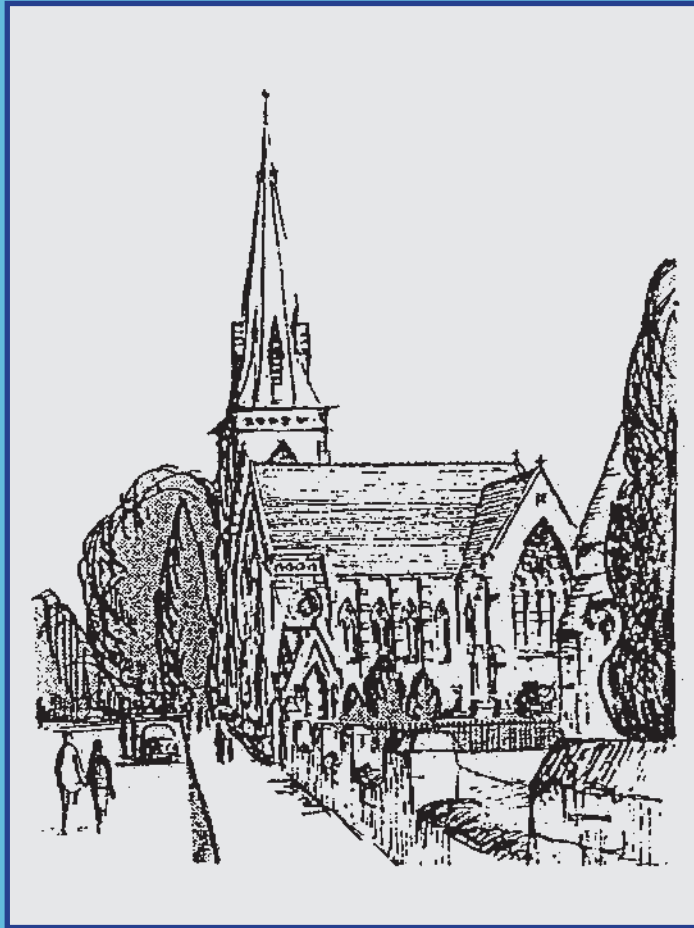




# TRINITY TRIANGLE

JULY/AUGUST 2026



*'Serving God, serving each other, serving community'*

**TRINITY CHURCH**

Methodist/United Reformed/Church in Abingdon

Conduit Road, Abingdon

## TRINITY'S WEEK

Sunday Services at 10.30 am, occasionally in the evening.

Junior Church meets on the first Sunday morning of the month during the Church Service. It is designed for children who are aged 3+ and parents may stay with their children if they wish. Holy Communion is normally celebrated at 10.30 within the morning service as announced in the Calendar.

<b>Monday</b>	2.30 pm Evergreen Club: 3rd Monday in month. 5.30 pm Beavers. 6.45 pm Cubs. 7.30 pm Scouts.
<b>Tuesday</b>	7.30 pm Abingdon Operatic Society.
<b>Wednesday</b>	5.15 pm Brownies. 7.00 pm Guides.
<b>Thursday</b>	9.30 am Toddler Group. 7.30 pm Thursday Group. 2nd Thursday in the month.
<b>Friday</b>	10.00 am Prayer Support Group (in their homes). 9.30am Coffee 10-10.45am. Abingdon Larder (SOFEA)
<b>Monthly</b>	7.30 pm Friendship Group - see calendar.

**Conduit Centre, Conduit Road, Abingdon OX14 1DB**

**Church Office Manager:** Eluned Hallas, Tel 520282

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Office open : Thurs and Fri 9.30am -4.30pm. Closed Mon, Tues, Wed

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*Lord, may our church be a source of light  
amid our community,  
offering hope and kindness.*

### Triangle Joint Editors:

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Carolyn Hawkes, Pauline Main, Gloria Sandford.

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The editors reserve the right to edit articles.

Trinity Website: [www.trinityabingdon.org.uk](http://www.trinityabingdon.org.uk)

## Trinity Develops a Growth Plan

Over recent weeks, Trinity Church has been looking at ways it can grow and develop, both as a church and as part of the Wantage and Abingdon Methodist Circuit.

The process began with a “Going for Growth” day on Saturday 9th May. People from churches across the circuit came together to share what they were doing.

Nine people from Trinity attended. Neil Oastler gave a presentation based on the feeding of the five thousand. Starting with five loaves and two fish and ending with baskets full of leftovers, he showed how small resources can have a much bigger impact than people might expect. Activities such as Experience Easter, Evergreens, Toddler Group, Uniformed groups, Friendship Group, Thursday Group and others may have small resources, but over the years they have reached thousands of people.

During the day, people discussed what they would do in their own church to bring the gospel of Jesus to people if money and resources were unlimited. They also looked at how the circuit could be more effective.

The next step took place during a service on Sunday 17th May, led by the Revd Wayne Hawkins. Members of the congregation were invited to place leaves on a tree to represent different church activities.

Some activities were seen as being in spring, showing new growth. Others were in summer, flourishing and doing well. Some were in autumn, still valuable but beginning to decline. Others were in winter, with little activity taking place at present. (There were also some activities people proposed for the future - like seeds.)

The exercise will help people think about where the church should put its time, energy and resources. It also raised questions about whether some activities take a lot of effort while producing little benefit.

A further discussion took place on 6th June at a coffee morning in the Conduit Centre. Twelve people attended and shared ideas in two groups.

People talked about ways of making Trinity more welcoming, especially for newcomers. Suggestions included using language people not used to church could understand and giving people a better idea of what to expect when attending a service or event for the first time. There was also discussion about the needs within the community that the church might be able to help meet, given the Trinity membership and location.

The ideas from these events will now be reviewed by the Revd Wayne Hawkins and the Revd Georgina Bondzi-Simpson. The most promising ideas will be discussed at a church meeting on 17th June.

After that, the church trustees will consider a shortlist of proposals and choose two areas to focus on during the coming year. The circuit has offered support and resources to help these projects succeed.

The aim is not simply to increase the number of people attending church, although that may happen. The main aim is to help more people encounter the Christian gospel through Trinity's activities and service in the community, building on the church's strengths and responding to local needs.



## **Pentecost: 1 Corinthians 12v3b - 13.**

*3b.No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.*

*4.There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5.There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6.There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.*

*7.Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8.To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9.to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10.to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11.All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.*

*12.Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

A Reflection given at the Pentecost Trinity/ All Saints Joint Service by Lynnette and Alastair:

Paul is talking in this passage about the different gifts of the Holy Spirit in the church at Corinth. Again and again, he emphasizes that it is the same Spirit at work in each of the gifts. What he wants to avoid is one gift being treated as more important than the others, or certain people being seen as more important because of the gifts they possess.

Let me ask whether you think the list of gifts in this passage is all there is in the way of gifts of the Spirit, or whether they were listed because of their prominence in the church at Corinth.

I wonder what Paul would make of the different gifts and different kinds of service he might see if he visited All Saints and Trinity. Paul begins this passage: "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord."

I am not sure he would see much in the way of healing, miracles, prophecy, tongues, or interpretation as they were openly practised at Corinth.

But what about the gifts and kinds of service that we do show? In the last two years, I have been at several events involving both our churches. Let me revisit some of them.

At All Saints, I think Paul might recognise hospitality, the warmth and creativity of the Maundy Thursday Last Supper service, where we were welcomed to a meal that was a church service and a church service that had a meal. Symbolically, the way the tables were laid out gave the appearance of the Last Supper, and it felt as though we were stepping into the Bible story.

There was also the welcoming atmosphere in the Lent and Advent groups, where people talked honestly and learned together. Sometimes the ideas were controversial and perhaps inspired because they were out of the ordinary, but together we experienced people being able to teach with discernment and knowledge, some of it learned,

such as from someone who had studied how the Roman army operated, and some of it inspired. All of it helped others understand Scripture in ways that were fresh, thoughtful, and encouraging, taking us beyond what we might have reached on our own.

All Saints, Trinity, and Abingdon Baptist Church also came together for the Good Friday service where, at the end, we left in solemn silence without exchanging a word. But we did not need to exchange a word because we were of one spirit.

Or take the special service where we said goodbye to Selina, and where Anne gave a wonderful and clearly well-prepared speech thanking Selina for all she had done. What I remember is that we at Trinity had forgotten to prepare for that moment, and Neil was asked to say something off the cuff. He did that with his usual humour. Before that, John spoke straight from the heart about how wonderful Selina had been for our church. Selina really appreciated that.

The other week, somebody came into one of our churches as a visitor with something heavy on their heart. Someone perceived this and made sure they spoke to the right person.

Paul would probably also notice enthusiasm and the gift of interpreting Bible stories into language aimed at young people, as happens at Experience Easter, and the telling of modern parables that witness to the people who come to Evergreens but who do not normally come to church. People give their time, patience, and care to children, families, the elderly, and the wider community.

And across both churches, do you think Paul would recognise the quieter gifts and services too: faithful prayer, kindness, practical help, listening, supporting others, and simply making people feel welcome and valued?

Would you agree that Paul's main point would be that we need all these gifts? No one gift is enough on its own. The Church needs teaching and hospitality, worship and service, celebration and quiet faithfulness. Different gifts, but one body and one Spirit.

That feels important when we think about the relationship between All Saints and Trinity. We do not all have to do things in the same way. In fact, our differences can help and strengthen one another. There is diversity and one Spirit.

One church may have more to offer in music or discussion, while another may have direct ways of community outreach.

What unites us is not doing everything in the same way, but sharing one Lord, one Spirit, and one God.

Paul says, "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ."

This is a surprise. Paul does not say at this point "so it is with the church" but "so it is with Christ."

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free, and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Before anything else, we are in Christ. When we worship together, learn from one another, support one another, and serve together, we are Christ to the wider community.

## Minister's Letter

*...Changed from glory into glory  
Till in Heaven we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before thee,  
Lost in wonder, love, and praise! (StF 503)*

The final verse of one of Charles Wesley's most beloved and widely sung hymns across Christian traditions - Love Divine, All Loves Excelling - is often chosen for matrimonial services. It speaks profoundly of God's perfect love, yet the hymn in its entirety reflects Wesley's teaching on Christian perfection, expressing a deep longing for God's transforming and sanctifying grace, through which we are changed into his likeness daily.

Christian transformation is an act of God's grace, made possible through the essential work of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling presence of God who empowers and guides us towards Christlikeness. As we willingly surrender to his will, we are gradually transformed. As we grow in our knowledge of Christ, we begin to reflect his love, kindness, and goodness in our lives, and our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours increasingly align with those of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, we are changed "from glory into glory" until we are fully united with Christ.

Knowing and embracing the truth that God is continually shaping and refining us should encourage us not only to be imitators of Christ, but also to recognise that, both as individuals and as the body of Christ, we possess the most valuable of resources. For Christ himself is at work, forming and moulding us into vessels fit for his service.

Dr Russell Herman Conwell was an American author, Baptist minister and founder and first president of Temple University in Philadelphia. His most famous lecture - "Acres of Diamonds" - has its genesis in a true story told to him by an Arab guide met in Bagdad, which beautifully illustrates this truth.

"A businessman and land owner named Ali Hafed had heard tales of others making millions by discovering diamond mines. He was so excited about the possibilities which lay ahead that he sold his farm and travelled to foreign and far distant lands in search of the valuable gems. Unfortunately for him, he never found his fortune and died a despondent and dejected man.

Meanwhile, the man who purchased the farm from this wealth-seeking man discovered a beautiful rock while crossing one of the streams on

his newly-acquired property. He placed it upon the fireplace mantel because of its curious beauty. Several weeks later a visitor noticed the rock and nearly fainted. The farmer thought it was just an impressive clump of crystal. As it turned out, it was one of the largest diamonds ever discovered and it came from a creek full of many more large and precious stones. The farm which had been sold, turned out to be one of the most productive diamond mines on the entire continent.”

Conwell concludes, “We often waste our lives looking elsewhere for better opportunities”.

We already own the most valuable resources available, in that the Creator of diamonds has said he is polishing us into the image of Christ.”

“And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” (2Corinthians 3:18)

Every blessing,

Georgina



Thurs 2nd	9.30am	Trinity Toddler Group
Fri 3rd	10.30am	Virtual Prayer Support Group 9.30am Coffee 10.00 – 10.45am SOFEA Larder
Sun 5th	10.30am	Morning Worship with Baptism led by Georgina
Mon 6th	5.30pm	Beavers 6.45pm Cubs 7.30pm Scouts
Wed 8th	7.00pm	Guides
Thurs 9th	6.30pm	Thursday Group: Barbecue at 77 Ock Street (Maggie Greaney's)
Fri 10th	10.30am	Virtual Prayer Support Group 9.30am Coffee 10.00 – 10.45am SOFEA Larder
Sun 12th	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Georgina (Action for Children Sunday: Children's & Young People's service)
Mon 13th	5.30pm	Beavers 6.45pm Cubs 7.30pm Scouts
Fri 17th	10.30am	Virtual Prayer Support Group 9.30am Coffee 10.00 – 10.45am SOFEA Larder
Sun 19th	10.30am	Morning Worship with Communion led by Revd Wayne Hawkins.
Mon 20th	2.30pm	Evergreen: Old Gold Band, 60's & 70's entertainment & sing along
Fri 24th	10.30am	Virtual Prayer Support Group 9.30am Coffee 10.00 – 10.45am SOFEA Larder
Sun 26th	10.30am	Morning Worship with Baptism led by Georgina
Fri 31st	10.30am	Virtual Prayer Support Group 9.30am Coffee 10.00 – 10.45am SOFEA Larder

### **Trinity Evergreen Club - Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2.30pm.**

This is our last meeting before the summer break. We are delighted that "Old Gold" is coming to entertain us. They first came in December 2024 when we all enjoyed them so much that we have invited them back. There will be the usual raffle and there are rumours of a Cream Tea as well!!!

Tricia Cook



- |            |         |  |
|------------|---------|--|
| Sun 2nd    | 10.30am | United Morning Worship at ALL SAINTS led by members of the congregations of Trinity and All Saints |
| Fri 7th    | 10.30am | Virtual Prayer Support Group<br>9.30am Coffee 10.00 – 10.45am SOFEA Larder                         |
| Sun 9th    | 10.30am | Morning Worship led by Georgina  |
| Thurs 13th | 7.30pm  | Thursday Group: Relaxed evening to chat over coffee/tea  |
| Fri 14th   | 10.30am | Virtual Prayer Support Group<br>9.30am Coffee 10.00 – 10.45am SOFEA Larder                         |
| Sun 16th   | 10.30am | Morning Worship led by Graham Luscombe   |
| Fri 21st   | 10.30am | Virtual Prayer Support Group<br>9.30am Coffee 10.00 – 10.45am SOFEA Larder                         |
| Sun 23rd   | 10.30am | Morning Worship with Communion led by Revd. Carol Hamilton Foy                                     |
| Fri 28th   | 10.30am | Virtual Prayer Support Group<br>NO SOFEA this Friday.  |
| Sun 30th   | 10.30am | Morning Worship led by Revd. Wayne Hawkins   |

**Deadline for September issue of the Triangle  
Friday 21st August**

Please send contributions to Cynthia ([cynbartlett@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cynbartlett@yahoo.co.uk))  
AND to Val ([vadalby17@gmail.com](mailto:vadalby17@gmail.com)) or via the Office



## Mercy Ships, Trinity's Charity of the Year.



Rachel Buckingham, Griff and Scilla Fellows' surgeon daughter, has been working in Sierra Leone January into February and in Madagascar May into June. Her letters give us an idea of the challenges and joys aboard Africa Mercy:

### May 16th

I am heading off to Madagascar on Wednesday! We have a shorter field service this time so just 4 weeks of orthopaedics. I am not sure how the port and the city of Toamasina will look after a devastating cyclone in January that took the roofs off 90 % of buildings. Thankfully though the government agreed that Mercy Ships should return to continue our work. This will also enable the day crew to receive a wage and hopefully rebuild their homes and their lives. We are NOT a disaster relief organisation though, and will just be doing our 'normal' surgeries. It will be great to be there with Gabrielle Dent, a lovely friend who is a nurse on Toms ward at the John Radcliffe-though she will be there for many more weeks than me!

### May 22nd

Patient screening days are crazy, busy and fun. The kids and caregivers have been bussed in from the 'Hope Centre' and spend the day playing on trikes making friends with each other and being entertained by crew blowing giant bubbles. One by one they are brought into the hospital tent on the dock to be questioned, poked and prodded by strange looking doctors and have their xrays scrutinised, angles drawn and plans made. The space is tight for two surgeons, OR nurse, rehab team lead, screening nurse and translator but somehow we all squeeze in and then play musical chairs (or rather musical stools) when we get the patient to walk and be examined on the couch.

We have two sets of twins. Angelino and Angelina are easy to tell apart because one is a boy and the other a girl (we also have their little brother Gelisco)

But the identical twins, Juvaniot and Juvanot both like to be called Juvaniot. Their mother can only tell them apart by taking off their identical hats and looking at the back of their heads because one has a single crown and the other a double. We had planned to colour code their plaster casts but it seems that this year we have only been sent light blue casting material.... So we have painted their finger nails instead- one red and one blue.

So all the kids got scheduled for their surgery over the next two weeks, and as usual we have our work cut out with some pretty severe deformities- mostly rickets of some sort, one with a nerve injury following antibiotic injection when he was younger, which is always so sad to see because it is so avoidable.

Surgery starts on Monday, so tomorrow I will head off into Toamasina to see what buildings remain, and whether the market that sells vanilla is still functioning (this is where vacuum packed means the stall owner sucks the air out of the plastic bag by mouth then seals it with a candle). And of course a walk along the beach.

Oh and one patient will arrive later next week. He was too afraid to get into the MAF plane to come to the ship, so the MS team on the ground are doing some work with him to explain that a plane is just like a canoe that goes in the sky.



**June 3rd:** One of my favourite things on board is walka walka, or marcher marcher depending on which country we are in. In the evening shortly after evening ward round, all the adult patients along with the nurses and translators, walk/dance up and down the hospital corridor with someone carrying a speaker playing African music. The kids that are far enough post op get put into wheelchairs and pushed along, or walk on their frames, and a nurse stands in the doorway to the kids ward with a bubble blowing machine, showering everyone with bubbles as they walk by. Two of our smallest boys were put side by side in one wheelchair



this evening with their legs out straight in matching blue long leg plaster casts. They are now best friends. The kids just love it and high five anyone who they pass. The time has flown by as usual. We had a great week of surgeries last week. This week similarly, but have had two massive surgeries yesterday and today, and I have not had time to do everything

I need to do before leaving the ship tomorrow... Luckily one of the teenagers on board in trying to earn some money so I am paying him to clean my cabin tomorrow morning as I need to do another operation before I leave the ship at 1pm!

The cyclone caused pretty extensive damage, but the electricity is now just up and running again, and there is evidence of a lot of rebuilding, but I think a lot of small businesses have suffered.



Last Saturday I got to visit a prison for teenage boys.

Mercyships have partnered with a local Christian charity that goes into prisons to teach English and share the gospel. So 8 of us joined the 4 staff from that charity, and spend about an hour and a half with 28 boys aged from around 12 to 15. Unfortunately in Madagascar you are guilty until proven innocent, and its very possible that many of them have not committed any crime but are just awaiting trial which could take months, and that assuming they can get legal representation. They get given one piece of casava per day by the prison and that is it. Otherwise they are dependent on family or friends to supply food, and their families may live some distance away. They are not allowed visitors so the food just gets dropped off at the gait.

So we picked our way between pretty dilapidated single story buildings with dirt floors. There were piles of rubble and rotting rubbish, broken

glass and discarded razor blades. Twisted corrugated iron sheets lay stacked up against a wall, presumably ripped from the roofs by the cyclone. Spread out over this were T shirts and shorts put to dry in the sun. Other washing was just spread on the floor. Some boys were chopping wood, I am not sure if that was just to give them something to do.

About 28 boys came out into the courtyard to meet us, dressed in pretty ragged shorts and T shirts. They were incredibly polite and respectful. They had an English lesson from a young man who had spent five years in that prison and now works for the organisation that had helped and visited him every Saturday. They then practiced some conversational English with us. At the end we gave them each some sausages, an egg and a banana. They politely held on to them and waited until we left before eating them. It was clear that our visit was the highlight of their week. Very sadly at the end, two of the boys came to the leader of the charity we were with to let her know that although they had been due to be released that week, their sentence had been increased by 2 and a half years because they had got into a fight. They were devastated and felt utterly hopeless. Please could I ask you to pray for them in particular. These kids are not bad people, they may have just made some bad choices....

I will be home by Friday. There are another two and half weeks of ortho surgeries to go, followed by the long weeks of healing and rehab for the kids. As always we are praying for quick healing and no infections.

Until next time (Ghana in September)





## **Nicola Williams**

The Volunteer Celebration, mentioned in the June Triangle, gave Trustees and Volunteers an opportunity to say “thank you” to Nicola Williams, our Education Development Officer, who has been with the organisation for seven years, and guided us so well, sometimes during choppy times!

Not long after Nicola joined us, everyone was faced with COVID and lockdown. Nicola and the team had to adapt the resources to be used online by schools and pupils. The online version of Experience Easter has proved still to be very relevant, as some schools are unable, for financial reasons, to bring students to Trinity. Packs such as the one to support bereaved children have also become a much-used resource. Additionally the “new look” Experience Easter in church guides the children through the Easter Story and is less volunteer-intensive than the pre-covid version. Well done to Nicola and her colleagues!

A “nuts-and bolts” task where Nicola’s expertise has been vital, is in creating and keeping up to date the essential procedures TrinityLearning needs as an organisation working in schools and with children. Not the most exciting part of the role, in my opinion, but Nicola has performed it very dilligently, and seems to find it less tedious than I would!

This is just a snapshot of all that Nicola has done. We wish her every blessing for the future – and hope that she will keep contact with TrinityLearning.

## **New faces**

It was lovely to be able to welcome our new Education Development Officer, Hannah Richards. Hannah starts work in September, but has been spending some time over the summer becoming familiar with TL’s work. (See June Triangle for more about Hannah).

TL also has a new Treasurer, Nicola Jones, a retired accountant. Another Nicola to add to the team!

## **Funding**

TrinityLearning is very grateful for the financial support it receives from the Methodist Circuit, the Wessex Synod of the URC, various churches in Abingdon and individual donors. As for all organisations these days, our costs continue to rise, so any contribution you may be able to make is much appreciated.

*Pauline Main, Chair of Trustees*

# Trinity Learning



Sharing nibbles and a chat

Nicola with new Treasurer Nicola Jones



Information boards

New EDO Hannah shares with volunteers

# Lift up your eyes!

Not to the hills....but to locate these beautiful ironwork weathervanes, all in the central area of Abingdon:



Dolls and breakfasts, walks and toys  
And some things that one enjoys  
Happen every single day,  
But it is the other way  
With the nicest kind of things,  
Cherry blossom in the spring,  
And it's spring when blackbirds pipe,  
And just once corn's golden ripe.  
Once I was surprised by it.  
Now I've thought it out a bit.  
Though we must be sometimes without them,  
We can think in bed about them.

*Taught to me (aged 5) by Dorothy, who later became my stepmother.  
Ruth Sillitoe*

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