

Trinity News

No. 493 February 2020



**Trinity United Reformed Church,
Mansel Road, Wimbledon**

Minister's Letter



Dear Friends,

Towards the end of last year, we invited people at Trinity to nominate their favourite pieces of Scripture. The results are interesting indeed: around two-dozen Bible readings (including only a few “duplicates”), some just one or two verses, others rather longer. Four are from the Old Testament (the “Hebrew Scriptures” written long before the time of Jesus), three from the Epistles (the Letters in the New Testament written variously by St Paul and others), and the rest all come from the Gospels which tell of Jesus, his teaching and his deeds.

Reviewing the list of nominated passages has reminded me of the great variety of writing-styles to be found throughout Scripture. Looking at the Bible as a whole, there's narrative, there's poetry and prayer, there's instruction for the proper conduct of worship and for appropriate behaviour in the wider community. There's prophecy – including assurances of protection, and warnings of doom. There's discourse and dialogue, and there are even perplexed and perplexing musings on God's nature and God's activity in the world.

And because the writers of the various Biblical books lived in a time and a context so different from ours, it can be helpful when reading a passage to bear in mind the purpose and style according to which it's been written. Consider, for example, the story of Jonah – the reluctant prophet who tries to flee his commission, only to be swallowed by a sea creature! Now, the Book of Jonah is traditionally categorised among the Prophets; but really, it's more of a story *about* Jonah than a record of his prophetic preaching – so is it more helpful for us to treat it as a Narrative? Well, modern readers may assert that for a Narrative to be “true” depends upon it being historically accurate; but for some Biblical narratives, the real point is not to catalogue a verifiable chain of events but rather to illustrate and impart a truth about the character and ways of God. On that basis it doesn't seem unreasonable to read Jonah as a

Narrative – as a story that's “true” on its own terms (perhaps overlapping with a genre the scholars call “Wisdom Literature”) – and that helps us to know what we're getting, and what we should look for in the passage.

As it happens, Jonah wasn't one of the texts nominated at Trinity; but during the coming months we'll look to include in our Sunday worship the various readings that were suggested. Some arise in the course of our standard Lectionary (or indeed have already arisen – the Christmas narratives in Luke's Gospel were nominated!), and some will be covered in special themed services or series. We'll take the first pair this month, with two of Jesus' most famous Parables: the Good Samaritan on 9 February, and on 16 February the Prodigal Son.

As we re-read these, and later in the year the other Bible passages that have been selected, let's try to ask ourselves: What kind of writing is this? Who was the original intended audience? And what would the writer want us - today - to learn, or understand, or believe?

Every Blessing

Dominic

For Your Diaries!

Wednesday Social Group

The Social Group resumes after its mid-winter break on Wednesday 5 February (2.30pm) when we look forward to hearing Maureen Williams, one of the members of our Group, telling us about her experiences as a JP. This should prove a very interesting afternoon, and all will be very welcome to join us. As usual we will finish with afternoon tea



The next Church Meeting for all Trinity's members will be held on **Thursday 13 February** at 8pm in the Mansel Road Centre. Please note the date and watch for further information.

London Citizens Mayoral Hustings

On 21 April, in the evening, London Citizens are holding a hustings assembly for the candidates to be London Mayor at the Copper Box Arena, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London E20 3HB.

The candidates will be questioned about London Citizens' five campaigning priorities, which are youth safety, housing and homelessness, climate change, welcome, and living wage. We need to fill the arena to show we really speak for London, and a good turnout from Trinity will be great.

Please put the date in your diary and keep the time clear. For more information please speak to Dominic, Mike Tulloch or Robin Goodchild.

Chinese New Year Celebration Supper



2020 is the Year of the Rat. We will be holding a church supper to celebrate the Chinese New Year on Saturday 8 February at 7.00pm in the Mansel Road Centre. Look out for more details in the Notice Paper.

Adults £12, Children £6, Family (2 adults, 2 children) £32. Price includes full Chinese meal with jasmine tea (bring your own wine or soft drinks, if required).

Book places early – using sign-up sheet on the corridor notice board or the clipboard during coffee time on Sundays.

For further information please speak to Betty Wong.

FEBRUARY



1	Sat	16:00	Pilots
2	SUN	10:30 11:00 13:00	Elders' meeting Morning worship with Holy Communion Merton Winter Night Shelter
4	Tue	19:30	Pastoral Team
5	Wed	14:30 20:00	Wednesday Social Group Elders' Council
6	Thu	14:00	Bible study house group
7	Fri	10:00 20:00	Trinity Toddlers Friday Fellowship Film Night
8	Sat	19:00	Chinese New Year Supper
9	SUN	11:00 13:00	Morning worship Merton Winter Night Shelter
12	Wed	20:00	Church & Society
13	Thu	20:00	Church Meeting
14	Fri	10:00	Trinity Toddlers
15	Sat	16:00	Pilots
16	SUN	11:00 13:00	Morning worship Merton Winter Night Shelter
19	Wed	20:00	Worship & Faith Development Team
23	SUN	11:00 13:00	Morning worship led by Trinity elders Merton Winter Night Shelter
24 Feb – 8 Mar Fairtrade Fortnight			
26	Wed	Ash Wednesday	
28	Fri	10:00 20:00	Trinity Toddlers Friday Fellowship

Christian Aid update

We were joined by friends from St Mary's, St Mark's and Wimbledon Congregational Church to sing carols at Raynes Park Station just before Christmas. £256.91 was raised, slightly more than last year and a great result considering especially that there were far fewer trains because of the strike.

Christian Aid week 2020 is from the 10 to the 16 of May and the Car Boot Sale at St Mary's Field is on the 9 May.

Commitment for Life update

On Sunday March 1 there will be a special service for Commitment for Life and Hannah Jones will be speaking about the work of C for L. The usual Lent collection with the envelopes in the pews will start on that Sunday and for the following two Sundays. The four partner regions where specific projects are supported by C for L are Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Central America (Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala).

On the C for L website in the Resources section there are Moving Stories about the work in the four areas –

<https://urc.org.uk/resources-for-cforl.html>

Christmas Tree Festival 2019

"Anniversaries" was the theme of this year's Festival, inspired by the 30th Anniversary of London's Air Ambulance, the charity we were supporting, and our 5th Christmas Tree Festival.



Our sponsored trees depicted a tremendous variety of anniversaries including Monty Python (50th), opening of Wedgwood's factory in Etruria (250th), births of Victoria and Albert (200th), Sesame Street première (50th) and council housing (100th).



Congratulations to everyone who decorated a tree; they were all amazing, and such a lot of work had gone into each of them. Many people commented that the standard was the highest yet! Over 250 votes were cast in total for the "Favourite Tree" and the winner was Coombe Hill Manor's "Pride" tree.

This year we had thirty-nine decorated trees, including a very large one in the pulpit! The creative gallery display, arranged by Dominic and Miriam Grant on the theme of "Joy to the World", commemorated the 300th anniversary of Isaac Watt's hymn text.

Our sponsors were again from Trinity, our premises hirers, schools, charities and local businesses, many of whom have now supported us for several years and have become old friends!



We were also delighted to be joined this year by St Mark's church who were celebrating the 50th anniversary of their building, and by Faith in Action commemorating 15 years of helping homeless and vulnerable people in Merton.

On Advent Sunday we were joined by Rachel Peacock, a paramedic working with London's Air Ambulance, who launched the Festival during our morning worship by telling us about her work.

Then followed three hectic days of preparation before we opened the Festival on Thursday evening with an invited preview for neighbours, sponsors and other VIPs from Wimbledon.

We opened to the public on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and welcomed several hundred visitors, some of whom tell us they now look on the Festival as the start of their Christmas celebrations.

Another very popular Craft & Gift Fair (below) was held on Saturday (organised by Elizabeth Scharinger) with plenty of visitors enjoying an extensive variety of hand-made items and crafts for sale. Father Christmas visited that day too, and the vestry was transformed into an amazing grotto by Ali Wade, London's Air Ambulance ambassador, who also decorated their tree in the vestibule. Ali is well known to us now as a tremendous supporter and good friend.



Throughout the Festival we were treated to wonderful live music – sax player (Geoff Williams), classical piano, violin and viola trio (Kathleen Gilbert, Jayne Ross & Miriam Grant), the Barnes Concert Band and Flute and Sax Quartets with Wimbledon High School choir, and a talented young pianist (Austeja Paulauskiene).

The Festival closed with the ever popular and well-supported “Carols Among the Trees” on Sunday afternoon, accompanied by Andrew Davies and Trinity’s Band.

As always, there is a very big list of people to thank for their help with organising the events.

Particular mention must be made of Jane Fairbrother, Robin Ingram, Catherine Paul, Elizabeth Scharinger, Alison Trehearn and Andrew Sutton (planning group); and Lydia and Dodie Khurshid (refreshments).

Very many others were involved during the week, contributing to the success of our 5th Christmas Tree Festival. Thank you so much to everyone.



Above: "60 years of growing tomatoes"



From London's Air Ambulance Charity:

"That is absolutely phenomenal news! I must say a very big thank you for choosing to support our charity for a second year and for all of your hard work producing the most amazing Christmas tree festival – £13,750 is enough to fund 6.6 potentially life-saving missions, which is just fantastic!"

Photos of the Festival can be seen at <http://ctf.trinitywimbledon.org/>

Trinity Band at Christmas

Our wonderful group of instrumentalists added to the joy Trinity's Christmas services again this year with three appearances over the festive period.

Firstly, they accompanied the St Raphael's Hospice Choir at their Community Fundraising Event at Motspur Park on Saturday afternoon 7 December; then, back on home territory, they brought the Christmas Tree Festival to a rousing conclusion on Sunday evening 8 December with 'Carols Among the Trees'.

Lastly, they turned out on Christmas Day itself to celebrate Christmas with our congregation, including a closing rendition of 'All I Want for Christmas is You!' Huge thanks to Miriam on violin, Eddie on horn & drums, Matt on guitar, and our two newest recruits, Michael on clarinet and Ellie on piano. The band will all be back again on Mothering Sunday if not before, so do join us in church then, and encourage any other instrumentalists you know to get involved by contacting us at andrew.davies888@btinternet.com.



Trinity's Christmas Carol Service

As ever, our annual Christmas Carol Service on Sunday evening 22 December was a magnificent celebration of the choral and instrumental talents we are lucky enough to possess at Trinity.

Our enhanced four-part choir sang seven items, ranging from the uplifting 'Good King Wenceslas' and 'Ding Dong Merrily' to the mysteriously awe-inspiring 'I Wonder as I Wander', concluding with Rutter's wonderfully heart-warming message to the congregation 'I Wish you Christmas'.

Once again many of the congregational and choral items were accompanied by our professional-standard brass group, alongside virtuoso piano accompaniment from Miriam Grant and the rousing debut of our brand-new organ on full reeds. We hope it provided a truly memorable evening introduction to Christmas for everyone who joined us and look forward to the choir singing for us all again from Sunday 12 January. The choir are always looking for new members; if you - or someone you know - feels comfortable with reading music and are free - at least sometimes - on Friday evenings for rehearsals, please do consider joining us; it's a wonderfully rewarding experience.

Andrew Davies

***THE FINAL DATE FOR COPY FOR THE MARCH EDITION OF
TRINITY NEWS TO REACH THE EDITOR IS 10 FEBRUARY
PLEASE BE PROMPT***

From the archives

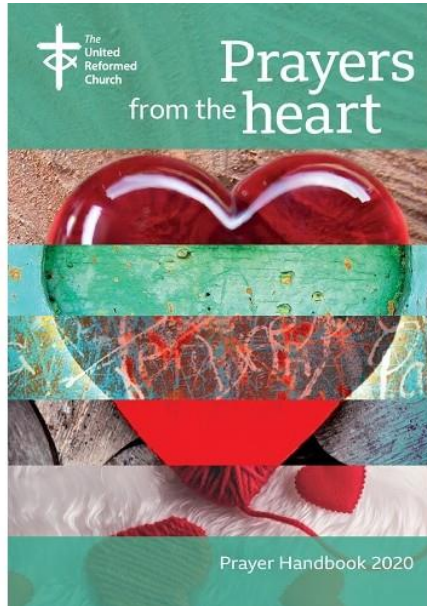
Through the decades No11: 1980s



The 1980s was a busy decade in Trinity. It began with the retirement of Revd John Weller, followed by the arrival of the church's seventh minister, Revd Ceri Lewis, who began a twenty-nine-year ministry in Wimbledon.

1984 saw the centenary of Trinity's formation. It was celebrated with splendidly attended special services and an evening reception at the now demolished Civic Hall, attended by the Mayor, the Synod Moderator and two of Trinity's previous ministers among many others.

The following year extensive work was carried out on the stonework of the church and the above photograph was taken while steeplejacks - not members of the Property Team! - were working on the spire. Incidentally further stonework repairs to the spire were carried out in 2002 and now the need for more work is anticipated.



The URC's Prayer Handbook for 2020 is now available, a collection of authentic prayers from around the URC.

"In offering this collection of prayers, we hope we have captured their raw authenticity; prayers that are beautifully written and deeply thoughtful but not overly clever "We have included pieces which came to us rough-hewn, unpolished or quirky, but all of which echoed the heartbeat of God's people crying out to our gracious God.

"In using this collection, we hope that you will catch an echo of your own thankfulness and desires for our beautiful, but often broken, world."

Available to order online at www.urcshop.co.uk, by calling (020) 7916 8629, or by emailing publishing@urc.org.uk. £4.99 each.