has it that Valentine cured the girl’s blindness and that his final act before being executed was to write her a love message signed ‘from your Valentine’. Valentine was executed on 14 February in the year 270.