

Trinity News

April 2021

No.507



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

Interim Moderator's Easter Message

We have been journeying through Lent, then Holy Week, towards Easter.

Lent – the name of the season comes from the old English word for 'lengthen', as this is the time of year in our part of the Earth, when daylight grows longer and the spring brings signs of hope, colour and life. Lent is really a time of hope, after the long gloom of winter. For us in 2021, as the United Kingdom slowly emerges from the long confinement of Covid, we are starting to feel there is a new beginning.

As Christians, we look forward to the new life of Easter Day. Still, it is a thoughtful time, to consider how we live the faith. At first, the disciples were afraid, dejected, confused, doubtful, all natural emotions, which swirled side by side with wonder, that the man in whom they had met God, came to them again. As a child did you ever have to sing a chorus which ended 'and now I am happy all the day'? Even as a child, I don't think I believed it. Arguments, tears, loneliness, jealousy, all these were still very much part of everyday life.

In Lent and Holy Week and Easter, we see that God is with us, through the wearisome and worrying times, in defeat and death. But we are not left in despair. Easter is mysterious, and we cannot explain how these things happened, but the disciples met their Lord, their friend, and knew he was alive again. Resurrection affirms the wonder of the human spirit that can believe, and hope, and love, even when our lives are broken. Resurrection affirms the love of God which made us in the image of God, and which embraces the whole creation. At the same time, amidst a pandemic which is still stifling our societies, in a world of wars, where easy answers and conspiracy points blame at others, we must acknowledge that there are people whose experiences are so horrific they cannot see hope in this life, but we trust and pray that in God's presence, they too will find healing and new life.

How are we doing? As we reflect on the way of Jesus, we may find it uncomfortable to face how we actually do think, feel, act,

and relate to others. The gospel is not about making us feel guilty, but about widening our small and sometimes self-focused horizons and setting us free. God calls us to go beyond our safe boundaries of family, church, culture, nation. Springtime can feel like being set free. That is what God does for us!

So at this time of year, we live through the heart of the Christian Gospel, and remember that God is with us, in the good times and the bad, and that love is stronger than all the pain and hurt and cruelty and even death. And we look forward and echo the acclamation of Easter morning:

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Revd SPI Lewis
(Interim Moderator)





April online worship

Thursday 1 April at 19:30 – Maundy Thursday

A service of reflection for Maundy Thursday, including Holy Communion

led by Mr Mark Dennis (Trinity elder & Assembly Accredited lay preacher)

Friday 2 April at 10:30 – Good Friday

A Good Friday reflection - "The Nail"

Sunday 4 April at 11:00 – Easter Celebration

Easter Sunday Service with Holy Communion led by Revd David Marshall-Jones (retired URC minister)

Sunday 11 April at 11:00 – Low Sunday

Service led by Revd Roger Jones, minister of Tolworth, Ewell & Epsom URCs

Sunday 18 April at 11:00

Service led by Revd Clare Downing, URC General Assembly Moderator

Sunday 25 April at 11:00

Morning worship led by Trinity Elders

Our service on Sunday 18 April will be led by Revd Clare Downing, URC General Assembly Moderator

We are grateful to all those who will be leading our worship this month, and especially to the **Revd Clare Downing** who is serving the United Reformed Church as Moderator of the General Assembly from 2020 to 2022.



After studying psychology at the University of Durham, Social Work at Liverpool Polytechnic, and Christian Theology & Ministry and ordination training at Westminster College, Cambridge, Clare's first calling was as minister to Braunstone and Evington Road, Leicester from 1998 to 2007.

In 2007 she moved into a Special Category Ministry (SCM) at the St Philip's Centre in Leicester for the study and engagement in a multifaith society. At the same time, Clare also gained an MA in Interreligious Relations at Birmingham University. In 2011 she was appointed as Moderator of the Wessex Synod.

"I'm a bit of a 'jack of all trades' in terms of ministry, but I love leading worship and getting people to think creatively about mission. Encouraging inter-generational work – making church accessible to people of different ages and learning styles – is another passion.

"I've been involved in delivering lots of training, especially around conflict resolution and leadership. My interest in interfaith issues developed through working in a very multifaith and multicultural area.

"I enjoy music, both listening and singing, and playing various instruments, mostly guitar and flute (but not at the same time!). Time off is often spent walking and birdwatching. The family has a sailing boat and we have taken it as far as South Devon and East Sussex. I support Liverpool Football Club – but am always happy to see Leicester City doing well too."

Clare and John, who is also a URC minister, currently serving with the Reading group, were married in 1980. They have two sons in their early 30s, and four grandchildren.

Church Family News

Births



During the time we've all been in lockdown we have been unable to welcome two babies who have been born to Trinity members. We look forward to meeting them both soon. Our congratulations to their parents.

Liam Matika, born on 8 July 2020 to Janet and Tony, and

Hugo Wentzel Malherbe born on 8 February 2021 to Albe and Mari-Lizette.

Birthdays in April

Many happy returns to those celebrating birthdays this month including Anne Broadbridge, Gemma Canham, Eric Chau, Jane Fairbrother, Oliver Khurshid, Ian McGilchrist, Ella Mansfield, Daniel Probert, Lauren Probert, Kwame Sarpong, Gill Swain and Alison Trehearn.

'New Life' Messy Church



Our 'New Life' Messy Church went live on the church website (www.trinitywimbledon.org) on 18 March. If you've not already seen it, do view it at a time that suits. It is an Easter celebration of crafts, music, story, a quiz and prayer.





Housegroup resumes

After a year without meeting, the Queens Road Housegroup has resumed and has been meeting weekly during Lent.

We could not, of course, meet at our 'home' but have been using the 'Jitsi' system which is similar to Zoom and preferred by some. We wondered whether a discussion group would be possible under these circumstances, but it has gone surprisingly well and it has been good to meet together, albeit remotely.

Before the pandemic arrived, we had been studying the Gospel of Mark. Taking up from the point we had reached has led us into the 'road to Jerusalem' and the lead up to Easter so our meetings have become a form of Lent course.

If you would like to join us or to know more about the Group please speak to Andrew Sutton on (020) 8542 8914 or email noo217@yahoo.co.uk.

Merton Winter Night Shelter 2020/21

Trinity has been actively supporting this winter's Night Shelter again but in a very different way than in the past. The Covid pandemic has prevented our homeless guests being accommodated overnight on our premises; instead five people have been accommodated in a large flat provided by the Lantern Methodist Church in Griffiths Road since December. In March more accommodation has been secured at the Premier Inn in The Broadway.

Two volunteers are on site in Griffiths Road at all times in three shifts. Trinity has been providing the evening meal on a Sunday evening during February and March as one of over twenty faith organisations supporting the project. It is hoped to provide the accommodation into May so our involvement may continue.

Do contact us if you would like to be involved or know more about what is happening.

Ralph Goodchild (07515-783393 or ralph.goodchild@gmail.com) & Robin Goodchild (0771-4095007 or robin.goodchild@sky.com)

The ministerial vacancy

The Vacancy Team met again this week via Zoom, and has made more and good progress in drafting a new Pastorate Profile for Trinity. We have been joined during all of our recent meetings by Revd Stephen Lewis, our Synod-appointed Interim Moderator, to whom we continue to be grateful for both support and wise counsel.

We have been encouraged in the drafting the Profile to review “with fresh eyes” the life and work of Trinity over the recent past and currently, and to look also at its potential future purpose and priorities. That reviewing process involves much more than just a quick, tidying-up of the Pastorate Profile produced in 2010. Over the succeeding eleven years, Trinity and its congregation, the community in which we are set, and society generally have changed a good deal. Undoubtedly, the 2020s will (and should) bring further change, and the Team intends to describe, honestly and clearly, the sort of church that Trinity is and aspires to be over the coming years. The new Pastorate Profile will be realistic about our congregation, reflecting not only our many strengths but also our numerous challenges, as well as describing future opportunities. When brought together, all of the elements of the Profile will influence our descriptions of the intended role of our next minister and of the type of person we would like to lead and guide us during the next stage of our congregational journey. We are focused on ‘getting it right’ rather than just completing the task very quickly, and already we have made substantial strides.

As soon as possible, the Team will finalise suitable means of consulting the congregation about the draft Pastorate Profile. Until then, your continued prayers for the work of the Team would be much valued. I do hope that you will call or email me if you have any questions at this stage.

Sandy McLeish, Vacancy Team Leader

17 March 2021

Sermon preached by Revd Alistair Cumming for Mothering Sunday, 14 March

Today I would like to focus on a small, two-lettered word. It is a word that is used so often. It is a word that we often use to express intensity of feeling. It is the word "so" spelled S.O. It is not "sew" spelled S.E.W. like sewing a button on a shirt. The word we are thinking about today is spelled S.O.

I have been thinking about the word "so" this past week, and I began to realize that the word "so" can be used in so many different ways. I need to clarify the way in which I am going to use the word "so" today.

So, for those of you who have been home schooling over the past few weeks, you will be used to this. So here is a warning, English Grammar lesson coming up. If there are any English teachers watching today, you might need to have the red pen at the ready.

You can use the word in a sentence, saying, "Are you going to Church? SO am I." And then the word is used as a conjunction in that sentence. Or you can say, "SO, it is you!" or "SO what!" And then it is used as an exclamation. Or you can use the word SO in another way such as, "I read a page or SO in a book." There the word was used as a pronoun. So, you can use the word SO in at least three different ways.

But today, I am not going to use the word SO in those ways. Not as a conjunction. Not as an exclamation. Not as a pronoun. Rather, today I am going to use the word SO as an adverb, as an intensifier, such as "The cake was SO good". Or, "she was SO good looking". Or, "I am SO mad". You can use the word SO in that way and SO then expresses intensity of feeling. It expresses intense, inner emotion. "I feel SO happy today."

For example, one night after dinner I experimented with some baking. I made banana loaf. Can you believe? Banana loaf. I asked the family how they enjoyed it. "Well, it wasn't so good", they said, "So-so." But I also made pancakes, dripping with sugar and butter. I asked, "Well, how did you like the pancakes?" They said, "They were

SO good, SO yummy, SO delicious". The little word SO revealed their inner feelings and delight.

The word SO is a stronger word than the word, "very". If they had said, "The pancakes were very good", that would have been complimentary. But when they say to me, "They were SO good; they were SO delicious", I know that they REALLY like them.

The little word SO can be used positively to express love or negatively to express anger, for example, "We were SO much in love".

But the word SO can also be used to express the opposite of love; that is, to express intense feelings of anger. "I was SO mad."

And so the word SO can be used to express intensity of feeling either positively or negatively.

It is with this mood that we approach the gospel lesson for today, John 3:16. John 3:16 is arguably the most important verse in the Bible. John 3:16 begins, "For God SO loved the world". It is indeed one of the most beautiful lines in the Bible. "God SO loved the world." Many people say that John 3:16 is the gospel in a nutshell. John 3:16 is the one Bible verse that you see on car stickers, sportsmen and women often write it on their arms. You see it held up on posters or on the side of buses and so on.

"God SO loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life." God SO loved the world, and the word SO expresses the intensity, the dramatic intensity of God's feelings for the world.

John expresses deep and intense emotion. Both in the gospel and also in John's Letter.

In both Bible verses, it is the same: John 3:16 says that "God SO loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him will not die but have everlasting life." The second is found in I John 4:11, "God sent his son to die on the cross for us. My friends, if God loved us SO much, should we not love one another?"

The same thoughtful intensity is expressed in the book of Ephesians where the Apostle Paul says, "God's love for us is SO abundant and God's care for us is SO great."

Now, what if I say to you, "I love my wife SO much. I love my children SO much. I love my grandchildren SO much." Would not that reveal the inner intensity of feeling that I have for them? You just don't say those words to anybody. You don't say, "I love you SO MUCH to just anyone. You reserve that phrase for very special people.

Similarly, in the Bible, when God says, "I love you SO much", those words are reserved for very special and sacred relationships.

God SO LOVED the WORLD. Not just the church. Not just Christians. Not just good people who stay out of trouble. Not just you and me. God SO LOVED THE WORLD. Everyone in the world regardless.

"For God SO LOVED the world. The world. People who don't love God. People who could not care less about God. People who reject God. People who snub God. People who say, "I don't need God".

The Bible teaches that God SO loved the world, and the world doesn't love God in return.

That is what is truly amazing, that the intensity of God's emotion is not just directed towards Christians. That the intensity of God's love is not just directed towards church people. That the intensity of God's love is not just directed to your little life or my little life. The intensity of God's emotion is for the world.

To be honest, I don't get it. I don't comprehend or understand grace, that God so loves people who do not love him. I don't get grace, that God can love people who so deeply reject him.

Now, this is very hard for us to understand why God would give his only Son to die for us on the cross to atone for our sins. This is very hard for us to understand. We don't understand the Jewish sacrificial system. We don't understand the Old Testament logic of sacrifices of animals in order to atone for our sins. We don't understand it.

Even so, I would like to tell you a story, an extended analogy that has many loopholes. This extended analogy will give us a feeling for what it means that God sacrificed his Son in order that the world might be saved. I would like to tell you a story.

Imagine that you are on a train. Do you have yourself on a train and going on a train ride, south from Glasgow going to London? You need

to create the geographic setting in your mind. On that train, you are traveling south and have crossed the high hills approaching the borders at Beattock Summit and onward into the Lake District at Shap summit. The track then drops quickly into Lancaster and Preston you can see Morcambe Bay outside the scenery is wonderful.

You have the setting in mind.

Now let's put people on that train. Let's say that this train is filled with one hundred people. Good people and bad. Rich and poor. Cops and robbers. Sixty of them are Asian or Middle Eastern. Ten are from Africa. Nine are from North America. Five are from Scotland. Sixteen of them are from England. That makes a hundred people on board. Ninety-four of them are poor. Fifty of them are hungry. Twenty-five of them are starving. Six of them are eating sumptuously from the buffet, enjoying an exquisite meal.

Now, comes the dilemma as the train hurtles south, a boy is standing on the tracks, the signalman sees it, he recognises that it is his son. He can switch the train onto another track and save his son but potentially cause a catastrophic train crash with multiple fatalities or he can leave the train on its current pathway where his son is standing.

Thankfully completely hypothetical and a decision we would never hopefully need to make. But God did.

For God SO loved the world, that he gave his only Son to die on the cross that the world might be saved.

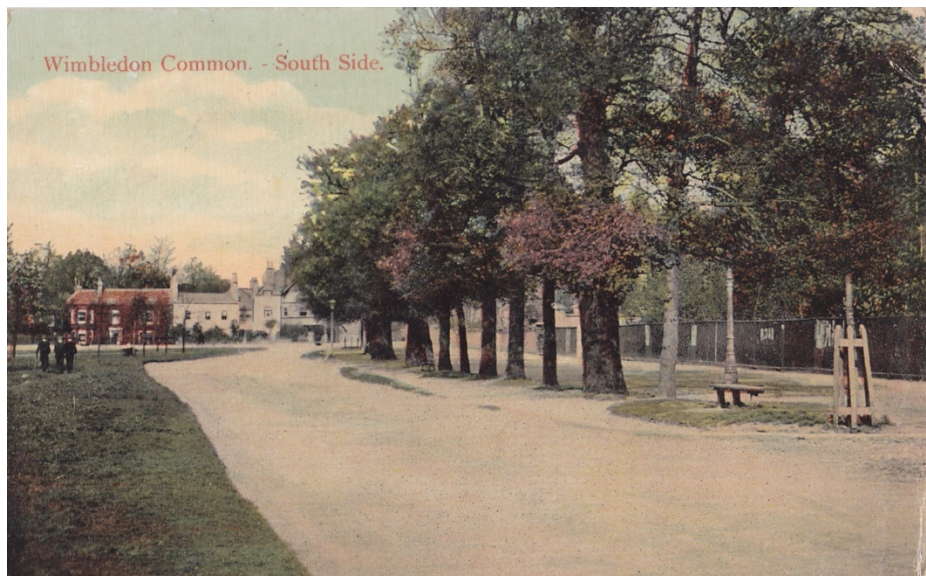
It is all so incomprehensible, that God loved the world SO much that he gave his only Son to die that the world might be saved. He gave his Son for us. What a sacrifice. What a debt we owe. To love one another. We owe SO much.

The little word, SO. It is SO small. It is SO short. SO seemingly insignificant. There is SO much locked up in that little word. It expresses such great intensity. The word, SO, is an intensifier. "Those pancakes were SO good. We are SO much in love. I was SO mad at a group of boys." The word SO is such a good word.

For God SO LOVED the world that he gave his only Son to die on the cross.

From the archives

'Upstairs downstairs' - a look at Trinity's very first members



Southside at the turn of the century

This month we take a closer look at some more of our 'founding members' from 1884 - some of them from the moneyed classes and some of them 'below stairs' but all residents at a large house called "Oakholm" which stood on the corner of Southside and Clifton Road.

Susan Darroch was the daughter of Charles Stewart Parker, a Virginia and West India merchant. In 1829 she married Major Duncan Darroch of Gourock House, Inverkip, Renfrewshire whose family were Barons of Gourock having, like the Parkers, amassed wealth in the West Indies (Jamaica).

Susan and Duncan had eight children. Duncan died at Gourock House in 1864 and Susan appears to have moved south to Oakholm, Wimbledon soon after. Two of their sons were called to the Bar, one of them, Charles, later entering the Anglican ministry and serving for

three years as Curate of Wimbledon. By 1884 Susan was living at Oakholm with her unmarried daughter Elizabeth Cotter Darroch.

When Trinity was founded in January 1884, Susan and Elizabeth, being Scots, became founding members. Susan died, after a spell of failing health, in August 1889 aged 83 and was buried in the family mausoleum at Gourock House.

John Lawrie was born at Carluke, Lanark in 1816. He was Mrs Darroch's coachman and had held that position for at least twenty years, originally at Gourock House, and must have come south with her when she moved to Wimbledon. He, his wife Margaret, son George and daughter, also called Margaret, lived in the coach house. Back in the main house, among several domestic servants, were the Misses Kilgower and Grace Welsh. All five joined Trinity in January 1884 - indeed Mrs and Miss Lawrie are the very first names in our first membership Roll book. Sadly, though, not John Lawrie as he died on 24th February, before the Roll book was written up.

In due course, after her mother's death, Elizabeth Darroch moved back to Scotland. Mrs and Miss Lawrie moved to Denmark Road, and probably also returned to Scotland soon after. Miss Kilgower and Miss Welsh moved to other domestic positions in the area. Oakholm itself was passed to the Burrell family, who also had Trinity connections, but that's another story! The house suffered serious damage in World War Two, when a bomb fell outside, and was later demolished, flats now occupying the site.



Trinity's first Baptism



Following the article in the last month's *Trinity News* about our first baptism in 1884, we've now heard from a descendant of the Moores (a grand-daughter of the babe in arms in the photo) who has given us more information about the family. Sadly she knows very little about Frederick William (standing right) except that he joined the Navy aged 15.