

Trinity News



December 2024

No.545



Trinity United Reformed Church

Mansel Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 4AA

www.trinitywimbledon.org



DECEMBER 2024

- 1 SUN *Advent Sunday***
10:30 Elders' meeting
11:00 Morning worship with Holy Communion
- 10:00-17:00 Greener Giving Holiday pop-up (at Wimbledon Quarter) see p.9
- 3 Tue 20:00 Queens Road housegroup
4 Wed 20:00 Elders' Council
5 Thu 20:00 Property Team
- 8 SUN 11:00 Morning worship (presentation of Christmas gifts for FiA & Christian Care)**
- 14 Sat 10:00 Church decorating for Christmas
- 15 SUN 11:00 Morning worship
18:30 Service of Carols & Readings by Candlelight**
followed by mulled wine & mince pies in the Old Hall
- 22 SUN 11:00 Morning worship with Nativity**
- 24 Tue *Christmas Eve***
**17:30 Christingle service
23:15 Communion by Candlelight**
- 25 Wed *Christmas Day***
10:30 Celebration service
- 29 SUN 11:00 Morning worship**



December Reflection



Greetings Friends,

As halls are decked with fairy lights and tinsel, as shop windows are trimmed with mistletoe and twinkles, there can be no doubt that Advent is upon us.

This is the time of year when much of the world gets into the festive spirit as we look ahead to the holiday celebrations. It is a jolly time, a happy time, a merry time, and one dare not act like Scrooge.

Indeed, we better watch out,
We better not cry,
We better not pout,
But do we know why?

In this age of consumerism, corporations often overshadow the true essence of Advent with their relentless marketing. However, Advent provides us with a precious opportunity to pause and reflect, reminding us of the authentic "reason for the season".

However, this raises the question: What is the reason for Advent?

Advent, with its roots in the Gallic and Spanish liturgies of the 4th and 5th centuries, was initially a time of fasting and penance akin to Lent. Over time, it transformed into a season of anticipation and preparation, a time when we eagerly prepare our hearts and minds for the joyous celebrations ahead.

The term "Advent" originates from the Latin word "*Adventus*," meaning "coming" or "arrival". This special season in the Christian liturgical year provides a wonderful opportunity to prepare for the joyful celebration of Jesus Christ's birth at Christmas. It also invites contemplation about the future arrival of Christ.

Advent unfolds over the four Sundays and the weeks leading up to Christmas, starting on the Sunday closest to 30 November and culminating on Christmas Eve. Yet as many lift their voices to sing

the Twelve Days of Christmas, it is also worth considering the significance of the Four Weeks of Advent.

Hope: The first week of Advent focuses on hope. This hope is in the coming of the Messiah, both in his birth and his eventual return.

Peace: The second week emphasises peace. It is a time to reflect on the peace that Christ brings to the world and to our hearts.

Joy: The third week is centred on joy, often marked by the lighting of the third candle in the Advent wreath, signifying a shift from penance to celebration.

Love: The fourth and final week of Advent is dedicated to love. This is a reminder of God's love manifested through the birth of Jesus.

Advent is an opportunity for more than simply counting down to Christmas; it invites us to explore the profound significance of the Incarnation, which embodies the fulfilment of God's promise to send a Saviour to the world. This season encourages us to come together in unity, fostering a sense of community. It prompts us to prepare ourselves both spiritually and practically for the meaningful celebration of Christ's birth. Moreover, Advent serves as a time for thoughtful reflection on the broader promise of Christ's return, allowing us to deepen our understanding and commitment to our faith.



Our Lord said: *"Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me."* (Revelation 3:20 NRSV)

As we enter into this sacred time, may we remember that Advent is a rich tapestry of historical, spiritual, and cultural practices that invite both personal introspection and communal celebration. May we embrace this time to enhance our understanding and appreciation of these significant events in our faith. Indeed, this Advent, may we be willing to open the door and invite Christ to join us at the table of our hearts.

With every blessing,

Jacob Bali

Revd Dr Jacob Bali
Minister

Church Family News

Baptisms

On Sunday 17 November - Milton Shun Kuen Chan, Jenny Kam Kuen Wong, Marco Pak Hei Chan and Wing Yan (Winnie) Kwok were baptised, and we welcomed them as members of Trinity.



Revd Ernest Yu & Revd Dr Jacob Bali, with David Li & the new members

Congratulations

to Sandy McLeish who was ordained an elder on 17 November 1974 (50 years).

December birthdays

A very happy birthday to those celebrating this month, including Andrew Davies, Chris Jeffery, Titus Lee, Dena-Jo Nunoo, Johannes van der Walt, Sophia van der Walt, Hailey Wong, Jacob Woo and Janet Young.



Our Christmas collections

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.



Wimbledon Foodbank



It would be good if we could include some Christmas 'treats' along with our usual donations to the Foodbank - **Christmas puddings and mince pies (alcohol free), chocolates, biscuits and extra treats for the children**, perhaps. Please give these early in December so that they can be distributed.

In the meantime, the most needed items are:

- Custard and rice pudding
- Noodles and micro- rice meals
- Squash and long-life juice
- Tinned and packet soup
- Ketchup and table sauces

Greetings everyone in Trinity



I would like to share a bit about my story.

I am Esther Bali, and my Korean name is Eunjeong Yu (유은정, 兪恩淨), also known as the wife of the Minister (Jacob Bali).

I was born and raised in a Christian home in South Korea. Since my parents are both university professors and quite busy, I was primarily cared for by my grandmother. During my childhood, like many other South Korean children, I participated in various extracurricular activities. One of these was attending a piano institute, which my grandmother specifically wanted me to join. Although I loved music, I was often reluctant to go to the institute. I even remember leaving home with the pretence of going to my piano lesson, but instead, I would immediately spend time hanging out with my friends. For a long time, I did not realise that this “childhood hobby” would play such a significant role in my life.

After obtaining my first degree along with a Nursing license and a secondary school teacher’s certificate, I began working as a health teacher at a secondary school. During this time, I felt a strong urgency and desire to read my Bible. When I found an opportunity, I dedicated myself to reading it from early morning until late at night, astonishingly finishing the entire Bible within a week. I still vividly remember a moment while reading Exodus when I cried because I felt an overwhelming love from God. As I explored the Book of Romans, I was enlightened by its meticulous explanations of Christianity. Throughout that week, I never felt tired; it was truly an amazing experience for me.

This intense period of reading prompted me to seriously consider which path God wanted me to take. I sensed that something was not quite right in my life and wondered if God was calling me toward a different direction. During this time, I was also reading one of my favourite books, "Man's Search for Meaning" by Dr Viktor E. Frankl, a Jewish survivor of Auschwitz. Although I had not experienced suffering as he did and felt my own struggles might not qualify for such an inquiry, I sought to find meaning in my life and in my relationship with God.

I was unsure about which direction to take in my life, but I had a faint sense that music held a divine calling for me. During my free time, I engaged in various musical activities, including playing the piano, accompanying other instruments, arranging orchestral scores, and leading choirs. These experiences, along with a growing desire to use music as a form of healing, made me consider music therapy as a potential career path.

I had the opportunity to come to the UK because my father was at Cambridge University for his sabbatical. At that time, I did not plan to stay long in the UK. I began by learning English, and during this early period of my life in the UK, I met Jacob. He later told me that after seeing me for the first time, he knew I would become his wife. In the beginning, my English was quite poor, and I struggled to understand the language. However, interestingly, Jacob and I found no trouble communicating; some said it was the "power of love".

After improving my English, I studied for a certificate in higher education in Theology for a year. I was not entirely sure why I was studying theology then, but I believed that God might have guided me in this direction because, as a Christian, I felt it was important to learn about Him. Following that, I pursued a three-year combined degree in Theology, Music, and Worship, and I gained my second bachelor's degree. After being accepted by the URC assessment conference, Jacob was invited to train for ministry in Cambridge. I then enrolled in a full-time, two-year master's degree program in Music Therapy. We both studied in Cambridge and were able to finish our programs together.

As I look back, I realise that all the steps God has led me through, is leading me through, and will lead me through are for my salvation because God loves me.

I often reflect on one of my favourite Bible verses: "*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*" (Psalm 119: 105 ESV). This verse

reminds me that God's word guides each step and illuminates my path, especially during times of uncertainty.

Sometimes, I feel like a traveller in the dark, uncertain about the path ahead. However, I take comfort in my belief that God is a lamp for my feet, guiding me with each step I take in the darkness. While I may not know what the future holds, I trust in God's light to lead me, for He is my good shepherd.

- Esther Bali



Gift Day 2024

A big thank you to all at Trinity who supported our major annual Gift Day fundraising for our chosen Charities.

Merton Winter Night Shelter
St Raphael's Hospice

Alzheimer's Research
Mind

Médecins sans Frontières
Medical Aid for Palestinians

Disaster Relief
Water Aid

South West London Samaritans
Wimbledon Foodbank

Cancer Research UK

British Red Cross

Faith-In-Action

Our total so far has reached £10,725 and there is still time to donate before the collection is finalised in early December. Please go to the Trinity website (www.trinitywimbledon.org) and click on the Donate button or QR code. This will allow you to make your donation to Gift Day at Trinity via the CAF Bank giving website.

thank you



sustainable merton

GREENER GIVING

Holiday POP-UP

Sunday 1st December
10am - 5pm

Ground floor, Wimbledon
(back) **Quarter**
SW19

Celebrate the holiday season and discover unique, eco-friendly gifts for friends and family from local, sustainable businesses!

Brought to you by Sustainable Merton, in collaboration with Trinity United Reformed Church Wimbledon and Wimbledon Quarter, this not-to-be-missed, family-friendly event will showcase a vibrant array of sustainable products. You're sure to find something for everyone on your holiday list!

Alongside the shopping, enjoy a selection of **festive-themed workshops** (to be announced!) and the nearby **ice rink**, organised by Wimbledon Quarter, creating a magical atmosphere for all ages.

Visit our Greener Giving Holiday Pop-Up to embrace a more sustainable way of gifting without compromising on quality!

sustainablemerton.org/events



Generously supported by



Wimbledon
Quarter
SW19



Queens Road House Group

The Group will meet at 217 Queens Road on Tuesday 3 December at 8pm. All will be welcome to join us for coffee and biscuits, followed by informal study and discussion. We will be looking at Matthew chapter 16.



Following St Luke

On Advent Sunday we begin a new 'Church year', and St Luke's Gospel will usually be the Gospel read on Sundays until this time next year.

The Gospel writer is unknown, but it is commonly attributed to St Luke. We learn from Acts that Luke was a physician.

The main sources for Luke were:

- a) The Gospel of Mark.
- b) A lost collection known as 'Q' but used also by Matthew and Mark.
- c) Material unique to Luke, including much of the Christmas story.

The Gospel dates from AD 80-110.

The URC Daily Devotions (<http://www.devotions.unc.org.uk>) are now following St Luke's Gospel and will continue to do so until Easter next year.



**FINAL COPY DATE for the January edition of *Trinity News* is
Tuesday 17 December**

Please send items to catherine.f.paul@btinternet.com

Faith in Action (Merton Homelessness Project) - Christmas gifts

This year, to ensure that everyone is given similar gifts, we are asked to donate **unwrapped** gifts, in a gift bag.

Hats, gloves, scarves, medium size boxers, chocolates/sweets, biscuits, shower gel/shampoo would be much appreciated.
Please bring your gifts to church on **Sunday 8 December**.



Christmas hampers for Christian CARE

Last year, with our help, Christian Care provided Christmas hampers to over forty families that they have supported throughout the year.

Our help would be appreciated to make their celebrations special again this year.

Could you pack a whole bag for a family of four? Or could you share with others to pack one? Choose a large seasonal bag and then fill it with these items:

- *1 bottle of sparkling non-alcoholic drink*
- *1 large Christmas/chocolate pudding or four mini ones*
- *1 box of mince pies*
- *1 chocolate log or Stollen*
- *1 tin/box fancy biscuits or shortbread*
- *1 tin of fruit, 1 tin of custard, 1 jar of cranberry sauce*
- *1 packet of stuffing*
- *1 jar/packet of gravy*
- *1 box chocolates or children's sweets*

A supermarket voucher will be added for families to buy fresh food, and presents for the children.

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*

Climate-friendly gift ideas!



New Year's Day walk

Begin the year with a walk in Richmond Park starting at 11:00. The meeting point is Broomfield Hill car park, by the Isabella Plantation between Kingston and Robin Hood Gates (note: access only via Kingston Gate). Hot and cold snacks and beverages will be available from the kiosk in the car park.



All very welcome on 1 January - including children and dogs....!

- Catherine Paul

Children & Young People

Nativity



This year's Nativity for all will take place on 22 December, in the Sunday morning service at 11 am.

Following the success of last year's 'Not a Very Silent Night', a 'pop-up Nativity', we are once again going to use this format this year. A 'pop-up' Nativity helps us to look at the age-old story of Jesus' birth in a different way. It's called 'pop-up' because very few (if any) rehearsals are required, and it all just comes together on the morning!

It will still involve lots of our favourite Christmas Carols, and readings, but differs from a traditional church Nativity in that we want adults, not just children, to take on the parts and volunteer during the service to be Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels, magi, and more!

We are in the process of choosing our 'pop-up' play and will let you have more details shortly, but for now, make sure you have the date in the diary; invite friends and family, who would be more than welcome to join in too!

For any further information, do speak to Sarah or Claire in Junior Church.

Christingle



The Christingle Service at Trinity, which takes place at 5.30pm on Christmas Eve, has become a firm tradition. Our Christingle Service is an informal one, but one which explores the meaning of Christmas in a special and interactive way. During the short service, which includes gentle guitar music and carols, we invite those attending to make a Christingle. A Christingle is an orange,

decorated with tape, sweets and fruit, finished off with a candle on the top. Each element has a special meaning and helps to tell the age-old story of Jesus' birth in a way that children and adults alike love.

The church is lit by candles, it feels magical, and you leave with something that reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world and that He brings hope to all, especially those living in darkness. Our Christingle Service will be held at 5.30pm on Christmas Eve. Everyone is very welcome – especially children. Bring your family and friends!

Trinity Toddlers

Yes, Trinity Toddlers is restarting at Trinity. You may remember my article in September's *Trinity News* that we were exploring bringing back one of Trinity's most popular outreach activities.

As you can see from the flyer below, we are now ready to advertise and start preparing for the first session on 14 January 2025.

You will also remember that I asked for volunteers to help out on Friday mornings, particularly with serving tea and coffee to the parents and carers, but also with tidying up and importantly just chatting to those who walk through our doors.

If you would be interested in helping, please do come and talk to me on a Sunday morning or email me at claire1592@aol.com for further information.
- Claire Wood



The flyer is for Trinity United Reformed Church Wimbledon. It features a central blue oval with the text "Trinity Toddlers Restarts 14th January 2025". The background is decorated with colorful handprints. At the top left is the church logo. Below the oval, there is a text box with details about the group's return, including the location (Mansel Road Centre) and time (10am to 11.30am). To the left of this text box are illustrations of three children and a book. To the right are illustrations of a cup of coffee and a child playing a musical instrument. The text box also lists activities like play, stories, singing, and craft, and provides contact information for the office.

Trinity United Reformed Church Wimbledon

Trinity Toddlers Restarts 14th January 2025

The very popular Parent and Toddler group returns to Trinity URC's Mansel Road Centre in Mansel Road Wimbledon on Friday mornings (term time only) from 10am to 11.30am.

Enjoy play, stories, singing, craft, and the opportunity to meet other parents and carers.

For further information, contact office@trinitywimbledon.org

How to have an Eco Christmas

Gifting

- Look for gifts with minimal packaging
- Opt for second-hand – if you're doing a Secret Santa, why not have a rule that it has to be a second-hand gift?
- Put together a zero waste kit
 - a reusable coffee cup, wax food wraps...
- Make something personal
- Adopt an animal for someone
- Give a membership



Wrapping

- Shiny wrapping paper is pretty but it is not recyclable
- Use brown paper for a vintage look
- Sellotape is plastic so can't be recycled – why not use string or ribbon
- Christmas Cards with glitter or ones that are shiny can't be recycled either.
- Save your cards and cut them up to use as gift tags next year

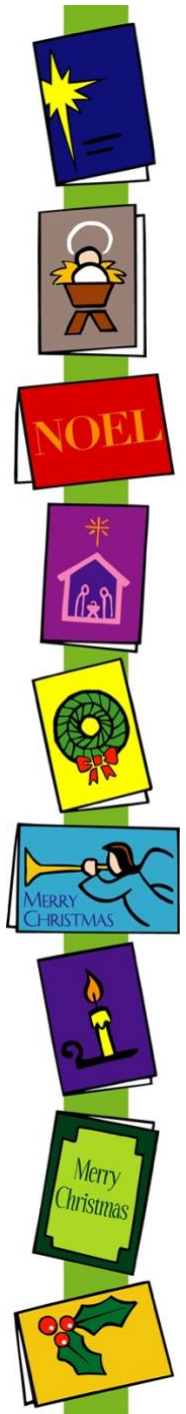
Food

- Try not to over buy
- Shop local to avoid food miles
- Get a local veg box delivery
- Compost your vegetable waste
- Eat up the leftovers
- Choose organic



Decoration

- Avoid tinsel
- Reuse your tree
- Recycle your tree
- Make your own wreath
- Turn off lights over night
- Make your own Christmas Crackers
- Make your own table decoration
- Avoid synthetic candles





140 years of Trinity Christmases



From the Archives

this *Trinity News*. But how did the Trinity Christmas that we know today develop?

Things would have been very different in the Victorian Trinity. The fact that many of the congregation were Scots would suggest that Hogmanay was perhaps the more important celebration for them! There was a service in the Church on Christmas Day (and an evening service when Christmas Day fell on a Sunday) and some 'seasonal hymns' were sung on the preceding Sunday but that was about the limit of the celebrations.

Very little changed until after the Second World War. The children had a 'Toy service' in December to which they brought toys for 'children of the East End'. That took place during afternoon Sunday School, only moving to the morning service when Sunday School transferred from afternoon to morning - and this continued until the late 1970s.

From the 1930s the Church would be decorated with holly and evergreens. No candles of any kind - they were regarded as popish. There wasn't a Christmas tree until the 1970s.

In 1952 newly arrived minister, Mr Bruce, introduced, and produced, a 'nativity play' and thereafter this took place most years on the Sunday

evening before Christmas. The children and young people took the main parts. Later plays were written by and produced by Mrs Margaret Glegg, and nativity plays in various forms have been part of our celebrations ever since.

About that time Mr Bruce introduced a service of 'Nine Lessons and Carols', at first during morning service and later transferring to the evening. Candlelight services were started in about 1978, later with specially constructed candle stands fixed to the pews.

In 1968, when Christmas Eve fell on a Sunday it was decided to experiment by transferring the evening service to a Communion service at 11.30pm. It was not anticipated that many people would attend at that hour and it was a great surprise when 128 turned up! This service continues to this day, albeit now at 11.15pm.

Another 'experiment' was a service for children at 5.30pm on Christmas Eve. This was first tried in 1982 and began as a 'Children's nativity service'. By 1990 it had become a 'Christingle' and, with one or two exceptions, this has been the case ever since.



A Trinity Nativity play 1991. Who do you recognise?

The Church has always held a Christmas morning service. For many years it was a rather poorly attended service with carols and a sermon. In the sixties it became more of an informal service attended by children, parents and grandparents and the children were invited to bring one of their newly opened presents to show us.

For five years between 2015 and 2019 the 'Christmas Tree Festival' ended with 'Carols among the Trees' an informal way of bringing to a close the wonderful displays of decorated trees to which we had invited not only Trinity people but many visitors as well. These services were popular and well attended.

So we look forward to Christmas 2024 in Trinity.

Happy Christmas everybody!



***A Christmas card showing Wimbledon High Street.
Dated 1905***

