

## **TRINITY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, WIMBLEDON**

### **Church Secretaries' Annual Review – for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015**

**The Minister** We greatly value Dominic's ministry amongst us. We are grateful for the way in which he fulfils his role as minister of Trinity – worship leader, teacher, pastoral carer.

His leadership of our worship Sunday by Sunday - his prayers and hymn-writing, celebration of the Sacraments and preaching of the Word – has been wide-ranging and challenging. We would wish to pass on the gratitude of the congregation for his leadership in many areas of Christian discipleship, whether concern for the plight of Syrian refugees, leading us patiently through discussions on same sex marriage, or challenging the elders to think 'outside the box' about worship. Those who are bereaved or experiencing illness have greatly appreciated Dominic's pastoral care, carried out calmly and discreetly.

On our behalf he has attended meetings of the URC Southern Synod and has interacted ecumenically with local clergy in Wimbledon. During the year he took on the role of convener of the South London Synod Area (West) Pastoral Committee.

Our thanks also go to Miriam for her share in Dominic's ministry and, in particular, for the considerable contribution she makes to Trinity's music.

**Associate Minister** The Chinese-speaking group in particular, but all at Trinity, greatly value the ministry of Revd Ernest Yu. A regular attendance of around ten gathers every Sunday morning in the Mansel Road Centre for worship in Cantonese, with Mandarin translation, and also on Mondays for Bible Study at Ernest's home. We are very fortunate to have this group as part of our Trinity fellowship.

**The Eldership** The pastoral care of Trinity's members and adherents is shared between the Ministers and Elders. The Elders' Meeting before each morning Communion Service offers an opportunity to share pastoral news.

In October, the Minister led a thought-provoking one-day Conference for all elders, ranging widely across many aspects of worship.

We were saddened to learn in December of the deaths of two very faithful and long-serving elders, David Dennis and Moya Rice-Jones.

Alan Need, Emeritus Elder, who had served the church loyally over many years, moved from the district to the south coast.

We are grateful to Andrew Sutton, Elders' Secretary, who has continued to ensure the smooth organisation of our Communion services.

**Elders' Council** The Council met eleven times during the year. In March, under the agreed procedure for the election of Elders, two members of Council (Dodie Khurshid and Su Lambert) stood down after serving a three-year term. They were subsequently re-elected for a second term. Katrina Clifford was ordained to the eldership and inducted to serve on the Council.

**Trustees** The Elders' Council (the Minister and elected elders) acting as the Trustees of Trinity United Reformed Church (Wimbledon) Charity, were responsible for the general

oversight of all Church objectives and activities and specifically for the financial administration of the Church, together with the care and maintenance of the Church premises and the manse. They met twice during the year, and much work was carried out between meetings.

**Teams** Our eight Teams (Children & Youth Work; Communications & Publicity; Finance; Lettings; Mission & Outreach; Pastoral & Membership; Property; Worship & Faith Development) each met on at least four occasions throughout the year, but the majority of their work continues week by week.

This has been a particularly busy year for the Property Team, which has overseen redecoration of the Mansel Road Centre, installation of new boilers and Old Hall doors, replacement of kitchen worktops, and upgrading of the sound system in the church, in addition to the regular maintenance work that continues all year.

Two new Team Leaders (Robin Ingram and Richard Probert) were appointed to Lettings and Finance respectively. They took over from Joyce Sarpong and Robin Goodchild, to whom we offer our thanks for all their work. Very many of the Team members have served for considerable periods, but it is important to refresh the membership and offers to become involved are always warmly welcomed.

The Roll Review Group and a Calendar Planning Group also each met twice during the year.

**Membership** During the year we celebrated the baptisms of five infants (Freyja Stirling-Currin, Margaret Jin, Emmeline Eales, Sadie Pearson and Colin Crous).

We received 12 new members during the year. A number of visitors were welcomed throughout 2015, some of whom are now worshipping with us regularly.

No marriages were celebrated during 2015.

We record with sadness the deaths during the year of five members: Mr David Dennis; Mr George Derrick; Mr Scott Gauld; Mrs Moya Rice-Jones; and Mr Len Veacock.

The number on the roll at 31 December 2015 was 198 (an increase of 2 over 2014).

**Church Meetings** There were six Church Meetings during the year (one on a Sunday morning and five mid-week) with an average attendance of 38 or approximately 19% of the membership. Church Meeting is 'the gathering of the committed members in each place, coming together to seek the will of God and mind of Christ for the life and mission of that fellowship'. Our low attendance concerns the Minister and Elders' Council, and attempts are continually being made to encourage members take their full responsibility of membership.

At our February meeting, we were again joined by Revd Dr Peter Stevenson, Synod Church & Society Convenor, focusing on the single topic of Same Sex Marriage. General Assembly had asked Church Meetings to consider the question, "Should local URC congregations who want to offer and host same-sex marriages be allowed by the Church to do so?" The majority of those at the meeting voted in agreement.

In addition to the Church Meetings, a Speaker Evening was held in October when Dr Mohamed Ashmawey, CEO of Islamic Relief Worldwide, talked inspirationally about his charity.

**Local Mission & Ministry Review (LMMR)** In the Autumn, Southern Synod's review team visited us to carry out their review. It was gratifying that they found much to

commend in the church, but they also helpfully provided a series of recommendations for us to consider for our mission, faith development, worship leadership and membership commitment. The Elders' Council is addressing these areas.

**'Time for Trinity'** In June we undertook an exercise to investigate the range of talents amongst us. The survey asked offered a range of activities that make up the life of the church, both on a Sunday and during the week, where we can all contribute something of our time and talents, and asked everyone to examine the proportion of their time they devote to Trinity. Seventy-two completed forms were returned (37% of the membership). It is not necessary, of course, to wait for the next questionnaire before volunteering your help!

**Spiritual life** Communion Services were held monthly on the first Sunday morning of each month, on Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve, and on the third Sunday evening of alternate months.

There was All-Age worship on seven Sunday mornings, with Junior Church involvement especially on Mothering Sunday. A particularly lively All-age service took place in September with a Rugby World Cup theme, when children (and adults) greatly enjoyed working together by throwing rugby balls around the church.

Average adult attendance at morning worship was 92, and at evening worship 14. The largest congregations of the year were for Carols and Readings by Candlelight, Easter Day and Mothering Sunday.

Members of the congregation have continued to provide our Prayers of Intercession each week and our appreciation goes to all of them for the preparation and thought they put into their prayers. Similarly, a rota of Bible readers provides participation by a good number of young and not so young members of the congregation each Sunday. Our thanks go to them and to Pam Rostron and Joyce Sarpong who organise the respective rotas.

Church & Society Group led a morning service in February dedicated to Commitment for Life, and a lively and well-received evening Jazz service was held in July.

During Lent, two groups took the opportunity to meet weekly to examine our "Life Balance", looking afresh at our values and life principles in the light of the Bible's teaching about the Sabbath.

Dominic led our evening meditations on 'Stations of Holy Week', and inspirational services for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day.

In September we marked 'Creation Time' – a time of prayer for the protection of Creation and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles that reverse our contribution to climate change. Creation Time drew to a close with celebration of our Harvest Festival in October.

Rededication Sunday, held annually on the first Sunday of October, was as always an opportunity to celebrate and renew our shared participation in Trinity's work and witness. This year we looked forward to all that God has in store for us with the reception of new members, and the welcome to our new Director of Music on that day.

During the year we welcomed to our pulpit Revds Roger Jones and Barbara Pearson. We were also privileged to have a visit in October from one of the two URC General Assembly Moderators, John Ellis who preached a fine sermon drawing on his background in business to challenge all Christians to stand up for their beliefs. He shared with us

something of his experiences at home and abroad on behalf of the URC, and later met members of the congregation over coffee.

After more than thirty years, it was sadly decided to end the Tuesday morning Coffee and Chat gathering as the number attending was no longer sustainable. The small group of regular leaders, and especially Margaret Noble, are thanked for their dedicated service over a long period.

Although advertised, there was insufficient response to run a second Emmaus course in the Autumn, but during Advent, a course of four evening discussions led by the Minister was appreciated by a small group in preparation for Christmas.

Bible Study with Breakfast met weekly before Sunday morning services; the Queens Road house group (studying the second letter of Timothy, Titus and Philemon) and the Church & Society group (addressing a wide variety of topical issues) have continued to meet monthly. All these groups would welcome new members.

**Music** After an all too brief stay at Trinity, we were sad to see Sean Mayes, our Director of Music, return to Canada at the completion of his studies in the UK. Sean brought innovations, such as the two enjoyable events, 'So you think you can't sing' (in February) and 'Pedals, pipes & pizzas' (in March), and a fresh approach to music in our worship, introducing us to Canadian composers and a wide range of musical styles. In just ten months, Sean's infectious enthusiasm for life and all things musical made him a popular leader.

This year's musical production, "The Baptist", written, directed and produced by Roger Jones, was once again a highlight of the year. Sean Mayes led the orchestra and contributed significantly to the success of the production, but it was a tremendous achievement by all those, far too many to list but including some young people from YPs/the Fellowship, who were involved. Trinity is indeed fortunate to have such a wealth of talent available, and our thanks go to all concerned.

In October we were fortunate to be able to appoint Andrew Davies as our new Director of Music. Andrew has already entered fully into the life and membership of Trinity. With impressive musical skills and experience, he has tremendous enthusiasm and is very keen to develop our music especially working with the young people's music and, of course, with our choir.

The choir and our occasional instrumentalists are commended for the high standard of music which they continued to provide throughout the year, and for providing leadership of our worship.

**Children's and Youth Work** A very encouraging highlight at the start of the year was the launch of a Trinity Pilots company at a special service. Pilots has continued to thrive during the year, and membership has grown from five to eighteen, many of the children coming from outside the church. It is now one of our best means of outreach to children. Our thanks go to Gillian Jones, Sam Elliot and Hannah Jones (temporary Youth Worker), along with occasional volunteers, who have worked hard to provide an exciting and energetic mix of games, craft and other activities with strong elements of worship, prayer and service for our 5 to 11 year olds on Saturday afternoons.

The Junior Church children continue to meet together on Sunday mornings. The average number of children (aged 0-18 years) worshipping on Sunday mornings during the year was 9, but attendance varied from 3 to 21 during term-time!

Very successful Holiday Clubs were held for three days each at Easter and during the Autumn school half-term, based on material from Scripture Union. Twenty-four children

from within the church and beyond were welcomed at the Club at Easter, and ten in October. One 'Drop & Shop' afternoon – for the benefit of busy parents – was held on a Saturday in December.

The New Year Party is always fun and a great opportunity simply to play good 'old-fashioned' games! The Fireworks party, held this year in the Mansel Road Centre, was an opportunity to invite Pilots and their parents - quite a number joined us for the event, with hotdogs and a glass of wine for the adults.

An excellent Nativity Play, written by Roger Jones and directed by Hannah Jones, was performed by twenty-one Junior Church children and YPs, who sang, narrated and created the tableaux to tell the Christmas story during a morning service. The Christingle service continued to prove popular again on Christmas Eve.

'All Together Now', the Southern Synod Youth Camp, organised by Hannah Jones and a team of seven leaders from Trinity, took place in August at Honey Hill Campsite at Bearsted. Twenty-nine campers (seven from Trinity) participated. The Camp was considered by all those involved to have been a great success and highly recommended by the young people.

Friday Fellowship (for 11-15s) continued to meet regularly with an average attendance of five, led by our Youth Worker with valued ongoing support from other Trinity volunteers.

Trinity Toddlers meeting on Friday mornings in the Old Hall continues to prove very popular with an average attendance of 25 children and their carers.

A newsletter was launched for the children and young people, and three editions were produced during the year.

Our thanks to all who give their time and energy to children's and youth work at Trinity, a key part of the life and work of the church.

**Ecumenical & URC links** As has been our custom for several years, we were joined by the congregation and choir of St Mark's Anglican Church for an Ash Wednesday service, this year held at Trinity.

Christian Aid was supported for the annual house-to-house collection and car boot sale during Christian Aid week, and by carol singing at Raynes Park station. We again supported the URC's Commitment for Life collections during Lent.

The work of the Wimbledon Food Bank was supported generously by the congregation at our Harvest Thanksgiving in October, and by regular donations throughout the year.

We continued to support the work of Faith in Action, working to support homeless people within the Borough of Merton.

Trinity members again took part with other local churches and faith organisations, in the Merton Winter Night Shelter programme on Trinity's own premises. A rota of volunteers provided shelter and warm hospitality, with a cooked supper and breakfast, for fourteen homeless men and women on seven Sunday nights between January and March.

Throughout the year we were kept in touch with the work of the Southern Synod of the United Reformed Church by our Synod representative, Colin Lambert.

**Christmas Tree Festival** Our first Christmas Tree Festival was held over four days in December, when forty beautifully decorated trees and special lighting transformed the

church. It proved to be a great success. A good number of Trinity folk were involved in the planning, organisation, decorating, stewarding and numerous other roles. Our many visitors, from the local community and beyond, were entertained with a range of musical items, and refreshments were provided. Sponsorship was obtained from local businesses, our premises hirers, church organisations and individuals, enabling us to make donations to Crisis and Trinity.

**Social activities** A varied programme of social activities was arranged: Chinese New Year Supper (February); a Spring walk in Surrey (April); curry night (May); Summer barbecue (June); a Summer walk in Surrey (August); and Harvest supper (October). Badminton is played by an enthusiastic group each Monday evening in the Old Hall.

The Wednesday Social Group, meeting on the first afternoon of most months, again provided a varied programme of speakers and music, together with excellent teas.

A small group of volunteers helped prepare the church for Christmas with a 'Church clean up' in early December, and this was as much a social event as it was work party.

**Publicity & communications** Our membership and those beyond our doors are kept in contact with our life and events through a variety of communications. The weekly Notice Papers, Church Directory and Calendars of Services and Events were published during the year. Our thanks go to Anne Broadbridge who works diligently each month to produce *Trinity News*.

Our bright new church website ([www.trinitywimbledon.org](http://www.trinitywimbledon.org)) was launched in February. You are encouraged to have a look at it if you have not already done so! We now also have church facebook ([www.facebook.com/trinitywimbledon.org](http://www.facebook.com/trinitywimbledon.org)) and Twitter (@TrinityWimbledn accounts).

**Mansel Road Centre** The Centre continued to be used extensively by church organisations and by private, commercial and community hirers. Our lettings income continued to increase under Elizabeth Scharinger's administration and the centre remains a very popular venue in great demand by local organisations. Although our two part-time caretakers cover much of the load, we are indebted to our small band of volunteer stewards without whom we would be unable to let our facilities, and hence raise much-needed income.

Many organisations and other activities continued throughout the year, and it is impossible to list them all. They include:-

Church flowers (arrangement and distribution); child and vulnerable adult protection; health and safety coordination; church gardens maintenance; crèche; door stewards; property work parties; cradle roll; church archives; Olive Branch Café; Sunday morning coffee; Sunday morning transport; 'Reform' distribution; coin collecting cans; Traidcraft stall; transport; welcomers; and women's book club.

**Our thanks to all those who make possible all aspects of the work of our church. We pray for God's blessing on the worship of our church, on its witness, and on its wide ranging work that all may be to His Greater Glory.**

Catherine Paul & Sam Elliot  
May 2016