

Trinity News

Dec 2023/Jan 2024

No.535



Trinity United Reformed Church

Mansel Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 4AA

www.trinitywimbledon.org



Minister's December Reflection

Greetings Friends,

Winter is coming!
Indeed, it is already here.

As the days shorten, the nights lengthen, and the cold wind blows. The geese migrate to warmer climates, foxes broaden their foraging grounds, and hedgehogs hibernate in their nests; the natural world takes a well-earned rest.

Similarly, for many people, this is the time of year when they have their winter holidays. For some, this means a vacation abroad, while others will have a staycation more locally, and many will prefer to stay home. Nonetheless, if you have to travel by road, rail or air with a child, you will inevitably hear the ubiquitous words shouted at the top of their lungs...
ARE WE THERE YET?!

Just reading these words is enough to send shivers down one's spine.

We are told that good things come to those who wait, and patience is a virtue. But can we believe it?

If you have ever had to wait a long time, you know how it feels to have your patience put to the test. Waiting is much easier said than done.

For the first-century Jewish people waiting for the promised One, there had been 400 years since God gave his last message through

the prophet Malachi. 400 years of silence. 400 years of waiting. For 400 years, the people of Israel waited for the birth of their coming Messiah.

Time was pregnant with expectation, and as the people were suppressed under the occupation of the Roman Empire, the people were encouraged by the words of their last prophet:

"But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall." (Malachi 4:2).

Amid their darkness, the people held on to God's promise that the wait would be over, the night would end, the sun would rise, the storm would conclude, and the fear would subside.

During Advent, as the light of day shortens and the darkness of night lengthens, we also wait. We, too, are encouraged by God that *'the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it'* (John 1:5). As we light our Advent candles and children take the chocolates from their Advent calendars, may we also remember this hope. Although the darkness is great, soon, the sun of righteousness shall rise.

With every blessing,

Jacob Bali

Rev'd Jacob Bali



— December calendar —



Sunday 3 December - Advent Sunday

10:30 Elders' meeting

11:00 Morning worship with Holy Communion

Wednesday 6 December

20:00 Elders' Council



Saturday 9 December

11:00- Trinity's second ECO DAY

15:00 (see page 6)

Sunday 10 December

11:00 Morning worship

**18:30 Service of Readings & Carols by Candlelight
Followed by mulled wine & mince pies**



Sunday 17 December

**11:00 Morning worship
with a Nativity for
all (see page 6)**



Sunday 24 December - Christmas Eve

11:00 Morning worship

17:30 Christingle Service

23:15 Communion by Candlelight



Monday 25 December - Christmas Day

10:30 Celebration Service



Sunday 31 December - New Year's Eve

11:00 Morning worship



Eco Day

at Trinity United Reformed Church
Mansel Road, Wimbledon SW19 4AA

Saturday 9th December
11am - 3pm

£3 entry per person
Children under 5 free

- ★ Craft & Gift Fair
- ★ Handmade Goods
- ★ Sustainable Lifestyle Products
- ★ Refreshments & Light Lunches
- ★ Natural Christmas Decorations
- ★ Workshops



Supporting Sustainable Merton



This year's Nativity for all

Not a Very Silent Night A Pop-Up Nativity



In the Sunday morning service on 17 December, we will be performing Fay Rowland's 'Not a Very Silent Night', a 'Pop-Up Nativity'. This is a new venture for us and will involve lots of music, readings and audience participation!

You may remember 'The People's Passion' from Easter a few years ago - this will look at the Nativity story in a similar way. It is a 'pop-up' because very few (maybe just one!) rehearsal(s) are required, and we're hoping lots of people from the congregation will volunteer during the service to be Mary, Joseph, shepherds, magi and angels.

Please come along to hear the children and young people read and sing, watch Sarah and Claire as comperes, and join in! If you'd like any more information, please ask Sarah Elliot.

Four ways to give this Christmas



Christmas Offerings

This Christmas, our offerings at all our Christmas services (Carols & Readings by Candlelight, Christingle, Communion by Candlelight, and Christmas Day) will be donated to the work of Merton Winter Night Shelter. You can also give online using the 'Donate' button on the church website. Thank you.

Wimbledon Foodbank

This month the Foodbank are asking especially for toothbrushes and toothpaste, UHT/long life milk. These and other gifts can be left in the trolley in the Mansel Road Centre.

With **Christmas** approaching it would be good if we could send some Christmas 'extras' as well as our usual gifts - chocolate or sweets for the children, perhaps, and mince pies, chocolate biscuits, cakes, shortbread or similar items are suggested. But, please, no items containing alcohol.



Faith in Action Christmas gifts

A traditional Christmas lunch is planned again this year for the service users with a gift for each.



Traditionally Trinity members have provided the gifts. Wrapped gifts, labelled for a man or woman (over 90% of our service users are men), would be very gratefully received. Suggested items are new hats, gloves, scarves, warm socks, deodorant, sweets/chocolate/biscuits.

If you are able to provide a gift, please bring it to church on **Sunday 17 December**, or leave it at the Church Office before then for May Nicol to collect. Thank you for your generosity and support.

Christmas hampers for Christian CARE

Every year for the past eight years Christian CARE has prepared hampers for around thirty families who are well known to us.

This year we will once again help our families to have a special celebration on Christmas Day. Can Trinity help to make this happen again in 2023? Last year you provided eight hampers for families.

Could you pack a whole bag? Or could you share with others to pack one? You would be told the sizes of the families (between 1 and 8 people). Choose a large seasonal bag and then fill it with these items:



- *Sparkling non-alcoholic drink*
- *Large or mini Christmas pudding (non-alcoholic), chocolate puddings*

- *Mince pies, chocolate log, Stollen*
- *Tin/box chocolate or fancy biscuits, tin/box shortbread*
- *Tin fruit, tin custard, cranberry sauce, stuffing, gravy*
- *Box chocolates, children's sweets*

Pam Rostron will deliver them to our Office at Martin Way Methodist Church early in December. We will add a token to buy fresh food, a Christmas card, presents for the youngsters and deliver them to the families in time for Christmas.

These Christmas Hampers are so much appreciated. Please let Pam Rostron know, as soon as possible, if you are able to pack a Christmas Hamper and bring joy to a family this Christmas.

- *Christian Care*



Merton Winter Night Shelter 2023/24

The Merton Winter Night Shelter (MWNS) will be opening on Monday 4 December. This will be the second season where MWNS is coordinated by Faith-in-Action Merton Homelessness Project (to give FiA its full name) rather than the YMCA, as happened before the Covid pandemic.

As many of you are aware, MWNS provides a communal shelter during the coldest months for homeless people who can cope with the shared environment, which is not that easy. Faith groups in the borough come together, each providing hot food and a safe shelter on a specific weekday evening/overnight for seven weeks. There are 14 venues so we can cover two blocks meaning the shelter can run until mid-March, with Trinity covering Sundays in Block 2 starting on 28 January. As a result, the collective effort will provide over 1100 bed space nights in a safe, warm and welcoming environment from 4 December to 11 March.

This winter the setup is less challenging than last year, but there are still one or two outstanding issues at the time of writing (mid-November). Merton Council continue to be ambivalent about communal shelters. Government policy favours single room



accommodation rather than having the risk of disease spread in communal shelters. However, single room shelters are much more expensive to provide, especially in London, so communal shelters are tolerated where there is no alternative. Guests will again be tested for Covid, especially around Christmas when increased socialising is likely to increase the infection rates.

As happened last year, 'Crisis at Christmas' is not providing shelter to our guests during Christmas week, so we have to arrange accommodation for them within MWNS's resources again. It looks as though Trinity's premises won't be required (as happened last year), but there may be an opportunity to volunteer for a few hours on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Do let me know if you could be interested.

Raising money for the project is a perpetual challenge. The project costs around £50,000 pa. MWNS was awarded a generous grant of £20,000 pa for three years (this will be year 2) but the remainder needs to come from local sources. The collections at all of Trinity's Christmas collections will go to MWNS, so please give generously then. If you'd be interested to support on a regular basis, please let me know.

My son Ralph is at the early stages of drawing up the rota for Trinity's shifts in the new year. If you would like to get involved and haven't heard from him, do contact him at ralph.goodchild@gmail.com or on 07531 428750. There will be a training session for new volunteers at Trinity on Sunday 14 January at 14.00. Volunteering at the shelter is extremely rewarding and everyone can make a difference both individually and as part of the collective effort to provide over 1100 bedspaces during the coming winter. I'd be delighted to respond to any queries.

Robin Goodchild (robinnapiergoodchild@gmail.com)

*Sunday 6 January 2024 marks the
140th anniversary of Trinity's first service
on 6 January 1884*

Church Family News

The Minister's email address

is now minister@trinitywimbledon.org; tel: 07935 369777

December birthdays

A very happy birthday to those celebrating this month, including:

Christine Channer (who celebrates her 100th), Andrew Davies, George Henning, Chris Jeffery, Harry Khurshid, Dena-Jo Nunoo, Kwabena Sarpong, Yaw Sarpong, Johannes van der Walt, Sophia van der Walt, Hailey Wong, Jacob Woo and Janet Young,



Belated congratulations

to Allan Todd, one of our caretakers, who celebrated his 70th birthday in November.

January birthdays

...and good wishes to those celebrating in January: Norman Angus (our Senior Elder), Ann Bremner, Katy Collins, Susan Collins, May Nicol, Harriet Vary, Madeline Vary and Mike Tulloch.

January calendar

3	Wed	20:00	Elders' Council
7	SUN	<i>Epiphany Sunday</i> 10:30 Elders' Meeting 11:00 Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Mark Dennis	
10	Wed	20:00	Queens Road house group
14	SUN	11:00	Morning Worship (leader tbc)
16	Tue	20:00	Worship & Faith Development Team
18-25			<i>Week of Prayer for Christian Unity</i>
18	Thu	20:00	Outreach & Witness Team
21	SUN	11:00	Morning Worship
28	SUN	11:00	Morning worship



Election to Elders' Council

In early January it will again be time for us to nominate and elect Elders to serve on Elders' Council. Nomination forms and instructions will be sent out to church members in January.

Under the agreed procedure for the election of Elders, the November 2023 Church Meeting noted that there would be **two** vacancies on the Council from the Church Meeting on Sunday 17 March 2024.

Completed nomination forms should be returned by **Sunday 28 January 2024**.



The Housegroup will be having a break during Advent but will meet on Wednesday 10 January, when we will continue our study of St Matthew's Gospel.

As always, everybody is invited to join us at 217 Queens Road at 8pm. Andrew Sutton would be happy to provide more information.

Why after-church fellowship is important

After-church fellowship is the best way to get to know your minister and for your minister to get to know you. If you arrive just before (or just after) the service starts and leave straight away after the service finishes, your minister will not get to know you. It's that simple. He will not get to know your interests, your gifts and graces or your needs. Likewise, you will not get to know the minister - will not get to know how he 'ticks' - what makes him do what he does or understand the burden he carries for each member of the congregation - including you.

So after-church fellowship, around a cup of tea or coffee, is a vital part of the life and ministry of the worshipping congregation. It is where members of the wider and particular church family get to know and love each other and where Christian life is not only encouraged but also supported and cared for.

See you after worship.

- from the magazine of another church but relevant to Trinity's fellowship



Final copy date for the February edition of *Trinity News* is 19 January. Please send items to catherine.f.paul@btinternet.com

From the archives

Long service awards - thirty years ago

Early in 1993 the Elders meeting decided to recognise the loyalty and service of those who had been members of Trinity for over 50 years.

So it was that, on Sunday 25 April 1993, at a special service, certificates were presented to fifteen people - another five qualified but were unable to be present.

At the same service the position of Elder Emeritus was bestowed on six Elders who were retiring from 'active service' - Mrs Muriel McGilchrist and Messrs Ian Fair, Tom Mair, Archie Ronald, John Stevenson and Hubert Walker.



The photograph shows, left to right, Alison Amies, Margot Bremner, Clifford Amies, Stella Young¹, Miriam Miller², Jean Mair, Ella Stevenson, Tom Mair, Mary Wallis, Kenneth Young¹, Muriel Bremner, Jimmy Grimstone, Revd Ceri Lewis (at back), Betty Grimstone, Archie Ronald, Muriel McGilchrist³, and John Stevenson.

¹parents of Alan Young and Catherine Paul; ²grandmother of Andrew Melrose, and ³mother of Ian McGilchrist.

Singing with John Rutter



On 21 October I had the pleasure of joining with around 250 others for a day of singing at St Botolph's-without-Bishopsgate led by John Rutter CBE and accompanist Alex Aitken.

John has written and arranged many of the items that we sing in choir and founded and conducts the Cambridge Singers who have made many recordings of sacred music under his own label Collegium Records.

The day was organised by The Royal School of Church Music. We sang a variety of pieces including sections of Rutter's 'Requiem' and some new items from the recently published 'Carols for Choirs 6' some of which I'm hoping we can incorporate into the choir's repertoire in the future. The collection is unusual in that all the pieces are by living composers.

A thoroughly enjoyable day, I'd certainly recommend it to anyone who enjoys singing. If you'd like to hear about similar events in the future, you can sign up to the newsletter by emailing churchmusiclondon@gmail.com-

Cathy Dundee



Junior Church children enjoying the snow at Trinity in 2013 - members of the Khurshid, Rostron and Sarpong families