

Trinity News

No. 497

April 2020



*Trinity United Reformed Church,
Mansel Road, Wimbledon*

Suspension of congregational worship and events

The global and national response to the ongoing Covid-19/ Coronavirus pandemic is far-reaching; we're all being asked to make fundamental changes to our patterns of behaviour and activity until such time as the worst of the danger is past.

Following clear guidance from the Government, public health agencies, and the United Reformed Church and other denominations, our Elders' Council met via video-conference on 18 March and agreed **to suspend all services of congregational worship and other church events/gatherings** until further notice. The purpose of this is twofold: to protect the most vulnerable in our own church community, and to reduce the risk of becoming 'carriers' of the infection to others in our wider communities.

Our building, together with the Mansel Road Centre, is therefore currently closed. But we know that fundamentally, the church is not a building: it's a fellowship of people. And so in terms of our identity as a church fellowship, Trinity is assuredly still open! As challenging as we'll surely find it to be prevented from meeting together in person, we are determined not only to maintain, but to deepen the bonds of fellowship.

At the time of writing, we've had one Sunday of "Worship At Home": a Mothering Sunday service was made available in online video and text formats, and a themed activity pack was sent to Trinity's children and young people. With Holy Week and Easter fast approaching, we're actively developing both this Sunday worship resource and other means to facilitate and express our faith, discipleship, and common life and mission as a Trinity community.

We will, of course, provide further updates as plans take shape: via the church website trinitywimbledon.org, subscription email service, and social media; and by phone or in writing to those in our church community who aren't online. Together, we will need to be bold and imaginative in finding fresh ways to strengthen the bonds of shared faith and mutual care, even amid the necessary practice of social distancing for the time being. Together, we're a community in which each one of us has a part to play in ensuring the continuity of spiritual, pastoral and practical support to all our church members and friends.

"Do not be anxious about anything; but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4.6-7)

Minister's Letter



Dear Friends

"I thank my God every time I think of you! I always pray with joy, whenever I pray for you all, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Of this I'm convinced: the one who began a good work in you will thoroughly complete it by the day of King Jesus. It's right for me to think this way about all of you. You have me in your hearts, here in prison as I am, working to defend and bolster up the gospel. You are my partners in grace, all of

you! Yes: God can bear witness how much I'm longing for all of you with the deep love of King Jesus." (*Philippians 1:3-8* - "New Testament for Everyone" translation © NT Wright 2011)

This was due to be my last *Trinity News* Minister's Letter, but circumstances have changed in ways which none of us could have predicted. In view of the ongoing public health crisis, with social distancing measures in place and restrictions on gathering or travelling for work or worship, it has been agreed that the wisest course of action is for me to remain at Trinity for a while longer to help provide a continuity of pastoral and devotional provision.

And although the present confinement we're all undergoing in this time of Covid-19 is quite different from the imprisonment suffered by the Apostle Paul when he wrote to his friends in Philippi, for me there's a particular resonance just now to his words. As I think of you all and pray for you, it's with a sense of joy in the knowledge of your continuing faith and partnership in mission, but a sharp sorrow also at the impossibility of seeing you face-to-face at the moment.

Elsewhere in Philippians, and in Paul's other "letters from prison", he tells of the encouragement and gladness he has been brought through receiving gifts or news from them. Likewise today, it's more important than ever for us to keep in touch with one another. Let's encourage and help one another - whether through the emotional support of a caring conversation, or (if it is possible for us) the practical support of assisting with shopping or other errands.

If you can, please do continue "joining" us for worship: we plan to continue offering a Sunday service in online video and on-the-page formats for the duration of the lock-down. At the time of writing we're looking at how we might add to these resources for spiritual sustenance, and match them with opportunities for fellowship even in our dispersed state.

For those who have access to the Internet, our website and social media streams will be prime sources of news and information from Trinity - and I'd strongly encourage you to sign up to our subscription email service too (the details of all these are below). But whether online or offline, we'll be working carefully to ensure that no-one is overlooked.

Of course, this "we" means all of us. So you don't have to wait for someone at Trinity to call you - instead, pick up the phone and dial! If we are truly "partners in grace" as Paul puts it, then sharing in mutual contact with others in the congregation can be not just a reassurance to us, but a means of God's grace as we face these difficult times together.

With every blessing

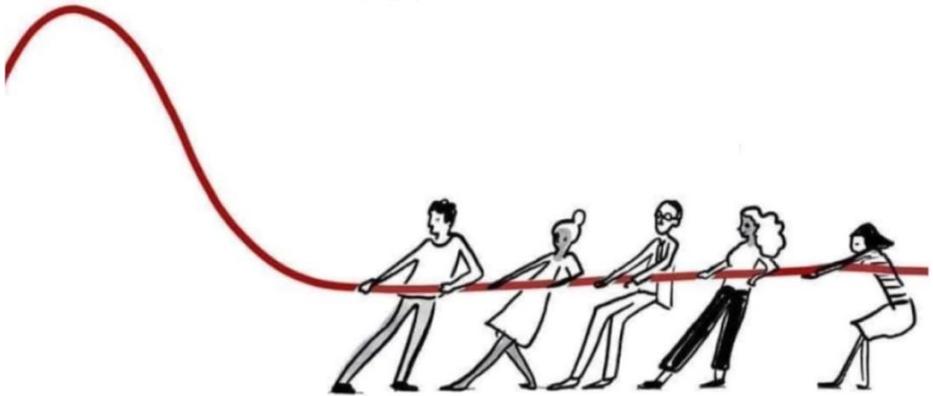


Trinity's website: www.trinitywimbledon.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/trinitywimbledon.org

Twitter: www.twitter.com/TrinityWimbledon

Subscription email service: sign up via the Trinity website (as above): follow the link in the left-hand column of the home page



**If you feel lonely, pick up the phone.
If you are wondering how someone is, pick up the phone.
If you're bored, pick up the phone.
If you're feeling low, pick up the phone.
Pick up the phone and have a chat with anyone.
They may be waiting to hear from you.**

We may not be able to meet together as a church on Sundays, but we can certainly stay in touch.

If you want to contact another Trinity person and don't have their number then just email churchsecretaries@trinitywimbledon.org. We'll be happy to help.



If you have questions, needs or concerns you should contact your Elder by phone or email, or email churchsecretaries@trinitywimbledon.org

Getting to know you... **ALISSA WHITE**

(Another of an occasional series of pen-pictures which individual Trinity people are invited to write about themselves)



Having lived in London for only three years, I am happy to say we love it and the life we are making here. My husband, son and I moved to the UK in 2017 from St. Louis, Missouri. It was definitely difficult to ask our son to join us as he only had one year left of high school and had to leave the friends he had known since nursery. Even harder (for all of us) was having to move away from our daughter. She had already started University and will graduate this May. Fast forward to the present and we all have found our place here in London and our daughter even studied here for 6 months last year.

As you can tell, my family is my heart. When I was growing up and asked the question "what do you want to be when you grow up?" - I would always answer - "a Wife and a Mom". Thankfully I was able to become both. Along with those two roles, I have always worked full-time in the Insurance/Employee Benefits industry since my graduation from University, volunteered in our community, been a church member and member of church and community choirs.

I am grateful that I have found a church family at Trinity. Growing up in the Presbyterian church, I am happy to be a member of a church that takes me back to my roots. I am gradually trying to become more involved and meet more members. Everyone has been welcoming and I look forward to continuing as a Door Steward and other future roles.

Just a few fun bits - I have been obsessed with tennis at Wimbledon since I was a child and have watched so many matches on television that I wouldn't be able to count. I was the biggest Boris Becker fan but now that I'm older - it's Roger. (Hopefully some day I will actually visit Centre Court). Lastly, I'm a huge St Louis Cardinals

baseball fan. I do so miss going to games in the summer but beyond excited that the London Series in June is the St Louis Cardinals vs the Chicago Cubs (our biggest rivals). We have our tickets!

If we haven't formally met, I look forward to meeting you in the future.

See you on Sundays

Alissa



From a prayer written by our children and young people before our church was closed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and used on Mothering Sunday

Dear Lord

As we remember that you protect and keep us, we pray for everyone affected by Covid-19:

- those who have contracted it, those who are caring for patients with it;
- the researchers and scientists working to find a vaccine and a cure;
- and the governments as they work out how to best manage it in their countries.

In this new situation for the world, please grant us wisdom and kindness, helping us to look outwards and to those who most need help.

Amen

Commitment for Life

Many of us were really moved by Hannah Jones's talk at the beginning of March about her trip to Israel and the Occupied Territories and the terrible situation there. This is our partner area.

For more information about this area, and the others supported by Commitment for Life, do go the website www.unc.org.uk/cfl. The Spring Link Person newsletter on the noticeboard has more information too.

Through CfL we have had information about a call for volunteers to go for three months as human rights monitors to provide protection by presence in Palestine. For more information please go to quaker.org.uk/applyeappi. The closing date is 24 April.

- Margaret Tulloch

Christian Aid

Christian Aid has experienced a drop in general donations and has decided to close its regional offices. Justice Onwuka, whom some of you may have met when he spoke at Trinity, has left his post as SW London organiser but is now working for Christian Aid in HR.

Christian Aid's work is still very much needed of course. Christian Aid week 2020 is from 10 to 16 May. We will need many volunteers to collect from houses around Wimbledon. Do let us know if you can do it.

The Christian Aid Car Boot Sale at St Mary's Field is on 9 May during the morning from 9 to 1pm. However if you want to bring your car you will need to come much earlier. If you would like to give us books or bric a brac to sell on the Christian Aid stall please let us know. Do come along on the day, you might find something just right!

- Mike and Margaret Tulloch

From the archives

FIRE!

The night we nearly lost Trinity!

Just seven years after our neighbouring church at St Mark's was destroyed by fire, Trinity came close to similar destruction on the night of 10 January 1973.

A Church Meeting was fixed for that evening and at about 7pm Trinity Elder Fred Macleod arrived to prepare the Hall and open up. But on entering the Old Hall he found the place full of smoke and a fire blazing in the corner by the High School side doors, the flames rising to the ceiling.

Mr Macleod took immediate action and the Police and Fire Brigade arrived quickly. The fire was extinguished, and damage restricted to that area of the Hall, the Cubs suffering most as they lost their colours and equipment. But if there had not been a Church Meeting that night and had Mr Macleod not arrived when he did, the fire would have really taken hold. The firemen said that in another twenty minutes the fire would have spread into the church itself and would have quickly set the organ alight.

Investigation showed that intruders had broken into the premises through the kitchen. They pulled the phone coin box off the wall, clearly searching for money (it was nearly empty!) and tried to set another fire alight in the old crèche, but there the paper used didn't catch properly.

Needless to say, the Church Meeting was postponed, but at the start of the service on the following Sunday there was an act of thanksgiving for the preservation of our buildings.

Merton Winter Night Shelter 2020

On Monday 10 March at 08.30, we closed up the Night Shelter shed (outside the Old Hall between the fire escape exit and kitchen door on the High School side of the church) for the final time this season. But, for the first time in our nine seasons, our guests left us on that final morning with the promise of a roof over their head for the following evening and another 48 nights thereafter. This reflects that there is a third block to the project which will now run to the end of April.

The 2019/20 Shelter has therefore been momentous because it will run for 22 rather than 15 weeks. We expect that next year the Shelter will open earlier, around 1 November, so that accommodation will be provided over the coldest period until early April. If so, we will be asked to open earlier at the beginning of January rather than on the last Sunday. Block 3 comprises five new venues, all churches, plus the Durnsford Road Mosque and St Mark's both doing a second shift (being Block 1 venues).

The Night Shelter has also had new leadership this year. Nicki Zisman stood down as Co-Ordinator after eight years of inspirational leadership. She remains involved and played a leading role in getting Block 3 off the ground. Alexio Oluwamuyiwa was appointed as her successor and he has been ably supported by Ash Morgan and John Goddard. At Trinity, we have also benefitted from a Polish Catholic Church volunteer visiting us regularly to help translate. As in previous years, Poles were the largest group among our guests so this help was greatly appreciated.

You don't need to spend long with our guests, who this year were all male, to realise that it is very easy to become homeless. Most of Trinity's membership have a family support group as well as the church itself; for those without such a network, e.g. anyone who has grown up in care, when things go wrong the spiral downwards is steep. Moreover, the sense of shame experienced often prevents the victim from asking for help, nor appreciating how many people do actually care. At least one of our guests was so shocked to meet people who genuinely cared, it may have changed his life. He has joined one of the Block 2 churches.

We wrote about the general structure of the programme in December's Trinity News, so won't repeat any of that here. Twenty-four volunteers have contributed their time this year. Our marvellous team was Cynthia Betts, Jo Chiu, Grace de Grouchy, Christine Denwood, Sam Elliot, Lies Goodchild, Revd Dominic Grant, Gwyn Hawden, Ian Henning, Roz Hubley, Michael Mackintosh, Elizabeth McLeish, Sandy McLeish, Michael Maguire, Andrew Melrose, May Nicol, David Reeves, Anni Struthers, Charlie Struthers, Jean Taylor, Alban Thurston and Mike Tulloch. Massive thanks to everyone for their contributions, especially those who are otherwise outside the Trinity family.

We will need more volunteers next year, particularly for the early morning shift. Any offers of help are always appreciated. Being part of the team can be enormously rewarding - both because what we do is greatly appreciated by all our guests, and through being part of a wider community group comprising people of faith who similarly care about the homeless and are willing to do something about it.

Please don't hesitate to contact either of us if you'd be interested in being involved in 2021 - presuming that both the project and Trinity's participation continues.

Ralph Goodchild (07531 428750 or ralphgoodchild@gmail.com),
Robin Goodchild (0771 4095007 or robin.goodchild@sky.com)

Who knows anything about old video?

In 1973 our morning service was broadcast live by London Weekend Television. A recording of the service was made and the tape, which predates VHS cassettes, has recently been found. Unfortunately, we have no way of playing this back, but it would be fascinating to do so. The tape is marked 'Nivico video tape' and the box says it was recorded on 405 lines on a 'Rank Nivico Recorder'.

If you can help, please contact Alan Young (alanjanety@aol.com).

Merton Citizens – Pressurising our Council to build more Affordable Housing: The Case of ‘Virgin Inactive’

Trinity URC has been a founder member of Merton Citizens since 2018. Merton Citizens comprises eighteen organisations, mainly churches + some schools, + the YMCA and South West London St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust, that are working together to make a difference in our Borough.

Merton Citizens builds the capacity of people to participate in public life, to act together for the common good, to win change, and to strengthen civic institutions in the process. Moreover, Merton Citizens is connected with London Citizens and Citizens UK so can campaign at a regional and national level too, where so many decisions are made about our lives.

Following an investigation of local needs, three priorities were identified - Mental Health, Refugee Welcome and Housing. We have been involved in the Housing strand where our aim is to get the Council to promote more affordable house building locally. That group has done a survey of the Borough through walking tours and has identified several sites where new affordable housing can be provided.

Our top site is the former Virgin Active Gym off Haydons Road in Trinity Ward close to the River Wandle. Not only has this site been vacant for two years, it is also owned by the Council. It is identified as suitable for housing in the Local Plan but no firm proposals for development have been produced.

To encourage some action, Merton Citizens held an event at the site on Thursday 5 March to which local politicians and the Council Leader were invited. Despite it being a miserable afternoon weather-wise, as it rained all day, twenty Merton Citizens activists and two local councillors attended. The latter both committed their support for our campaign and ceremonially opened the first affordable home on the site – actually a gazebo!

We’ll keep you updated with progress on the campaign. Everyone agrees that the ‘Virgin Inactive’ is a perfect site for affordable

housing and already being Council owned, it should be possible to ensure that at least 50% of the units developed are genuinely affordable.

Please do contact us if you want more information on Merton Citizens. Mike Tulloch (michaeltulloch@phonecoop.coop) or Robin Goodchild (robin.goodchild@sky.com)



Church Office & Mansel Road Centre enquiries during closure

While we have had to suspend our worship services at Trinity for the time being, we are still keeping in touch with everyone.

The Church Office will be staffed from home.

Office Hours 9:30am to 2pm.

Tel: 020 8946 9281 E-mail: office@trinitywimbledon.org

Website: www.trinitywimbledon.org

Facebook: [trinitywimbledon.org](https://www.facebook.com/trinitywimbledon.org)

Twitter: [@trinitywimbledn](https://twitter.com/trinitywimbledn)

Now the Green Blade Rises

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
wheat that in the dark earth many years has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

In the grave they laid Him, Love whom we had slain,
thinking that he never would awake again,
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
he that for the three days in the grave had lain,
quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
then your touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green

J.M.C. Crum (1872-1958) altd

