

# Trinity News

*No. 499*

*June 2020*



*Trinity United Reformed Church,  
Mansel Road, Wimbledon*

## Minister's Letter



Dear Friends

*My eyes are awake before each watch of the night, that I may meditate on your word. (Psalm 119.148)*

For some, a sleepless night might be an unfortunate side-effect of the stress and disorientation of Lockdown at the moment. And there must surely be few frustrations so intense as lying in bed unable to reach the sleep that is so longed-for.

For others, however, an "all-nighter" may be a deliberate choice – although one would hope that it's no more than a very rare undertaking, because of the importance of regular sleep patterns to good health!

Students, of course, would be one category of people who may from time to time feel a temptation to stay awake through the night. Sometimes that's in order to meet a looming essay deadline or squeeze in some last-minute exam revision; sometimes it's for less academic purposes! But this Summer in particular, students (including A-level and GCSE candidates as well as those in further education) are among those for whom there is a great deal more anxiety: with exams cancelled and assessment arrangements changed, let's remember to pray for all who feel that their future is no longer in their own hands in the way that they had expected it to be.

Psalm 119 – the longest chapter in the Bible – seems to have been written by a student of sorts. Probably not someone preparing for assessments or enrolled on a formal academic course, but someone nevertheless with a single-minded devotion to the study of God's word and God's ways. For that is the overarching theme of Psalm 119 – and it's reinforced by the use of some tried and trusted revision techniques. As well as the all-night study sessions hinted at in the quoted verse, the word "meditation" itself describes, in the original language, not a discipline of silent thinking but rather a reading-aloud, vocalising in order to aid the learning. And because patterns

can help people to memorise material, the whole Psalm is written as an acrostic: each section starts with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and that letter is repeated at the start of every line of the section.

Now, I'm not proposing to implement at Trinity any Scripture exams or homework during Lockdown. But if you find yourself with extra time on your hands, you could do worse than to read and work through part of the Bible: perhaps a Gospel or a New Testament Epistle, perhaps the Psalms, perhaps a chapter or book that you don't remember reading before. If you're feeling adventurous, you could even try picking out a few verses to memorize!

As you do so, see what you can find out about the context in which the passage was written, how it contributes to the overall themes and message of the Bible, and how it might inform or enrich your times of prayer.

With every blessing



## Church Family News

Our congratulations to Mike & Margaret Tulloch who celebrate their Golden (50<sup>th</sup>) Wedding Anniversary on 20 June.

Our best wishes for a very Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday to Dominic on 5 June, and to Andrew Sutton who celebrates his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on 1 June.

To all those celebrating birthdays this month (including Toby Collins, Matthew Grant, Jean Jerram, Olivia Li, Sarah Li, Amelia Lowe, Nathan Mansfield, Oliver Mansfield, Raychel Matika, Olivia Scharinger and Annie Spain..... Happy Birthday!



# Worship "At Home"

Join the Services via any of the following:

Trinity's website: [www.trinitywimbledon.org](http://www.trinitywimbledon.org)

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

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/TrinityWimbledn](http://www.twitter.com/TrinityWimbledn)

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

## 7 June - Trinity Sunday Worship At Home + Communion

Theme: Grace, Love, and Fellowship  
(2 Corinthians 13.11-13, Matthew 28.16-20)

## 14 June - Worship At Home

Theme: Commission and Compassion  
(Matthew 9.35-10.8)

## 21 June - Worship At Home

Theme: Fearless and Faithful  
(Matthew 10.24-39)

## 28 June - Worship at Home

Theme: Welcoming the Word  
(Matthew 10.40-42)

## Messy Church

Trinity's first Messy Church 'At Home' is coming soon!



Keep an eye on our website for some fun and interactive ideas using things you might have at home, some music and some prayer, all on a **RAINBOW** theme. Tune in and join in the fun!

## This is the time to be slow....

On Radio 4's Today programme during March, some of BBC News' best known voices offered their favourite poems of comfort and hope and talked about the importance of the words in their lives.

Fergal Keane, chose this poem from John O'Donohue's, "Benedictus: A Book of Blessings", with the verse that helped sustain him through PTSD. You can hear him reading it here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/embed/p0884gfm/52091958>

"This is the time to be slow,  
Lie low to the wall  
Until the bitter weather passes.

Try, as best you can, not to let  
The wire brush of doubt  
Scrape from your heart  
All sense of yourself  
And your hesitant light.

If you remain generous,  
Time will come good;  
And you will find your feet  
Again on fresh pastures of promise,  
Where the air will be kind  
And blushed with beginning."



## The Ministerial Vacancy Team

Elders' Council nominated Sandy McLeish as Vacancy Team Convenor. The appointment was approved unanimously by Church Meeting on 13 February and with gratitude to Sandy for his willingness to assume this role.

On 4 March, Elders' Council approved the Vacancy Team membership as follows, with thanks to those who were willing to serve:

Sandy McLeish (Team Leader)  
Sam Elliot & Catherine Paul - Joint Church Secretaries (ex officio)  
Revd Ernest Yu - Associate Minister (ex officio)  
Cathy Dundee  
Lydia Khurshid  
Andrew Melrose  
Pam Rostron  
Claire Wood  
Alan Young

It had been anticipated that these names would be recommended to Church Meeting for endorsement on 29 March, but during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic it is proposed to co-opt these members to enable the Team to begin its work, and to seek endorsement at the next possible Church Meeting.

While the membership encompasses a range of different perspectives and roles within Trinity, Team members have been selected not to be directly representative of the whole church, but instead as people who have the capacity and gifts to lead a conversation with the whole church about what leadership is needed for the future. Consulting widely within Trinity will be essential, and you will be hearing more about this soon.



# Annual report 2019

At this time of year we usually present the Church Secretaries' annual review for the previous year to our May Church Meeting.

You can read both our [review of 2019](#) on the church website, along with a [Children & Youth report](#) from those working with our children and young people.

## Team news

### *Worship & Faith Development Team*

At the Church Meeting on 13 February, Dominic reported that Alan Young had retired as Leader of the Worship & Faith Development Team after around twelve years and thanked him for his exemplary custodianship and leadership of the team.

Elders' Council had nominated Pam Rostron who had agreed to take on the role of Team Leader. Church Meeting noted this appointment with enthusiasm.

### *Property Team*

The position of Property Team Leader has been vacant for three and a half years, since Barry Gilbert's move to Scotland.

The Team no longer met formally after that time, and we take this opportunity to thank all those members who had served so faithfully for many years, in particular Norman Angus, Richard Dunfield-Prayero, Peter Smith, Ron Temple, Alan Young, Janet Young and Michael Young. We are very grateful to them all for their time and the care with which they looked after our church and Mansel Road Centre buildings and grounds, and the manse.

Elders' Council is delighted to nominate Dodie Khurshid who has volunteered to take on the role of Team Leader. This appointment will be noted at the next Church Meeting.

## Trinity URC – 2019 Accounts: Outturn & Prospects

During Lockdown is a good time to provide a review of Trinity's finances.

In a normal year, the May Church Meeting would have received the 2019 Annual Accounts by now, following their approval by Elders' Council on 6 May, so I shall present them in the pages of Trinity News instead.

2019 was a record year for regular income (before special donations and legacies) with the total exceeding £300,000 for the first time. This was achieved principally through Lettings Income increasing by 5% and it now comprises 51% of regular income (see the 2019 Income pie chart).

The make-up of last year's expenditure is shown in the other pie chart and the total, including major projects, was £10,000 below budget. During the year, the toilets in the Mansel Road Centre (MRC) and the Old Hall floor were refurbished, the kitchen roof was replaced and, most significantly, our new digital organ was installed following removal of the old pipe organ.

At the year end, Trinity's unrestricted funds totalled £375,210, just 0.6% down on 2018. This excellent result could not have been achieved without the new organ itself being donated in memory of Dr Robin Paul. Those reserves are allocated as follows:

General Reserve	£100,000
Roof Fund	£125,000
Major Repairs	£75,000
Technology	£5,000
Music	<u>£10,000</u>
Total Designated Funds	£315,000
Unallocated	<u>£60,210</u>
Total Capital ex Restricted	<u>£375,210</u>

Significant repair works to the church are going to be required in the near term; to the fleches above the chancel and the Old Hall, to sections of the external brickwork and to the subsidence in Room 1. In addition, more extensive roof repairs are likely to be needed in the medium term, hence the fund designated for that purpose.

Overall, Trinity entered 2020 in a strong financial position but the Covid-19 pandemic is going to test it. Since mid-March, Lettings Income has declined almost to zero because the MRC has been closed. There are also no open plate collections on Sunday mornings. Fortunately, Planned Giving via standing orders is holding up well so Trinity has some income.

Our expenditure, however, is difficult to reduce. Our largest cost (see the Expenditure pie chart) is our Ministry & Mission payment to the URC Synod, on which the denomination relies for 90% of its annual income. Church & MRC Administration, the next largest, comprises both salary costs for our three employees and cleaning. Savings are being made both through the furloughing of our two caretakers and through a major reduction in contract cleaning services. Unfortunately these savings are much less than the current loss of Lettings Income.

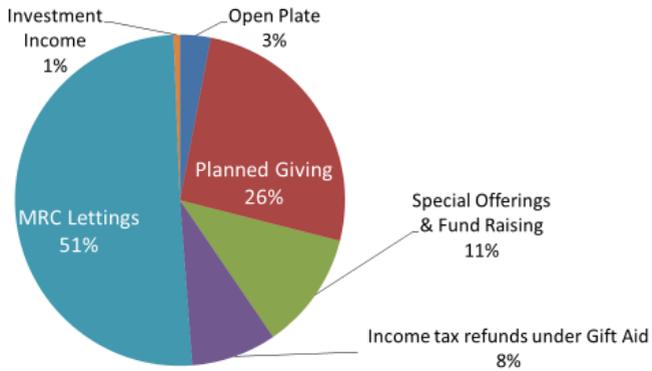
Thus, Trinity has reserves in excess of its designated funds, which include the General Reserve for emergencies, so is going to be able to function even if the MRC remains closed until the autumn. However, as Treasurer, I am not keen to use our hard-earned reserves to pay for day-to-day expenditure.

Many of you give generously through the Planned Giving scheme and a number of you have recently increased your regular donations in response to a letter from the Planned Giving Secretary, Andrew Melrose.

There has never been a more opportune time for us all to review the amount we give and if anyone is not in the scheme, please contact Andrew. Anything extra will help offset what is almost certainly going to be a year when Trinity's costs exceed its income materially.

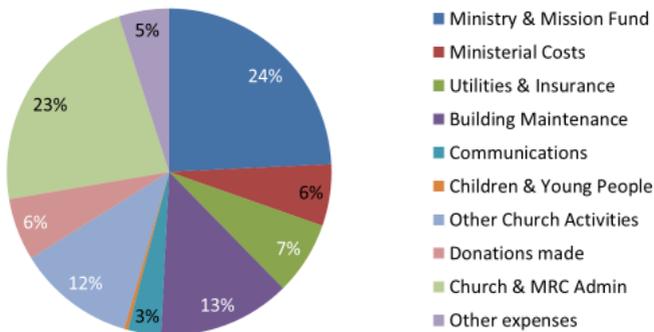
Please don't hesitate to contact me for a set of the 2019 Accounts or on any other financial matter. Planned Giving enquiries should be directed to Andrew Melrose (email: [andrew.melrose@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:andrew.melrose@hotmail.co.uk)).

## Income in 2019



Total Income £301,557

## Expenditure in 2019

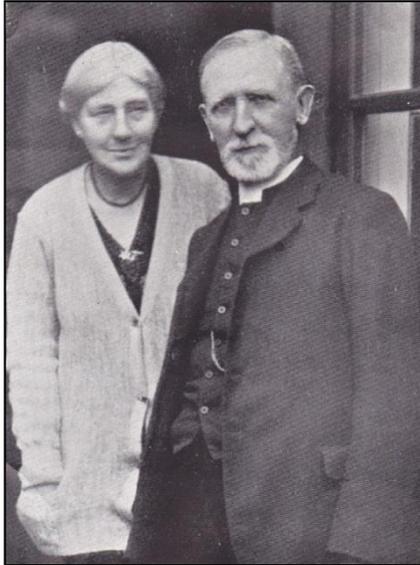


Total Budget Expenditure £327,805

- Robin Goodchild (Congregational Treasurer)  
 email: [robin.goodchild@sky.com](mailto:robin.goodchild@sky.com)

## From the archives

### Trinity honoured as Revd Duncan Macgregor is elected Moderator



**Revd Duncan Macgregor and his wife Christina**

Twice in Trinity's history its Minister has been elected to serve as the denomination's Moderator. The first occasion was 100 years ago in 1920. Early that year it was announced that the Revd Duncan Macgregor had been elected to serve as Moderator of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England. He was widely congratulated 'on his call to the highest position our Church has to offer her ministers' and in recognition of this honour Trinity presented him with a new set of silk pulpit robes.

Synod met at Regent Square Church on Monday 8 May and there was a good assembly of Trinity members present to witness the installation of Mr Macgregor as Moderator and to listen to his sermon on 'The Church and the Present Hour'. Incidentally, Mr Macgregor was destined to be the very last Moderator of Synod, for that year a decision was taken to change the name of Synod to 'General Assembly'.

The twelve months that followed took Mr Macgregor to the Assemblies of the Church of Scotland and the Waldensian Church in Italy as well as to parts of the country both far and near. He preached in Belfast and Bristol, Reading and Redcar, Blackburn and Barrow, as far west as Gloucester, as far north as Edinburgh, Hexham and Jesmond, as far south as Aldershot. He was present at the unveiling of the Cenotaph in Whitehall and at the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. He was away from Wimbledon for twenty-one full Sundays as well as several half Sundays and occupied forty-four other pulpits, conducting numerous anniversaries, including two Jubilees and one Centenary.

Mr Macgregor's year of office ended with the meeting of the General Assembly at Newcastle in May 1921 when he handed over the reins of office to Dr Thomas Barclay. As he did so came the news that the University of Edinburgh had decided to confer a degree of Doctor of Divinity upon him.



## **We have a dedicated mobile phone for prayer requests**

This works in the same way as the prayer boards in the Mansel Road Centre, but by phone. We bring before God our prayers for those known to have special needs, anxieties, distress or sickness, or any celebrations and happy events for which we give thanks.

**Please text 07561 608862 if you would like to leave a prayer request.**

## Looking ahead to Trinity after lockdown

Since the Government has set out its plans for the gradual lifting of lockdown, the Elders Council have continued to meet regularly to begin assessing the implications for the Church. Over the next few weeks they will be producing plans for the next steps for Trinity in five key areas:

- Worship – phased restarting of congregational worship and the implications of continued social distancing and other constraints;
- Property and Lettings - making the buildings safe for worshippers, staff, hirers and visitors;
- Communications and Technology - staying touch with people and using new innovations in the future;
- Outreach - maintaining links with community partners and mobilising support from the Church;
- Pastorate Profile, Mission and Vacancy - discerning appropriate balance of continuity and change in Trinity's mission during this time and preliminary planning for the call of a new minister.

Each area of work will be led by at least two members of Elders Council in consultation with the relevant Teams. While much of what we do will be governed by public health and guidance, and by what is practically feasible, we want to take intentional steps into the future, with our plans prioritising God's will for us as a church community. To help discern this, in the coming weeks we will be holding a wider conversation with the whole church to get your ideas, views and concerns.

We know we are living through extraordinary times and we want to ensure Trinity is ready for this next phase - not simply to preserve Trinity as a set of buildings or as an institution, but as a living Christian community doing God's work in this new world.

## Leading the Property Team

At the Church Meeting in February, Robin Goodchild gave an impassioned plea to those present to consider whether they felt able take on the lead of the Property Team. Although the team had been functioning effectively through a small consultancy group, there was an increasingly urgent need to identify a member to lead the work that needed to be done in this important aspect of Church life. With the Church facing a period of Ministerial vacancy, members needed to pull together to ensure that the Church delivered on its Mission as best it could. For that to happen, vacancies needed to be filled. Robin's words had a profound effect on me and I felt strongly in that moment that I should step up and put my name forward. In the event, Elders' Council accepted my nomination as Property Team leader at its meeting in early March.

In the intervening period, I had the opportunity to sit in on a property group meeting as an observer. I was immediately struck by the wide range of matters with which the group had been dealing. As regards the Church itself, the group were looking to have the damaged bricks at the front of the building repaired, to have the stonework surveyed and the verticality of the spire monitored. They had noted that the lead panels on the fleche had slipped and were in need of repair, and had engaged a consultant engineer to advise and obtain tenders for the required works. There were some electrical issues being investigated and an upgrade to the wheelchair ramps to the transepts was being pursued. As regards the Mansel Road Centre, the group had been monitoring the subsidence crack in room 1, were addressing the need to replace the boiler and flue and had overseen the upgrade of the upstairs kitchenette. They had also arranged for a leak in the kitchen ceiling to be repaired, were investigating a radiator leak in the old hall, were liaising with the Church's neighbours about their overhanging trees, were looking into issues with the partition screens between rooms 3, 4 & 5, and so on.



The fact that so much work was being done by the members of a small consultancy group astounded me. We owe them a great deal and I take this opportunity on behalf of us all publicly to thank those

members for all they have done and will continue to do. At the same time, I found it troubling that such work was being done without the majority of us even being aware of it. As with many aspects of Church life, we often take for granted the time spent by a dedicated few working behind the scenes to 'keep the show on the road'. We are led in worship, in Church, Junior Church and the Chinese group; buildings are kept warm and welcoming; events are organised and communications are sent; finances are looked after and lettings are made; pastoral care is delivered and other tasks attended to. As I sat there observing my first property team meeting, it felt right that I would be contributing just a little to this effort, and I would encourage everyone to find a role that they too can fulfil.

Much has happened since those 'innocent' days of early March. The subsequent lockdown as a result of Covid-19 virus meant that the Church and the Mansel Road Centre had to be closed and, although recent government announcements indicate that the restrictions have started to be eased, it is clear that the road to a physical return to our buildings will be a gradual one full of complexities. As the position is uncertain and ever-changing, it is difficult to know precisely what will need to be done before our buildings can be brought into use again. What I can say is that a good deal of thought and planning will be given to the matter, in order to protect the health of our members and visitors. We will return, in time and when we are ready. Until then, we continue to meet online.

*- Dodie Khurshid*

## **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](mailto:office@trinitywimbledon.org)

## Bonhoeffer's death remembered 75 years on

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of German Lutheran Pastor and noted theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, described by some as a "role model of true humanity in the spirit of Jesus Christ", was remembered in April. Bonhoeffer is remembered for his staunch resistance to Nazi dictatorship which led to his execution a few weeks before WW2 ended.



The Revd John Proctor, General Secretary for the URC, reflects on his life:

"Bonhoeffer was one of the bravest Christians of the twentieth century. Born in Germany in 1906, he was set for a respectable career as university professor in theology. Then the Nazis came to power, and he saw it as his Christian duty to speak against, stand up to and subvert their influence.

He challenged what was happening to Jewish people. He led an "underground" college for training new ministers, out of sight of the authorities. He used his contacts abroad to help him resist the regime at home. Even in wartime he worked against the government.

Eventually the Nazis caught up with Bonhoeffer. He was implicated in a plot to murder Hitler, condemned to death, and hanged in a concentration camp just a month before the war ended.

Bonhoeffer's legacy has been immense. He wrote extensively – letters, sermons, hymns, big books. Much of it still feels very current. *Life Together* is a vision for Christian community. *The Cost of Discipleship* reflects on the standards and demands of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The song 'By Gracious Powers' is included in *Rejoice and Sing*. His example inspired Christians to stand up to bad government in South Africa. Many churches carry his name, one of them in London, where he was pastor for two years in the 1930s.

A camp doctor who saw Bonhoeffer die later wrote: "I saw Pastor Bonhoeffer ... kneeling on the floor praying fervently to God. I was most deeply moved by the way this lovable man prayed, so devout and so certain that God heard his prayer. At the place of execution, he again said a short prayer and then climbed the few steps to the gallows, brave and composed. His death ensued after a few seconds. In the almost 50 years that I worked as a doctor, I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God."