

# Trinity News

**October 2020**

**No.502**



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

## Minister's Letter

Dear friends

This is a letter I expected to be writing to you back in April. Of course, the circumstances changed somewhat – for everyone! But it is now likely that my ministry at Trinity will draw to a close in October, as I move to take up a call to serve two churches in North London.

Ministers may come and go; but the life of the local church continues. Indeed, this life is gifted from within: as the gathering of God's people in a particular place and context, the local church's continuity resides in its congregation.

So what keeps a church going, what helps a church remain healthy and effective? The opening chapter of the **Letter to the Ephesians** offers some clues:

*I have heard of your **faith** in the Lord Jesus and your **love** towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.*

Faith, and love: two attributes which, as we might expect, appear right at the top of the list. But not just an abstract faith, and not a love that reaches only as far as the church door. No: it is in Jesus as Lord that we are to place our trust and fidelity, and our love must extend to all whom God calls friends. And now, as I reflect upon the privilege of ministering among you during these last eight years, I give thanks for you and pledge to remember you in my prayers. For you have been steadfast in faith, and generous in love.

*I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you **a spirit of wisdom and revelation** as you come to know him...*

An appetite for discovery, for deepening of faith: this too is a mark of the Christian life together. Even if, for modesty's sake, we hesitate to claim for ourselves any great wisdom or ground-breaking revelation – still the goal and the reality is our enrichment in the knowledge of God. A knowledge that's found not just in sermons and study guides, but in the heart's experience. And now, recalling all we've shared and

learned in our time together, I pray that such a spirit may continue to be yours as you come to know God ever more truly.

*... so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the **hope** to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious **inheritance** among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his **power** for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.*

A hope, and an inheritance. For what good is a church that lives only in the past? Rather, the tracing of God's deeds in former days is the framework for our discernment of God's activity in the world today, drawing us towards the promised fulfilment of God's Kingdom. Recent months have forced us all to find and focus on new ways to sustain our church's work and witness; it's been an unsettling time, but God's power is at work indeed! And now, as God's plan brings us to the threshold of new challenges and opportunities in different places, I pray that you may be empowered and encouraged for the work in which God is calling you to share here.

***God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.***

At the heart of our story is the faith-defining, history-shaping testimony that sin's curse has been set aside for us in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is indeed how God's power is encountered and made known: Christ is raised and exalted not to enslave us, but to set us free. And this same power enlivens the church today. So let this proclamation continue to shape Trinity's life and mission in all the years to come.

And now, as the time approaches for me to take my leave of you, I pray for you with deep thanksgiving for all that we've shared, and joyful expectation for all that God is yet to do among you.

With every blessing

Dominic

## Sunday 4 October



**Sunday 4 October is our annual Rededication Sunday**, the occasion in the Church calendar when we reaffirm our shared participation and commitment to Trinity's work and witness.

**It will also be the last occasion when the Revd Dominic Grant will lead worship at Trinity as our Minister** after eight years of devoted service. Dominic originally planned to move to his new pastorate in Barnet in April, and we are grateful for the extended time he and Miriam have been able to spend with us to support us through the period of lockdown.

It would be wonderful to see as many Trinity members as are able to attend in church on that day for both reasons.

Even though our services have re-started in church, numbers allowed to attend are necessarily currently restricted and we are not permitted to host any large social gatherings. It will therefore not be possible to host the kind of celebration we would normally wish for occasions such as this.

We have decided to repeat our morning service in the afternoon on that day to enable all those who would wish to attend to come and worship, and to meet with Dominic for the final time as our Minister. If you would like to come to worship on 4 October it will be essential to pre-register by emailing [churchsecretaries@trinitywimbledon.org](mailto:churchsecretaries@trinitywimbledon.org). Services will be held at 11.00am and 3.00pm (if required). Please

state your preferred time when booking. Closing date for registration will be 12 noon on Wednesday 30 September. We will do our best to accommodate any specific time requests.

Then in the evening, at 6pm, we will hold a videocall for all Trinity's members and friends to say our farewells to Dominic and Miriam. Further details about this will be sent out soon - there is no need to register for the videocall so please put this in your diary now.



## Retirement of Revd Ernest Yu, Trinity's Associate Minister

After sixteen years serving the Chinese group at Trinity, Revd Ernest Yu will retire as Trinity's Associate Minister on 7 November 2020 (his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday). This is a decision he has reached following a period of careful prayer and discernment of God's will.

It is Ernest who first brought Trinity's Chinese group together, and he has continued to care for its members faithfully. His ministry to the group and to the whole church has brought great blessing to all of us.

Ernest will continue to be a member of Trinity URC Wimbledon after his retirement, and it is his wish to carry on preaching and leading the Chinese group's services as often as he is able, so that Chinese-language worship continues to be offered.

Our Chinese group is recognised as an important and special part of the life of our church, both by the Elders' Council at Trinity and by the URC Southern Synod of which we are a part. We give thanks to God for Ernest's ministry here, and assure him of our prayers and good wishes in his forthcoming retirement.

讓我通知你們余威嶽牧師在三一堂擔任了副牧師和侍奉了中文組崇拜十六年後，他會在二零二零年十一月七日（他的七十五歲生日）退休。這是他經過誠心的禱告和察驗上帝的旨意才決定的。

三一堂的中文組由余牧師首先設立並且忠心地牧養其組員。他的侍奉工作為整個教會和中文組帶來我們大大的福份。

在退休後余牧師會仍然是三一堂的教友，並且他願意繼續盡他所能領導中文組和講中文道。因此三一堂繼續有中文崇拜。

我們所屬的教區，聯合歸正教會南區大會，和三一堂的執事會都承認我們的中文組是教會聖工的一個特殊和重要的部份。我們為了余牧師在這裏的侍奉感謝上帝。我們為他禱告和祝願他退休喜樂。

## October services

**Church services will be held at 11:00 at Trinity**

If you would like to attend on any Sunday, please [email churchsecretaries@trinitywimbledon.org](mailto:churchsecretaries@trinitywimbledon.org) before 12 noon on the preceding Friday - letting us know the number of people from your household (and their names). **This pre-registration is essential** as we have to limit numbers attending.

If you are unable to attend you can still worship at home using our recorded weekly service. Details can be found on the church website ([www.trinitywimbledon.org](http://www.trinitywimbledon.org)).

**Sunday 4 October - Rededication Sunday with Holy Communion & final service led by the Minister at Trinity before he moves to new pastorate**

**Sunday 11 October – led by Revd Alistair Cumming**

**Sunday 18 October – led by Revd Bill Bowman**

**Sunday 25 October – to be confirmed**

## Gift Day 'For Others' – 1 November

Each year we conduct a ballot for the congregation to select the ten charities (four local, three national and three international organisations) we will support at our Gift Day 'For Others', this year to be held on Sunday 1 November.

Click [here](#) to complete the Voting Form and return it by 11 October to [robin.h.ingram@gmail.com](mailto:robin.h.ingram@gmail.com) or post it to Robin at the Trinity office.

Do contact either Robin Ingram or Robin Goodchild if you need any further information.

Please take the time to vote in this important fundraising event in the Trinity calendar.

## W R Rawlings Trust

### – A way to mitigate the impact of Covid-19

The WR Rawlings Trust is a longstanding charity closely connected with Trinity. The purpose of this short article is to remind readers of its existence so that all at Trinity are familiar with its purpose at a time when its services may be needed more than ever.

The Trust was set up in 1936 and its principal object is relieving financial hardship among members connected with Trinity and those who reside in Merton and are known to the church. The trustees comprise the Minister, the Church Secretaries and the Congregational Treasurer. They would welcome applications for assistance from anyone whom the Trust can help.

Do talk with your Elder or any of the trustees if you think that Rawlings might be of assistance.

Catherine Paul (tel: (020) 7938 4608, catherine.f.paul@btinternet.com); Sam Elliot (tel: 07973-210715, samelliot82@yahoo.co.uk) and Robin Goodchild (tel: 0771-4095007, robin.goodchild@sky.com)

## Church News

**Congratulations** to Janet and Tony Matika on the birth of a son, Liam, in July.

**Our good wishes** go to those who are beginning university studies: Oliver Khurshid (Oxford); Lauren Probert (Durham); Daniel Probert (Oxford); and Abena Sarpong (Nottingham)

### **Birthdays in October**

Happy birthday this month to Joyce Chiu-Broadbent, Matilda Henning, Vera Broadbridge, Kate Mansfield, Catherine Paul, Guy Rostron, Pam Rostron and Elijah Siphika.

Have we omitted anyone recently? If so, please do let us know so we can remember them in future.

## Trinity and our 'new normal'

As the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in the United Kingdom in March, it became clear that everything about our church life, in common with everything else, was to be affected. We have discovered new ways to worship God together, to stay connected as a fellowship, and to meet to conduct the essential business of the church.

Our last Service in church before the lockdown was on Sunday 15 March, after which the church was to remain closed for twenty-four Sundays.

During this time, online pre-recorded video services were provided, and these were much appreciated by the congregation in their homes. For those without internet connection, the text of the service was sent out by post each week, and a phone link was also available. The services have been shared by considerable numbers.

We observed Mothering Sunday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, the Ordination and Induction of Elders, Trinity Sunday and Pentecost all online, with Communion being celebrated at Easter and in June.

On Pentecost Sunday, Dominic shared the leadership of our online worship with Revd Richard Church, retiring Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) of the URC.



Worship At Home for Sunday 14 June 2020



Worship At Home for Trinity Sunday 7 June



Messy Church At Home



Worship At Home for 31 May 2020 (Pentecost)

On 19 July we joined the Synod's service with Communion, sharing with churches from across the Southern Synod.

We have been very grateful to all those who have provided readings and prayers from home during this anxious time. As the seasons changed, we had glimpses of their homes and gardens, and some were accompanied by a background of birdsong adding to our enjoyment!

We are indebted to all our musicians, and especially Andrew Davies our Director of Music, for their contributions week by week. (If you missed Andrew's article in last month's *Trinity News* about the way the music was produced [click here](#).)

A Junior Church time was included in our online services each week, and activities and other materials were emailed to the children and young people and posted on the church website.

Messy Church, originally scheduled for March, went out online in June and reached a very encouraging number of participants way beyond our church walls, with the theme of "Rainbows a sign of hope" and was much enjoyed by all.

Zoom, unknown to many of us before the pandemic struck, was to become a regular feature of our lives for six months or more.

An experimental Afternoon Tea on Zoom in early April was followed by weekly Coffee Mornings on Zoom when up to twenty participants joined regularly for a chat and catch up from our places of isolation.

Our first online meeting of church members in June attracted forty participants by Zoom; a well-attended all-elders meeting, and regular meetings of Elders Council, and Teams have all been organised by Zoom.

"Trinity Creates" challenge, encouraging art, music and literature creations on a weekly theme was a little

disappointingly supported. Can Trinity's congregation really be so lacking in creativity?

Above all, our thanks of course go to Dominic who rose to the challenge of providing worship of a very high standard online week by week, from the church and from the manse. Dominic and Miriam had expected to leave Trinity at the end of April, but he remained throughout this difficult period to provide continuity of pastoral care and worship for which we are sincerely grateful.

The services are all available on our website where they can be viewed at any time. ([www.trinitywimbledon.org](http://www.trinitywimbledon.org))

Worship in church began again on Sunday 6 September. The attendance is necessarily restricted at present in line with government guidance, but those unable to be present in person can join the online services which are continuing at least until the end of the year.

We have tried hard to keep in touch with everyone through contact with your elder, by occasional letters from the Joint Church Secretaries, with the Covid-19 Survey to which you responded in such good numbers, through Trinity News, website and social media.

We do hope to see as many as possible back at church very soon. It's not the same without you!



## Update on the works to the fleche spires

Steps are continuing to be taken to repair the lead work around the base of the Church's centre fleche spire, which was dislodged during high winds earlier in the year and damaged some tiles on the Church's roof. Although the hope had been to effect the repairs over the summer months, the remoteness of the centre fleche spire and the difficulties that presents in terms of ensuring safe access, has caused a good deal of head scratching on the part of our structural engineer and scaffold designer.

At a site meeting in June, the structural engineer expressed concern about the load which the scaffolding for the centre fleche spire will impose on the Church roof and, following a subsequent internal inspection of the roof structure in July, he confirmed that a scaffold tower will need to be erected inside the Church, in order to take the additional weight of the scaffolding outside. Much consideration has been given to the design of that scaffolding, both inside and outside the Church, with various safety considerations giving rise to the need for an evermore elaborate structure. The design, however, has now been finalised and the builder and scaffolder are standby ready to make a start as soon as we get approval from our insurers.



Regrettably, the works will cause some disruption to our services in Church, at least whilst the internal scaffolding is erected at the start of the works and taken down again at the end of the works. Our hope at present is that we will be able to make use of the building in the intervening 6-week period, but this will have to be reassessed once the works are underway.

At the same time as carrying out the repairs to the centre fleche, we are also taking the opportunity to maintain the rear fleche, which sits above the Old Hall. That too may cause some disruption to the users of the Old Hall, but we will be looking to keep this to a minimum.

## From the Archives



As part of our Centenary celebrations in 1984 Trinity hosted a Flower Festival in the Church. Above is the announcement in Trinity News and, below, an article that appeared in the weekly Wimbledon News.

# Floral tribute for centenary

THE MAGNIFICENT Centenary Flower Festival at Trinity United Reformed Church, Mansel Road, Wimbledon, has achieved its objective.

A pilgrimage of faith, "The Way of the Lord", was shown by 23 major arrangements from May 5-7. Admission was free.

Church members, led by the minister, Rev Ceri Lewis, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land last year. Pictures brought back were used effectively in the arrangements.

Inspiration at first hand gave depth of meaning to the flowers. The Via Dolorosa was formed by wreaths down the church centre pointing to the Crucifixion scene high in the gallery.

The tragic holocaust scene, "Father Forgive Them," and the "River Jordan" painting by the same artist achieved great depth of feeling. So did the figure of Mary in white starched cotton robes in the Sunday school's garden at Jesus' tomb. No one who saw the floral arrangements could remain unmoved. A market scene full of Jerusalem bazaar treasures, surmounted by the Star of David, was in the church entrance.

An exhibition of the 100 years history of the church, now being celebrated, was on view with pictures of Wimbledon's early days.

CATHERINE Young, Gayles Derrick and Gladys Whigham, three of the festival organisers.

A black and white photograph showing three women from the chest up. They are smiling and holding a large, dense arrangement of flowers. The woman on the left is wearing a dark vest over a light-colored top. The woman in the middle is wearing a light-colored blouse. The woman on the right is wearing a patterned vest over a light-colored top. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting.



# FAITH IN ACTION

helping with homelessness

Sadly, the Faith in Action Homeless Drop-in is still not able to provide our normal level of service for homeless and vulnerably-housed people, due to government restrictions. However, we are providing a tailored, appointment-only service on Wednesdays and Fridays, between 11am and 2pm, for those service users who we are not able to assist over the phone, as well as supporting people who are still rough sleeping. Issues we help with include job searches and training support, accommodation advice and referral, and for EU citizens support with their applications for Settled Status.

We give service users who attend appointments a lunchbox to take away with sandwiches, fruit, water, biscuits etc., and some who are still rough sleeping have been using the showers.

We have seen a rise in the number of service users coming in early September jumping from an average of twelve per session to around twenty.

If you would like to contribute something to the lunches, all donations would be very welcome. Suggested items are cereal bars, individually wrapped biscuits, drinks, crisps or chocolate. Cathy Dundee would be happy to collect any donations and can be contacted on 07710 096866, (020) 8946 7044 or email [here](#).

Financial donations are also always welcome and can be made via the website at <http://www.mertonfaithinaction.org/donate/>



## Just as I am.....

The hymn 'Just As I Am' has been sung by tens of millions of Christians at Billy Graham Crusades the world over. Yet it was not written by a professional who was 'aiming' at a specific market, as many songs seem to be written today. It was written by an artist in Victorian times.

Her name was Charlotte Elliott, and she was born in Clapham in 1789. She grew up in a well to do home, and became a portrait artist and also a writer of humorous verse. All was well until Charlotte fell ill in her early 30s, and slid into a black depression. A minister, Dr Caesar Malan of Switzerland, came to visit her. Instead of sympathising, he asked her an unexpected question: "Did she have peace with God?" Charlotte deeply resented the question and told him to mind his own business!



But after he left, his question haunted her. *Did* she have peace with God? She knew that she did not, that she had done some very wrong things. So, she invited Dr Malan to return. She told him that she would like to become a Christian, but would have to sort out her life first.

Dr Malan again said the unexpected: "Come just as you are." The words were a revelation to Charlotte. She had assumed that she would have to put her life in order before she could hope to be accepted by God. Instead, she realised that Jesus wanted her just as she was - and He would take care of the sin. Charlotte became a Christian that day.

Fourteen years later, in 1836, Charlotte wrote some verses that summed up how it had been between her and Jesus that day. They ran:

*Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that thy blood was shed for me,  
And that thou bids't me come to Thee  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

*Just as I am, tho tossed about  
With many a conflict, many a doubt  
Fightings within, and fears without,  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

Charlotte could not have dreamed that 150 years into the future, her verses would be sung by millions of people all over the world, as they responded to the Gospel presented at many great Billy Graham crusades, and made their way forward to do just as the hymn describes - to come to Jesus Christ, despite sin and fear and doubts, to come 'just as I am.'



Christian CARE is offering an exciting and rewarding volunteering opportunity, where you can be at the forefront of the charity's continuing response to Covid-19.

## **FAMILY SUPPORT COORDINATOR**

**Family Support** - the provision of food and other household essentials - is about giving families who are really struggling to provide for their children a measure of food security, as well as making an emergency response to others in crisis. The current Coordinator has been in the role for 5 years and has set up a superb system of organisation for the scheme.

To find out more

visit us online at <https://christiancaremerton.org.uk>  
or contact the CARE Coordinator by email or phone

[gillian.thick@christiancaremerton.org.uk](mailto:gillian.thick@christiancaremerton.org.uk) / 07932 628840

Registered Charity: 1044099