

Trinity News



January 2026

No.557



Trinity United Reformed Church

Mansel Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 4AA

www.trinitywimbledon.org

January Reflection

Greetings Friends,

Are you familiar with the Northern Lights, also known as Aurora Borealis? Described as a mesmerising natural light show in the night sky, auroras are caused by charged particles from the Sun (solar wind) colliding with Earth's atmosphere, which creates vibrant colours (greens, pinks, blues) as energy is released. The phenomenon known as the Aurora Borealis, along with its southern counterpart, the Aurora Australis, occurs in the most remote areas of each hemisphere, where the ozone layer is at its thinnest. These ethereal and otherworldly lights have led many cultures to perceive them not only as natural occurrences but also as having spiritual significance.

However, did you know there is a spiritual equivalent to the Northern Lights? In Celtic Christianity, these special locations are referred to as 'thin places'. Locations where prayer flows easily, worship feels natural, and the light of God shines brightly. Often, these places are historically significant sites where places of worship have been built, attracting thousands of pilgrims each year.

Throughout the Bible, we find references to spiritually significant places, including Mount Sinai, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem, among others. One notable location, called Mount Tabor, was the site of one of the most harrowing events in the Bible. Shortly after teaching his disciples about his impending death and resurrection, we are told:

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. (Matthew 17:1-2)

On this mountain top, in one instance, these unsuspecting disciples experienced a literal thin place when Christ allowed them to glimpse beyond the veil separating heaven and earth. From that point on, Mount Tabor became known as the Mount of Transfiguration.

As we journey through 2026 and witness the beauty of the northern lights and the thin places in our world, let us remain open to the sacred opportunities that God offers us. May we approach moments of spiritual transformation with awe and wonder, and may we be willing to let the light of Christ shine through us, transfiguring our lives in the process.

With every blessing,



Revd Dr Jacob Bali

(The Minister's usual day off is Monday)



Church Family News



A very happy birthday to those celebrating this month, including Ann Bremner, Milton Chan, Katy Collins, Susan Collins, Emma Lee, May Nicol, Mike Tulloch and Madeline Vary.



1	Thur	New Year's Day	
4	Sun	11:00	A reflective service for Epiphany led by Elders (no Holy Communion)
6	Tue	20:00	Queens Road house group
9	Fri	09:45	Trinity Toddlers
11	Sun	11:00	Morning Worship led by the Revd Bill Bowman (retired URC minister)
14	Wed	19:30	Elders Council
15	Thur	20:00	Finance Team
16	Fri	09:45	Trinity Toddlers
18	Sun	11:00 13:00	Morning Worship Welcomers' Lunch
21	Wed	20:00	Outreach & Witness Team
22	Thur	19:30	Green Group
23	Fri	09:45	Trinity Toddlers
25	Sun	11:00	Morning Worship
27	Tue	20:00	Worship Team
28	Wed	19:30	Children & Youth Work Team
30	Fri	09:45	Trinity Toddlers

Christmas 2025



Our thanks to all those who contributed in any way to our Christmas services - Service planners and leaders; singers and musicians; tree sponsors and decorators; flower and candle arrangers; AV, sound, Christmas card and publicity providers; and many others behind the scenes. Thank you!



Stamps for the RNIB



A reminder to leave your used stamps in support of the RNIB (Royal National Institute for Blind People) in one of the boxes for donations in the church vestibule and the entrance to the Mansel Road Centre. Ideally, we are asked to cut about 1cm around each stamp. New and used stamps, 1st or 2nd class, foreign, first day covers, presentation packs and albums - all are gratefully received.



Queens Road House Group

Our December meeting was postponed. We will meet on Tuesday 6 January (8pm) at 217 Queens Road.

As the new year begins, what about making a resolution to learn more about the Bible? Do come and join us - we will be studying Matthew chapter 25.



Your generosity enabled us to take a trolley full of gifts to the Foodbank depot in the week before Christmas. Thank you!

But the need goes on. Nobody should go hungry. Not here in Wimbledon. Foodbank provides three days' food and support to those who need it most.

Gifts, large or small can be left in the Mansel Road Centre trolley. The most needed items are:

Tinned meat

Jam/honey/marmalade / Marmite / peanut butter/chocolate spread

Tea/coffee

Squash

Sauces - ketchup/brown sauce/bbq sauce/salad cream

Familiar faces in Trinity

This month we hear from Sarah Li

The long long road to the west



I was born in Canton, now renamed Quanzhou in China, on 2nd June 1949. I was the second of four siblings. My Chinese name is Tsun Shiu-Wai (秦肇慧). In Chinese tradition, the surname always precedes Christian names. Shiu-Wai means 'the birth of wisdom'.

My childhood in China was very care-free by and large, despite the brutal Communist regime. When communism arrived, our lives changed drastically. We were considered enemy of the state: (地主) 'Masters of Land'. My family was stripped of all our lands and possessions.

When we arrived in Hong Kong in 1958, I had to learn two new languages: English and Cantonese. My mother enrolled me into a Convent school. I knew nothing about Catholicism, but I learned to hold five pencils in my hand to write lines for breaking rules.

My mother was a staunch believer in God. All the while she took us to church, I learned nothing about the goodness of God. When I was ten years old, my life changed forever in Hong Kong. We lived in a flat behind our church in Shaukiwan. One day, my mother took my older brother and younger sister to a wedding feast and left me behind. I was so deeply upset, hurt and I felt totally unloved and unwanted. I wept bitter tears. I was alone. Then all of sudden, a bell-like ringing sound fell on my ears. The sound was beautiful and clear as crystal. It spoke these words: 'don't cry, dry your tears. You are alright, I am here'. The enormous heaviness in my heart suddenly left me. The hurt completely dissipated at that very moment. I didn't tell anyone to this day. Since that life-changing day, I went to church to learn about God through Sunday School. I learned to pray.

I passed my O and A levels and moved to England in 1967. I was a nursing student at the Manor hospital in Epsom and there I met my

husband David at the age of 18. We got married in 1972 and now have two children and four granddaughters. I enjoy grandparent duties.

I completed several degrees. The last of these was my PhD (2002). I dedicated my PhD to my father who starved to keep his infant children alive.

I was baptised at Epsom Methodist Church. There we worshipped with the now Rev Ernest Yu and his late wife Hazel. When Rev Yu moved to Trinity church, we went with him voluntarily. I loved Trinity church. It inspired me to do things more for the church (tea rota, welcomer, Bible reader, church meetings). It is very welcoming and friendly. I will continue my faith journey at this church.

I have many interests, among them are travelling, playing the piano, cello and Guzheng (Chinese harp), and I sing with Epsom Choral Society. I taught sociology at Kingston University and the University of London.

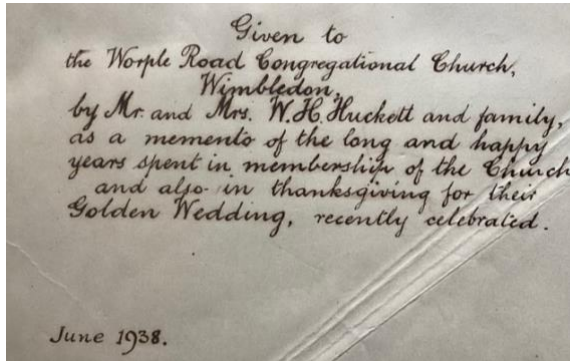
Currently I have three volunteering jobs. Sutton Council commissioned me to write a documentary diary on life under lock down, for education and research purposes. It is kept at the permanent archive at Sutton Central library (Ref: HOP2/3/16: email localstudies@sutton.gov.uk).

Amid my busy life, I never forget to thank God for my life-long blessings, life-long protection and provision.



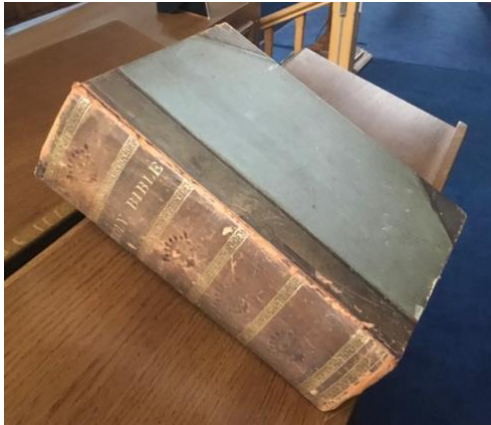
A gift from Worple Road - via the Netherlands!

A few weeks ago we were contacted by Mr Peter van den Dool of Wateringen in the Netherlands to say that, in moving into a new house, his brother had found a (very!) large pulpit Bible - the previous owners said that it had belonged to their parents and they did not know how they came by it. As can be seen from the attached photograph, the Bible was originally presented to Worple Road Congregational Church by Mr and Mrs Walter H. Hockett and family on the occasion of their Golden Wedding anniversary in 1938, in thanks for many years of happy membership.



Inscription in the pulpit Bible

Worple Road Church closed in 1941, as a direct result of War damage. We are probably its closest 'descendants' in Wimbledon and Mr van den Dool asked if we would accept the Bible as a gift from him and his family. The offer was accepted with thanks and the Bible duly arrived in early December. It has been placed, for now at least, in the display cabinet on the High School side of the chancel - do have a look!



Research has revealed that Walter and Eliza Hockett lived at 73 Merton Hall Road. In 1938 Walter, an insurance clerk, was 74 years old and Eliza was 72. They had three children, Ethel, Grace and Walter A. They seem to have moved to Pelham Road some time later. Eliza died in 1946 and Walter a year later aged 82.

We send our grateful thanks and best wishes to Peter van den Dool and his family.

AKY

Trinity's Safeguarding Policy

– Principles and Protocol



Safeguarding is the action taken to promote and protect the well-being and safety of individuals. The aim of our policy is to guide us to create and maintain a safe and caring environment which will protect from abuse, harm or neglect all people who worship in our church, who work in our church, and who use our premises. The policy is based on principles and legislation which promote safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting children, adults at risk and staff. There are also clear procedures for taking appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised.

The Principles which underpin our policy:

- Our theology and values
- Our commitment to put first the welfare of children and adults at risk
- A commitment to comply with relevant legal and regulatory requirements, including training and, where required, DBS checks.

Creating a Safer Culture

- Understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Remember that anyone can commit abuse, including members of a church and it does and can happen in churches
- Understand that training is not just a box to tick, but something which will increase your confidence to be able to contribute to the creation of a safer culture
- Read Trinity's Safeguarding Policy which can be found on the website to understand your part in creating the culture.

What to do if you have a concern?

- Don't ignore it and respond quickly
- Speak to the Church Safeguarding Coordinator or the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator (contact details below)
- If you cannot reach the Safeguarding Coordinators, contact the Synod Safeguarding Officer (contact details below)
- If you believe someone is at imminent risk of harm, phone the police.

Key Contact Details

Church Safeguarding Coordinator

Cathy Dundee

Tel: 07710 096866 **Email:** safeguarding@trinitywimbledon.org or cathy_dundee@hotmail.co.uk

Deputy Church Safeguarding Coordinator

Claire Wood

Tel: 07745 869521 **Email:** safeguarding@trinitywimbledon.org or claire1592@aol.com

Synod Safeguarding Officer

Natalie Van Camp

Tel: 0748 3994590 **Email:** safeguarding@urcsouthern.org.uk

Trinity's Safeguarding policy is based on the URC's Good Practice Guide 6 which came out in November 2023 – a long overdue update on safeguarding principles and procedures – with the aim of bringing safeguarding in churches much more in line with safeguarding in the secular world, such as education, social and health care. For far too long there was, in the opinion of many, a feeling that safeguarding in churches could be different, maybe even less rigorous, because surely people wouldn't come to harm or experience abuse in churches – we are Christians after all. But we know far too well that abuse can and does happen in churches. Horrific cases result not just from the actions of those who assault or abuse but the inaction of many in our churches, locally and nationally.

So, how do we ensure that we do everything we can to prevent harm coming to anyone in our church and its community? And remember safeguarding isn't just about preventing harm or abuse, it's about creating that safe place where all feel welcome. Our Principles and

Protocol document summarises key steps and I have expanded on some of the points, in particular the importance of training:

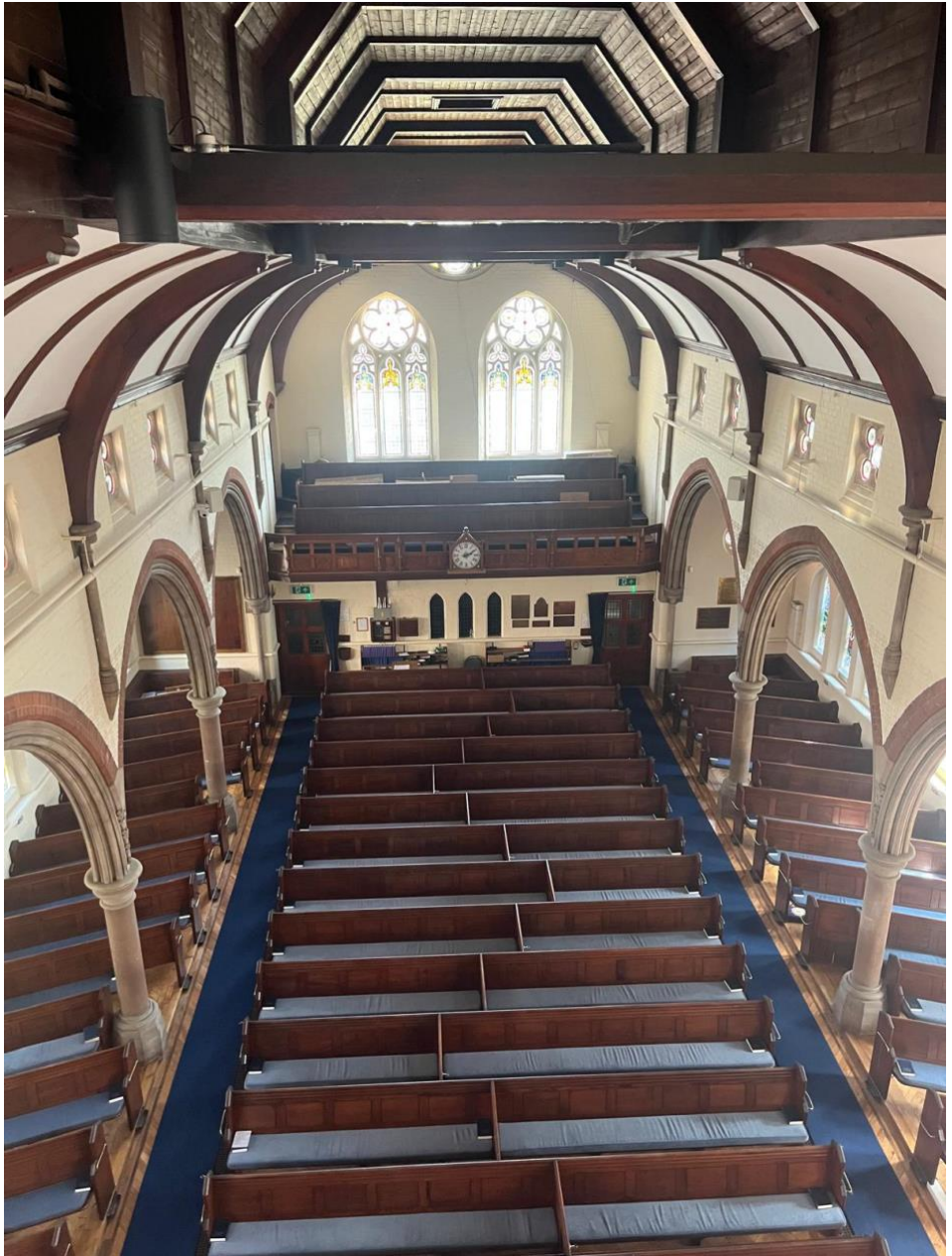
At Trinity, certain individuals or groups within the church must undertake training, with the amount depending on the role or responsibility: for instance, Jacob as our Minister, Cathy Dundee as our Safeguarding Coordinator and Claire Wood as Children and Youth Work Leader have three lots to do! If you have a role which requires training at any level, Cathy will have been in touch with you. At a recent Elders Council meeting, it was agreed that we would ask Welcomers to undertake training, due to their important role on a Sunday morning, and our thanks go to all who have already undertaken the online Foundation course. We know there can be frustrations with online courses but as we say on the Principles and Protocol document, training should not be seen as something that has to be done, a box to be ticked because the Synod says we have to – it is about increasing your knowledge and confidence to understand and deal with the issues around safeguarding. By the way, the Foundation training is open to any member of the congregation – talk to Cathy if you are interested.

We are **all responsible** for safeguarding and creating a safer culture. The Principles and Protocol document is a bit of an aide memoire but don't forget about the full policy. It is on the website but we would also be happy to provide a hard copy if needed.

Finally, **what to do if you have a concern**. The steps are listed on the document but it is worth saying this: **never hesitate** to mention or raise something that concerns you, or something that perhaps has been shared with you, even if you think it might not be that significant. It is important that you do, because someone else may have also raised a concern to the Safeguarding coordinator and, in that way, a bigger picture of concern is built up. It then becomes the responsibility of the Safeguarding Coordinators and, if necessary, the Synod Safeguarding officer. You will have done your job in respect of following policy and helping to create a safe environment.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Cathy Dundee or Claire Wood.





This unusual view of Trinity church was taken last Autumn by electrician Rob Stone while he was replacing lights in the chancel.

From the Archives....



The Story of Trinity's Mission Church

Part two: To Effra Road - the birth of St Cuthbert's

As the new Century began the little hall in Southey Road was filled to capacity as the numbers of children attending Trinity's mission Sunday School continued to grow. It was clear that larger accommodation was needed, but Trinity still had a debt on the Mansel Road buildings and could not yet contemplate further expenditure.

At last, in 1902, the Mansel Road debt was cleared and the 'South Wimbledon Building Fund' was set up. A site for a hall was found in Effra Road, about fifty yards from Haydons Road. Effra Road had been part of the land of Cowdrey Farm until about 1880 and an area of tree-lined fields. In the last years of the Century it had been extensively developed.

In December 1904 contractors began work, and the following June the Hall, with caretaker's accommodation, was dedicated by Revd Dr Monro Gibson who had taken part in the opening services at Mansel Road. The building was to be known as 'St Cuthbert's Hall'. The land and buildings cost about £2300.



The original drawing of 'St Cuthbert's Hall' - June 1905

Now the work could really develop. The Sunday School grew and by 1912 the number of scholars reached 350 with an average weekly attendance of 268. There were 27 classes and 32 teachers, most of whom came from Trinity. Sunday morning services were mainly organised for children; Sunday evening services were started for adults. An Assistant Minister, Revd Alexander Andrew, was appointed.



A St Cuthbert's group 1910

The Hall became known locally as the centre of a thriving and increasing work. By 1910 there were over thirty organisations during the week for young and old, including the Mothers' meeting, Men's Own, Band of Hope, Boys' Brigade and crowded weekly Saturday evening concerts.

Session decided that St Cuthbert's should maintain its own membership roll and there were hopes that eventually a 'St Cuthbert's Church' building could be erected alongside the Hall, and that ultimately the church would become independent of Trinity with its own Session and its own finances.



Final copy date for February edition of Trinity News is Sunday 18 January. Please send items to catherine.f.paul@btinternet.com