

Trinity News



February 2025

No.547



Trinity United Reformed Church

Mansel Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 4AA

www.trinitywimbledon.org



FEBRUARY 2025

2	Sun	10.30 11:00	Elders Meeting Morning Worship with Holy Communion
4	Tue	20:00 20:00	Children & Youth Work Team Queens Road housegroup
5	Wed	19:30	Elders' Council
7	Fri	09:45	Trinity Toddlers
9	Sun	11:00	Morning Worship
13	Thu	20:00	Church Meeting
14	Fri	09:45	Trinity Toddlers
16	Sun	11:00	Morning Worship
21	Fri		No Trinity Toddlers
22	Sat	10:00- 14:30	Synod Elders training at Trinity
23	Sun	11:00	Morning Worship
28	Fri	09:45	Trinity Toddlers



Final copy date for the March edition of *Trinity News* is Sunday 16 February. Please send items to catherine.f.paul@btinternet.com

February Reflection

Greetings Friends,

In the bleak mid-winter, many people celebrate a day dedicated to love: Valentine's Day. Characterised by love hearts, romantic films, and the giving of chocolates, it is a time to express affection and appreciation for those we hold dear.

Yet, as we look at the world around us, we find ourselves echoing the age-old refrain, "Where is the love?" – as the Black Eyed Peas famously asked.

Seriously, where is the love when war still rages, when children go hungry, when nature is exploited, when bodies are mutilated, and when communities are ravaged? Where is the love when darkness seems to be winning? Where on earth is the love when we need it the most?

Is love a social construct, a mere mirage, or just an emotion? The harder we look, the more elusive it seems to be. Yet, something keeps us hoping, yearning, and longing for true love.

In the film adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's epic fantasy, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, the character Gandalf states, "Some believe it is only great power that can hold evil in check, but that is not what I have found. I have found it is the small everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay... small acts of kindness and love."

Indeed, love is not confined to grand gestures or romantic relationships. We find love in a welcoming hug or a comforting touch, in kind words spoken or the smile of a stranger, and in a shared meal or a freshly brewed cup of tea. Love transcends all boundaries and is a universal language that connects us all.

Jesus said, *"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:34-35 NRSV)

Likewise, we are told of the nature of true love, *"Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the*

truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NLT)

These passages invite us to cultivate these qualities in our everyday lives, encouraging us to express love through our actions.

This February, as Valentine's Day comes and goes, we have an opportunity to reflect on our relationships with others. May we show true love and appreciation to our family, friends, and community. May we be forgiving and compassionate, taking time to evaluate and strengthen our relationships. Indeed, may we live out the true love of Christ.

With every blessing,

Jacob Bali

Revd Dr Jacob Bali
Minister

The Minister's usual day off is Monday



Church Family News

February birthdays

A very happy birthday to those celebrating this month, including Graham Angus, Esther Bali, Edelweiss Dunfield-Prayero, Martha Khurshid, Enzo Lau, Danai Siva and Tara Yu.



Queens Road House Group

How about a New Year resolution to join us at Housegroup and to share in our informal study of St Matthew's Gospel?

We meet on Tuesday 4 February (8pm) at 217 Queens Road (quite near the Haydons Road junction). We will be looking at Matthew chapter 16.



"In December 4,707 kg of food left our warehouse and was distributed to our five Foodbank hubs throughout Merton, helping nearly 700 people, including 270 children.

The congregation at Trinity URC generously donated again. Thank you for your work and continued support, we are so grateful to you. Please keep our Foodbank clients in your prayers this season."

Wimbledon Foodbank



Gifts in the Mansel Road Centre trolley have been fewer since Christmas, but the need is still there and all items you can leave will be gratefully received.

Any items will be welcome, but the Foodbank tell us that they particularly need **noodles, canned vegetables,**

toothpaste, tomato sauce and plastic carrier bags. They have plenty of pasta and baked beans.

Our Gift Day donations



FAITH IN ACTION
helping with homelessness

Thank you so much for the generous donation - we are immensely grateful for the wonderful support of your community. Trinity URC has been a constant supporter of Faith in Action for a number of years, not only of the Drop-In but also as an integral part of the Merton Winter Night Shelter. Faith in Action could not do the work it does without the support of our army of volunteers and its donors.

As I'm sure you know, we continue to operate the Homeless Drop-In in the Salvation Army Hall two days per week, currently supporting an average of 60 service users per session and sometimes over 70.

Regrettably, numbers continue to grow, and because there is now a greater focus on personalised work with individuals for whom we can make a difference, the numbers are challenging for our staff and volunteers to support.

We also operate the Merton Winter Night Shelter, offering emergency shelter for street sleepers during the coldest winter months. Last winter we were able to significantly improve the support we could offer to some of our most vulnerable citizens and hopefully we can build further on this.

Please pass on our profound thanks to all of your members for their unflinching support.



Our Calendar of Services & Events (January to May) is available on the church website (www.trinitywimbledon.org)



**Calendar of Services & Events
January to May
2025**

Go to 'About Us' and scroll down to 'Calendar'

Trinity Toddlers has started!

When you read this, Trinity Toddlers will have been going for three weeks, since its restart on the 10 January.

We have had a good start welcoming ten children in the first week, the majority of whom returned the next week, with the children, ranging from 11 months to those nearly 4 years of age, enjoying our space, a range of activities including traditional favourites such as Playdoh and getting to know others.

What was particularly lovely was that nearly half of those children were 'Trinity' children, or grandchildren. The others are local parents or nannies who had heard about the group through the advertising we had done, particularly with existing groups who use the Mansel Road Centre – my thanks to Elizabeth S for doing that.





We, of course, are hoping that our numbers will increase but the steady start has helped us see what works well, what the children enjoy (story time was a huge hit in our second week) and how we can improve what we offer.

One way in which we responded to the needs of those coming was to adjust our opening time to 9.45am rather than 10am. This reflected that those attending needed to leave

before the finishing time of 11.30 and also that some are doing school drop-offs and wanted to be able to come to us after that.

A huge thank you to my team of volunteers (Janet, Catherine, Alison, Andrew S, Elizabeth and Sandy as well as Elizabeth S) for providing much appreciated tea, coffee and biscuits throughout the morning and of course just being around to chat to children and adults alike and making them feel at home.

There is also the, not inconsiderable, task of packing away all our equipment at the end of the session. My huge thanks also to Mark, who, when the church diary allows, does the bulk of the setting up on a Thursday evening – this helps enormously.

It is, however, a small team of volunteers and we would really love it if more of you might be able to spare a couple of hours on a Friday morning, even if only once a month, to help. We do have a lot of fun while providing a very valuable service for adults and children alike.



Do come and have a chat with me.

- Claire Wood

CHRISTMAS Offerings

All the offerings received at our four Christmas Services were donated to the work of the Merton Winter Night Shelter. The final total amounted to £2,223. Thank you to all those who donated to produce this excellent result.



Christmas hampers for Christian Care

Thank you to all those who generously donated Christmas Hampers for families supported by Christian Care. Once again, we were able to supply eight hampers full of Christmas goodies, plus a cheque, which were received gratefully and sent straight out to needy families.

'Please do pass on the thanks of all of us at Christian CARE to members of the Trinity URC congregation for their continuing support and prayers.'

Christian Care supports the families all year, so they know how much all the extra treats are appreciated.

- Pam Rostron



Trinity's main contribution to the Merton Winter Night Shelter (MWNS) this season commences on Sunday 26 January. Arguably, this is our Church's most significant, regular outreach so it will be an important day.

We expect to offer a safe, warm place overnight for twelve guests, who would otherwise be homeless, plus an evening meal, breakfast and a packed lunch. We open our doors at 2pm, which is earlier than other MWNS venues, but there are few places where our guests can hang out on a Sunday afternoon, so it is much appreciated.

The key roles in our rota are filled, so huge thanks to all of you who have volunteered. However, extra help is always welcome during an evening between 6pm and 9pm or especially in the morning before 8 am, there will be some tasks to do as well as getting a feel for what is involved in volunteering.

In my experience, volunteering is very rewarding. It is surprisingly easy to become homeless, especially if you have a very limited support network. Loss of a job can often lead to a relationship breakdown and then having to leave home. In the current climate, where there is a huge shortage of affordable accommodation, the number of homeless, sadly, is rising steadily. Anything we can do is massively appreciated.

When I last wrote about MWNS in November's *Trinity News*, I talked about the financing of the central support. I expressed the hope that Trinity could raise over £2,000 at its Christmas collections and at Gift Day; in fact, we should be giving over £2,500 once all the online contributions have been totted up, which is a fantastic result.

While Trinity's own input to the project is very important, its contribution to the collective effort with thirteen other faith groups to provide 1200 bedspaces over a 14-week period from December to mid-March, is the icing on the cake; it provides a service that is literally 'life-saving' and 'life-changing'.

If you are interested in becoming a part of this amazing project, I'd be delighted to hear from you.

- Robin Goodchild (robinnapiergoodchild@gmail.com
[and/or 07714-095007](tel:07714095007))

Trinity Lent Bible Study 2025 Preview

The Wonder and Beauty of the Trinity + Spiritual Formation

Embark on a transformative journey this Lent to deepen your understanding and awe of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In this *Renovaré* Lent course, we will delve into the profound mystery of the Trinity and its practical implications for our spiritual formation. This course is designed to be both intellectually stimulating and accessible for all. Each week will include video lessons, guidebooks, and opportunities for group discussions or personal reflections.

13 March - Week 1: What is God Like?

Focus: Explore the nature and attributes of God.

20 March - Week 2: Understanding the Trinity

Focus: Gain insights into the Triune nature of God.

27 March - Week 3: Revelational, Dimensional Mystery

Focus: Uncover the layers of mystery surrounding the Trinity.

3 April - Week 4: Wrong and Right Thinking on the Trinity

Focus: Correct misconceptions and embrace accurate theological perspectives.

10 April - Week 5: An Eternal Community of Loving Persons & Implications for Spiritual Formation

Focus: Discover the relational aspect of the Trinity and learn how it shapes our spiritual growth.

Whether you are a church member or a curious seeker, this Lent course offers a rich and accessible exploration of the Trinity and its significance for your spiritual formation.





Why are there little brass frames on the pew ledges?

Have you ever wondered what those little brass frames at the end of the pews are for? They have been there since the church was built in 1891.



When Trinity was founded, one of its main sources of income was 'Seat rents', later known as 'Pew rents'. Surprising as it may seem to us, members of the congregation paid an amount to the Church - usually quarterly - to reserve a pew and their name was placed on a card in that little brass frame. Single people and couples either occupied one of the shorter pews or shared one, and large families reserved one of the longer pews. This is why the pews vary in length.

This was an important source of funding and in the early days the rent represented a high proportion of Trinity's total income - in 1900, for example, £309 out of a total income of £962. And Trinity was not alone in using this system - it was quite normal, especially in Free churches of the Victorian era, though gradually becoming less popular into the twentieth century.

Pew rents created problems for the Deacons (Welcomers). When visitors arrived, they had to be shown to an unreserved pew, of which there were comparatively few as the congregation grew. If somebody unknowingly sat in somebody else's pew they could be - and sometimes were! - asked to move elsewhere.

Income from Pew rents declined as fewer people rented their pews. It was usually under £100 per annum when, in 1945, Session decided that renters should be asked whether they would agree to bring an end to the scheme and make all seats in Trinity 'free'. They agreed by a large majority and Pew rents ended that year.



Christian Aid's 80th anniversary year



This year marks Christian Aid's 80th anniversary and 80 years of impact. Ever since its foundation in 1945 to support refugees in Europe following the Second World War, Christian Aid has worked tirelessly with its supporters, churches and partners around the world to tackle poverty and injustice.

Watch the video here: <https://bit.ly/3PKFkLJ>

"As a Christian Aid supporter who gives, acts and prays with us, you're part of a global community making a lasting difference. It is thanks to your support that Christian Aid and our partners are able to offer hope to communities who need it most. There's still so much we can do, and with your continued support we can do it."

Christian Aid Week 2025 will be from Monday 11 May to Sunday 17 May.

Greener Giving Holiday Pop Up Market

On Sunday 1 December Trinity, in collaboration with, and to raise money for Sustainable Merton held an event at Wimbledon Quarter.

This was the first time we'd held the Eco Day in another venue, and it was a big success. We were located next to the ice rink which was busy all day.

Formerly Centre Court Shopping Centre, Wimbledon Quarter has a large footfall owing to the shops and food stalls. It is now a family run community focused centre which is very happy to let the local community use their space for no fee (at the moment!) alongside the shops and cafés.



Sustainable Merton took a very active role in the organization of the venue and the marketing, while Trinity arranged the stall holders and the plan for the day.

Alongside twenty stall holders, all selling ethical, eco-friendly crafts and goods, we ran a 'make and take' table where visitors could select items from a Pick 'n Mix box (old fabric remnants, buttons, card, tissue paper...) and make a Christmas card or gift tags. This proved very popular amongst children and adults and was busy all the time.

We also had a Christmas Tree where people could write a pledge and hang it on the tree.

The event raised £1,050 for Sustainable Merton which was excellent. Thank you to all those who helped at the event and all those who came along to support us.



The Bible Society - over 200 years and counting

The story of the Bible Society and its founding revolves around three remarkable, yet markedly different, individuals: a determined Welsh girl (Mary Jones), a visionary Welsh pastor (the Revd Joseph Hughes), and a campaigning MP (William Wilberforce). Read more about them and their stories here: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-us/our-history>



On 7 March 1804, at a meeting of around 300 at the London Tavern in Bishopsgate, Wilberforce, and the campaigning groups of which he was a part, formed the British and Foreign Bible Society. At this moment, they could only begin to imagine what this society would achieve in the coming years.



"Since that day over 200 years ago, the British and Foreign Bible Society has become Bible Society – a charity committed to offering the Bible to the world.

We have won the admiration of royalty, including George III and Elizabeth II. Our work has survived, even thrived, through the unfolding events of two World Wars. We persevered to find openings in the communist Soviet Union and during the Cultural Revolution in China. There are now about 150 local Bible Societies around the world, which undertake the work in their locations. In 2011, we celebrated the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible with cultural events across the country.

Today, we stand on the shoulders of these giants of our past – Mary Jones, Revd Joseph Hughes, William Wilberforce and others – committed to faithfully living out their belief that the Bible should be made available for every man, woman and child in the world."

The Bible Society's website, in addition to its history, offers an online Bible, news and articles, resources including some for families and children, courses, devotions, and a shop. All can be found at www.biblesociety.org.uk.