

Trinity News

October 2022

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Trinity United Reformed Church

Mansel Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 4AA

www.trinitywimbledon.org



Queen Elizabeth II

1926-2022

Following the death of her father King George, Her Majesty succeeded the throne on 6 February 1952, but was officially crowned in 1953. Queen Elizabeth was the world's longest-reigning living monarch and was a much-loved and popular royal figure.

The Revd Dr John Bradbury, URC General Secretary, said: "Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II lived the most remarkable life of dedicated Christian service.

"As a devout Anglican and Presbyterian her faith shone from her words and deeds. Her contribution to the life of our nations, the commonwealth, and beyond will be remembered with gratitude for generations to come. She inspired respect from across the political spectrum and from monarchists and republicans alike.

"The United Reformed Church has always been aware that as each General Assembly presents a loyal address to the throne, we have been addressing a fellow baptised sister in Christ. We give thanks for her life and uphold in prayer all who mourn for her. May she rest in peace and rise in glory."

Fifty years on!

How Trinity came to join the United Reformed Church



The United Reformed Church came into being on Thursday 5 October 1972. On that day the Assemblies of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches met in Central Hall, Westminster and voted to create the new denomination. That afternoon there was a great service of thanksgiving in Westminster Abbey which was broadcast live on BBC2.



The Uniting Assembly and first General Assembly held at Methodist Central Hall Westminster on 5 October 1972

How had the churches reached that stage?

It had been a long road. Talks had taken place as far back as 1932. A Joint Conference was held in 1945 and a 'scheme for union' was drawn up in 1947, following which it was decided to engage in 'cooperation rather than unity'. During the 1950s the Presbyterian Church of

England had discussions about unity with the Church of Scotland which came to nothing.

In 1964 the British Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission called for all English denominations to unite by 1980. That, of course, did not happen but discussions between the Congregational and Presbyterian churches continued, and by 1971 the time was considered right to ascertain whether the two denominations were ready to unite. A 'Scheme of Union' was distributed to all churches for discussion.



The Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey

How was the decision reached nationally?

Every Congregational church voted in Church Meeting to say whether it was prepared to join a united church. A 75% majority was required. In fact, a quarter of the churches - 465 of them - voted to remain 'Congregational'.

The Presbyterian churches had to say if they were unwilling to join the new denomination. Only two - Guernsey and Jersey, both of which joined the Church of Scotland - voted to remain Presbyterian.

How was the decision to unite reached in Wimbledon?

In Trinity the decision to join the United Reformed Church was taken by the Elders in Session meetings. In the Presbyterian church decisions were taken by Session, there being no formal Church Meeting. The Scheme of Union was discussed fully by the Elders on a number of occasions and a letter was sent to all members explaining the proposals and asking for any questions by 10 September 1971.

In a meeting on 14 September, Session voted *nem con* to agree to the proposals, just two Elders abstaining. The Session Clerk was instructed to write to the General Secretary to say that Trinity was in favour of the Scheme of Union.

Of the two local Congregational churches, St Mark's voted to join the new Church whilst Dundonald Church voted to remain Congregational.

The 'legal union'

The 'United Reformed Church Bill' came before both Houses of Parliament in June 1972 and duly received Royal Assent.

How we celebrated at Trinity

On Sunday 8 October 1972, the first Sunday after the Westminster uniting Assembly, Trinity gathered for the first time as a United Reformed Church.

We were joined by members of the nearby former Congregational Church, formerly in Alwyne Road but now meeting at St Mark's (now as St Mark's URC) with their minister Revd Peter Jenkins.

**Revd H Burns Jamieson
on the front steps of
Trinity after the service.
In the foreground is
Revd Peter Jenkins of
St Mark's URC**



The service was conducted by Trinity's minister, Revd H Burns Jamieson, and Revd Arthur L Macarthur, General Secretary of the new Church, preached the sermon. The Trinity magazine said that 'there was a very full church, probably as full as any of us have ever seen it.'



**Revd Arthur Macarthur (centre) and the congregation
outside Trinity on Sunday 8 October 1972**

Our first Church Meeting

In the new Church all 'courts, committees and appointments' were dissolved. Trinity had to find a place for the 'Church Meeting', one of the fundamental features of the Congregational Church, carried forward into the new denomination, and the first one in Trinity took place on 11 October 1972.

At that meeting it was agreed that the Session would become the 'Elders Meeting' and Mr Jimmy Grimstone was elected as our first Church Secretary (formerly 'Session Clerk'). The Deacons' Court became the 'Committee of Management'.

Church Family News

Jubilee congratulations!

Congratulations to Janet Young who, this month, completes 50 years as a member of Trinity. In fact, Janet had the, perhaps unique, experience of belonging to three denominations in a week. Janet began 1 October 1972 still a Methodist. That Sunday she became a Presbyterian. A week later she became a member of the United Reformed Church!

Thirteen current members of Trinity joined the Church before we became 'United Reformed'. They are:

Ian McGilchrist (1957)
Norman and Isobel Angus (1961)
Ann Bremner (1961)
Elizabeth McLeish (1963)
Hilary Harland (1964)
Alan Young (1964)
Catherine Paul (1968)
Richard and Edelweiss Dunfield-Prayero (1969)
Andrew Sutton (1969)
Sandy McLeish (1970)
Janet Young (1972)

Norman Angus (our Senior Elder) and Andrew Sutton are the only current Elders who were in office at the time of union.



Birthdays in October

A very happy birthday to those celebrating this month, including Vera Broadbridge, Matilda Henning, Charlene Kwok, Su Lambert, Kate Mansfield, Catherine Paul, Guy Rostron, Pam Rostron and Elijah Siphika.

If your birthday has been omitted it's because we don't know when it is! Please let us know the date.

October worship



Faith – Hope – Love – Since 1972



- | | | |
|-----------|--------------|--|
| 2 | 11:00 | Rededication Sunday & Celebration of the URC's 50th anniversary
Worship with Holy Communion
led by Mr John Ellis (Past Moderator of URC General Assembly) |
| 9 | 11:00 | Morning worship led by Katrina Clifford
(Synod Lay preacher & Trinity Elder) |
| 16 | 11:00 | Morning worship led by Gillian Thick of
Christian Care |
| 23 | 11:00 | Morning worship led by Revd Jenny Mills
(URC Secretary for Education & Learning) |
| 30 | 11:00 | Reformation Sunday
Morning worship led by Revd Alistair
Cumming (Minister of the Church of Scotland) |

Our thanks especially go to those of Trinity's Elders who led our worship during the Summer months and who maintained our high level of worship Sunday by Sunday. Their preparation and fresh insights were much appreciated by the congregation on five Sundays.





Rededication Sunday

The service at Trinity on **Sunday 2 October at 11:00** will be especially important this year and we hope you will make every effort to attend.

Firstly, it is our annual **Service of Rededication**. In becoming members at Trinity, we have individually promised to share in the life of this church, and to be faithful in our commitment. **Rededication Sunday**, annually on the first Sunday of October, is an opportunity for each of us to celebrate and renew that commitment, so that by strengthening our church life together we might equip and encourage one another to be disciples of Jesus Christ in our everyday lives.

Secondly, this year, Rededication Sunday falls on the same weekend as the national celebrations marking the **50th Anniversary** of the union of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches to form the United Reformed Church. We are delighted that our worship with Holy Communion will be led by Mr John Ellis, a past Moderator of URC General Assembly. The service will be followed by coffee and cake to mark this special occasion.

We look forward to seeing you on Sunday 2 October.

Joint Church Secretaries



Photos on pages 9 & 12 by David Li

October calendar

1	Sat		Service of Thanksgiving & Celebration of the United Reformed Church's 50 th Anniversary (<i>POSTPONED BECAUSE OF RAIL STRIKE</i>)
5	Wed	19:00	Online service at Trinity for the 50 th Anniversary of the URC
8	Sat	10:00	Synod Together
12	Wed	20:00	Elders' Council
18	Tue	20:00	Worship & Faith Development Team
20	Thu	20:00	Outreach & Witness Team
22	Sat	10:30	LICC Learning Hub



Gift Day 'For Others' ballot

Each year we conduct a ballot for Gift Day nominations and we now need to decide which charities will benefit in 2022.

The ten charities selected will comprise four local, three national and three international organisations. There is further information at the bottom of the [voting form](#).

Completed forms should be returned to robin.h.ingram@gmail.com, or posted in the ballot box in the vestibule at Trinity on Sundays, or sent to Robin Ingram at the Trinity office by 9 October. Do contact either Robin Ingram or Robin Goodchild for any further information.

When the Gift Day appeal is launched later in October the charities receiving most support in the ballot will be highlighted. Please take the time to vote in this important fundraising event in the Trinity calendar.

Robin Ingram, 'For Others' Secretary

STOP PRESS

October 1 - Jubilee events postponed



Last week, the URC heard about the revised dates for the national rail strikes on October 1 and 5, news that was confirmed yesterday. Many meetings and conversations have taken place, and we've decided, with the heaviest of hearts, that the best option is to postpone our jubilee events.

After close to three years of planning, this postponement is deeply disappointing, but we want the URC to celebrate its jubilee properly, with all who want to take part.

We let you know about the new date as soon as possible, and please keep all who are affected by this news in your thoughts and prayers.

With warmest wishes and thanks,

Andy Jackson and Sam Richards
Convenors, 50th Anniversary Planning Group
21 September 2022

On Wednesday 5 October, the anniversary of the actual date of the formation of the URC, the URC's South London Synod Area is holding an online service starting at 7pm.

The Revd Dr David Pickering (formerly Moderator of the Synod of Scotland and now minister of Emmanuel, West Wickham & Elmers End Free Church) will lead the service with colleagues from the area and beyond.

The Service will celebrate some of the URC's story over the last 50 years and some distinctive features of our Church today, including our hymnwriters with all the hymns to be sung from the heart and pen of those who belong to the URC.

We will be showing the online service in the Mansel Road Centre. Please join us in celebration at 7pm. (NOTE: Any change to this arrangement will be posted on the church website.)

The Offertory

You will have noticed that we have begun to take up an Offertory during Services once again.



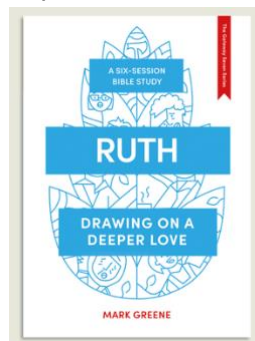
Thank you to all those who make regular donations this way, or by bank standing orders, retiring collection or contactless donation device. This latter is simple to use with either a debit or credit card, or mobile phone. Do try it!

Queens Road housegroup



On **Thursday 29 September** at 8pm we will meet at 217 Queens Road to begin our study of the Book of Ruth. We would be very pleased to welcome you to join us - if you are interested do come along that evening or speak to Alan Young or Andrew Sutton.

We will be using the LICC study course. A copy can be provided for anybody interested in joining us.



Eco Fair

On **Saturday 10 December**, we will be holding our first Eco Fair here in the Mansel Road Centre.



The day will consist of a variety of events. Firstly, there will be a **Craft & Gift Fair** with stall holders selling a range of environmentally friendly, hand crafted, sustainable gifts. We already have about twelve stall holders but if anyone would like to run one, or knows of anyone who might be interested, please let [Elizabeth Scharinger](#) in the Church Office know.

Secondly, we hope to hold a **Clothing Exchange** where guests can bring items of clothing that they no longer wear and exchange them for other items. Clothing exchanges are becoming an increasingly popular way to beat the fast fashion problem, and we hope that our first one will be well supported.



Thirdly, we have Kate Ray from Guided Wellbeing running two **wreath making workshops** throughout the day. Kate collects all the foliage for her wreaths from Molesey Heath and surrounding areas and makes the wreath from willow branches, so they are completely recyclable.

Refreshments and light lunches will be available, and all profits from the event will be donated to Sustainable Merton – a local charity that works to raise awareness of environmental issues in the community and works to support companies and individuals as they make changes to reduce the effects of climate change.

So, save the date, **Saturday 10 December**, save your unwanted clothes and watch this space for more information.

URC Golden Jubilee

Sermon preached by the Revd Adrian Bulley, URC General Secretary (Discipleship) on Sunday 4 September 2022

(Exodus 17:1-7; John 7:37-39; Revelation 22:1-5)



Twenty-five or so years ago I helped lead a weekend for young people who were connected with the Buckinghamshire church in which I was serving at the time. We stayed at a Youth Hostel in Bath and had a great time. Travelling home on the Sunday we decided to journey via the Cotswolds and Oxford, rather than the quicker route along the M4. We made a stop beside the A433 (the Roman Fosse Way) near Kemble in Gloucestershire to walk the mile or so to the place that's marked on Ordnance Survey maps as being the 'Source of the River Thames'. There in a rather pleasant meadow on a gentle hillside, and beneath an elderly ash tree, is a stone placed by the Thames Conservators confirming that this point is truly the source of the great River Thames.

But not a drop of water could we see on that hot and sunny July afternoon. We could trace a sort of depression going across the meadow that would presumably carry water in wet weather, but there was no water there for us to see! It was something of an anti-climax, yet we knew (because we trusted the Ordnance Survey and the Thames Conservators) that beneath our feet lay the true source of the Thames. We couldn't see it, but we knew it to be there.

The thing is, I was confusing source and wellspring. Every river has a **source**; it also has a **wellspring** – a place where the water issues forth from the ground to form the first trickle, which will in turn be joined by other trickles to form a brook... and by other brooks to form a stream... and by other streams to form a river... and (perhaps) by other rivers to form a great waterway wending its way towards the sea.

The wellspring may be at the same spot as the source (as I had confidently expected it would) but, in all but the wettest weather conditions and so in the majority of cases, the wellspring is actually quite distant from the source. Yet, somewhere, the source waters will burst to the surface.

On the summer afternoon we visited the source of the Thames, the first spring was more than a mile distant, south of the Fosse Way, just outside the village of Kemble. But there we found the first seepage of the water that would become the mighty River Thames. Finally, we could see and hear and touch the water... and (if it hadn't been for the cows nearby) we could have tasted it too.

As the river emerges and swells, so it can become **living water**. The waters of a river sustain life in a variety of ways:

- Within the waters themselves fish and insects may live, relying on the water for their life
- On the banks of the river plant life will be enabled to grow because roots can draw up the river's waters
- A whole variety of animals and birds will look to the river to provide them with the water that is so essential for their lives, and maybe also for food from those fish and insects and plants that call it home
- Humans will probably draw off water to fulfil their own needs (for drinking, washing, flushing toilets, watering crops and gardens)
- Humans may also want to make use of the water to generate power (water wheels, turbines) or for industrial needs (cooling equipment and machinery)

In a whole variety of ways, the waters of a river are living waters because they give and sustain life.

Living waters are, of course, the theme which links our three Bible readings.

In **Exodus** we meet the wandering people of God – perhaps we should call them the quarrelling people of God as, it seems, every time they took a few steps forward they were consumed with the need to complain. They willingly followed Moses dry-shod through the sea but no sooner had the Egyptian army been routed they were complaining they were hungry. And God responded by providing manna and quails to satisfy their hunger. Then they whinged that they were thirsty. Of course, the people of Israel were worried – they had wandered into a desert which are places seemingly devoid of water. How would they live without the ability to drink, to cook, to give sustenance to their animals, to wash? And, once again, God responded to their need by causing fresh, life giving and life sustaining water to flow out of solid rock.



In **John's Gospel**, John likens the Spirit (which was yet to come, of course) to living water: *"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. (because) As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"* (37-38). The Holy Spirit is the Living Water. Living water which emerges from the Creator (the source of all life... eternally present, always there... but for much of human history invisible, mysterious). Living water which emerges from the Son (the wellspring, where God bursts into human life – visible, audible, tangible – able to be experienced and known). Living water which gives life, sustains life, transforms life.

And then, in **Revelation of John**, we find a vision of a river... picking up on a theme from Ezekiel... the river of the water of life... bringing life and wellbeing and fruitfulness to all who encounter it. The river of Revelation acts as both our source of sustenance and the path we must follow... a path to new life, everlasting life, in harmony with God.

Life-giving water... life-sustaining water... living water... are important and powerful biblical images which flow through the Bible, from the earliest prophets in the Old Testament to the Revelation of John at the very end of the New Testament.

But what has that image to say to us as we mark the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the United Reformed Church?

The image of a river with streams, brooks, creeks and rivulets joining together as branches and tributaries, is a helpful one when we consider the story of the URC. Congregationalists and English Presbyterians had their own histories, separate histories, of comings together and partings, just as a river does as it makes its way from source to mouth. On 5th October 1972 those two denominations joined to form something new – the United Reformed Church – which flowed onwards, but changed from what it had been. Further tributaries were to join – the Churches of Christ in 1981 and Congregationalists in Scotland in 2000, each affecting the flow of the river, changing its nature.

There are times in that fifty-year journey from source to this moment when the waters have truly been life-affirming and life-sustaining...

- The worship and witness and community outreach and service of churches across three nations.
- The place that women have occupied from the earliest moments: as elders, church secretaries, ministers, synod moderators, moderators of General Assembly.
- The sharing of resources, of money and people, not based upon ability to pay, but upon need.
- The ways in which young people and children have been at the heart of decision-making.
- The commitment to ecumenical co-operation and initiatives which has been part of the URC's DNA since its conception and also to inter-faith dialogue.
- The prophetic ways in which the URC has spoken truth to power (so often in unison with our ecumenical partners), and galvanised us on issues such as global debt, poverty at home and overseas, global justice, racial justice, legacies of slavery, climate justice, peace and conflict, asylum and migration issues, the economy, and so much more besides.
- The programmes that have brought new life into communities, not least the Church-Related Community Work focus which offers hope and love into communities that might otherwise feel hopeless and unloved.

And, of course, there have been times in that meandering history that are causes for concern...

- Such as the relentless decline in membership across those decades (a trend which we share with all the mainstream denominations in this country)
- Such as the increase in the age profile of so many of our churches
- Such as the effect of the pandemic in accelerating the decline of some congregations to the point where their closure has been brought forward by many years
- Such as the ways in which those principles of which we are justifiably proud – such as the sharing of money and people according to need – are now creaking as consumerist principles creep in and some people are looking for value for money

There is much to celebrate... and much that demands careful reflection and – yes – confession.

Yet this Golden Jubilee is not just an opportunity to look backwards, gazing at where we have come from, but to think about where the ever-flowing river of life will transport us in the future.

That must be true of all jubilees and anniversaries, surely? They are not just a chance to celebrate the past; they must combine reflecting upon the yesterdays that brought us here... with where we are today... and where we are going tomorrow.

The river of life does not stop flowing... will never stop flowing. So, where will this particular branch of the river of life take us next? Where will the river of life take you next in your discipleship adventures?

These are the questions we must face, no matter what our Christian affiliation, because treading water is not an option... our world, country, communities demand that we plunge in and strike out.

And may God bless us as we immerse ourselves in the living water, which is God around us, beneath us and above us, eternally... God who promised: *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you ..."* (Isaiah 43:2).

Amen



On Dying Well

Reflection by Paula Gooder

What makes for a good death? We don't often talk about what dying well might look like. Although our society has conquered many of its big taboos – particularly the taboo of discussing sex – death often remains undiscussed and unexplored. So the question of a good death is not something we talk about much.

This week, we have mourned the life of someone who most would agree died well. As far as we can tell from the outside, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, died as well as anyone might hope to die: at the end of a long life, well-lived, surrounded by those she loved.

So what does make for a good death? The writers of the Old Testament had a very clear idea of what made for good and bad deaths. Much of the view about a good death can be found in summary form in Genesis 15.15-16: 'As for yourself, you shall go to your ancestors in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation.' In other words, there are three things needed for a good death: to die peacefully in old age; to be buried with your ancestors and to leave behind descendants who can live into future generations.

Today we would have many different criteria for a good death, though the first - living to an old age and dying peacefully - would probably be shared across all generations and cultures.

Jesus' death, however, shared none of these characteristics. He died young. His death was the opposite of peaceful. He was buried not in an ancestral tomb but a new tomb bought by a stranger. He left behind him no biological descendants. So was his death a good one or not?

We could spend many hours discussing this (and indeed I have) but here I will say just this. John's Gospel adds a new element into the question of a good death: 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends' (John 15.13). Jesus' death was a good death because it was a death that began, continued and ended with love. One of the features that many people have noted about Queen Elizabeth is that the same is true of her. Her life of self-

sacrificial devotion is something that so many people remember of her as they mourn her death.

And that brings us to the crucial issue. What makes a good death? Life. A life well-lived in love and devotion leads to a good death. And because of Jesus' 'good death', it proceeds onwards into new life and resurrection. A good death is a death entwined with life.

May Her Majesty, the late Queen Elizabeth II rest now in peace, from her life well-lived, and rise in glory.

*Dr Paula Gooder is Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral
and a leading Biblical Scholar
16 September 2022*



**Final copy date for the November edition of
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catherine.f.paul@btinternet.com.**

