



TRINITY CHURCH ABINGDON



ANNUAL REPORT 2022 / 2023

FOREWORD FOR TRINITY CHURCH REPORT

Dear Friends,

I can hardly believe that this will be the last Annual Report that I have the joy of introducing. As ever, this report shows the dedicated commitment of so many people to the church and the wider community at Trinity. As you read, you will see that we are richly blessed in so many ways. This report gives attention to our fellowship, our worship and our mission. There is a great deal to celebrate and give thanks to God for.

Trinity holds a very special place in many people's hearts, made perhaps more obvious through the particular celebrations of Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals, but also because Trinity is where so many people from our community meet together. That may be through Toddlers, Evergreens, uniformed organisations, SOFEA and so the list goes on. We have also hosted things like community consultations by Thames Water for example. This report represents a church that is not only faithful to Christ, but lives out its calling within the Abingdon community.

Sometimes, we can think that our premises are used and hired and have very little to do with Church or mission. Yet this year in particular I have heard people comment on the writing in the Hall.



It has clearly encouraged, inspired and reminded people in a clear, yet gentle way. In many ways it helps us all to remember that everything can be taken to God in prayer.

This report feels like a springboard into the future. We have a firm foundation on which to build. Of course, nothing stays the same forever, and we are a church in a decidedly less Christian country than it once was. However the generosity and grace of Trinity and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are clearly evident in all that this report contains.

I pray that this report will be a source of encouragement, a resource for prayer, and that we can do as it says in Proverbs chapter 4: "Look straight ahead with honest confidence", and do so as we fulfil that Great Commission: "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19, 20)

Every Blessing



Trinity Church Abingdon,
Annual Report
September 2022 – August 2023

CHURCH MEETING & TRUSTEES' REPORT	7
Worship.....	7
Ministry	9
Personnel	12
Church Charity Support	13
The Charity of Richard Belcher	13
Policies	13
Finance	14
Property	15
Sustainability & Conversations with All Saints	15
Other Matters	15
Dates for Future Meetings	17
In Conclusion	17
FINANCE REPORT	18
PROPERTY REPORT	18
SUSTAINABILITY	20
DIACONAL REPORT	21
CHURCH NEWS	25
Baptisms	25
In Celebration	25
In Memoriam	25
Stewards' Report	25
Bible Reading Rota	26
SPONSORING BODY NEWS	27
Circuit Stewards' Report for Autumn 2023	27
Wessex Synod of the URC	28
MISSION & OUTREACH	30
Church in Abingdon	30

Action for Children	30
Mission	31
TrinityLearning	32
Church and Hall Bookings.....	35
MINISTRY OF PASTORAL CARE, FELLOWSHIP & SUPPORT	36
Evergreen Club	36
Friendship Group	37
Prayer Support Group	37
Trinity Thursday Group	37
Trinity Triangle	38
YOUNG PEOPLE’S MINISTRY.....	39
JaM / Crèche	39
Trinity Brownies	39
Trinity Guides	42
Trinity Scout Group	43
Trinity Toddlers	46
MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY.....	48
Coffee	48
Trinity Garden	48
Housekeeping.....	48
IN CONCLUSION	49
Don’t forget.....	52

CHURCH MEETING & TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees met on 6th November 2022, 10th January, 1st February, 7th March, 22nd March, 9th May, 20th July and 7th September 2023. They also met for a one-item agenda (sustainability) meeting on November 8th 2022 and a further special meeting on November 22nd 2022 (future ministry).

The AGM took place on Sunday 6th November 2022. Other Church Meetings took place on 28th September 2022, 19th February, 26th April and 17th May, 2023.

Trustees for the church year 2022-2023

Cynthia Bartlett

Ian Brawn

Alastair Fear

Revd. Ian Griffiths

Carolyn Hawkes

Tom Kyffin

Malcolm Newton

Dcn. Selina Nisbett

Neil Oastler

Heather Townsend

Stuart Townsend

During most meetings of the Trustees this year the major topics for discussion were future ordained ministry for Trinity and challenges relating to the Methodist Circuit Plan, property and sustainability issues, developing the relationship with All Saints Methodist Church (All Saints) and preparations required for the Church Meetings in November, February, April and May.

A number of papers and documents were circulated and email correspondence undertaken in between the meetings. A number of the Trustees were involved in work related to the buildings and to acquiring more relevant information about sustainability. Some were also involved in small subgroups in relation to sustainability or ongoing property issues or in meetings with All Saints.

Worship

Worship in the church, for many members, resumed fully after the pandemic restrictions were removed. Trinity joined together with All Saints for worship on 23rd April, 18th June and 23rd July at All Saints and on 16th April, 11th June and 30th July at Trinity. Trinity people were invited to a Joint Autumn Supper at All Saints on Saturday 12th November 2022 and Trinity invited the congregation at All Saints to join them for lunch after the service on 30th July.

Special services this year included:

Harvest Festival – Sunday 9th October 2022

Food gifts were given to the Abingdon Foodbank and cash donations to Asylum Welcome.

Christmas Services 2022

4th December: Christmas Gift Service with baptisms at 10.30am led by Selina

18th December: Carol Service at 4.30pm

24th December: 4.30pm Christingle Service led by Selina, the collection in aid of Action for Children

25th December: 10 am Christmas morning service led by Selina

Easter Services 2023

Maundy Thursday: Evening service at Abingdon Baptist Church
led by Revd. Rachel Hughes

Good Friday: 10am at Trinity led by Revd. Ian Griffiths

Easter Sunday: 10.30am at Trinity led by Revd. Ian Griffiths.

Special services planned for autumn 2023:

Sunday 24th September 10.30am: Harvest Festival. Once again food will be given to the local Foodbank and cash to Asylum Welcome.

Sunday 26th November 10.30am: Anniversary Service,
commemorating 150 years since the laying of the Church foundation stones.

Sunday 10th December 10.30am: A Civic Service, led by Dcn. Selina Nisbett
(The Mayor's Chaplain this year)

Christmas Services 2023

3rd December 10.30am: Gift Service led by Dcn. Selina Nisbett

10th December 10.30am: 4pm Carol Service, led by Revd. Ian Griffiths

Sunday 24th December: There will be NO MORNING SERVICE

4pm: Christingle Service, led by Dcn. Selina Nisbett

Monday 25th December 10am: Christmas Day Service led by Revd. Ian Griffiths



Seating for worship

During the year, a number of possible seating arrangements for the church were trialled and both the Trustees and members of the congregation gave their views on such arrangements. The current arrangement provides wider aisles and greater

access to the seating. The number of excess chairs has been reduced and the different needs of individuals in relation to worship have been taken into account.

Coffee/tea arrangements at the end of the service

The trolley purchased at the beginning of autumn 2022 has been used throughout the year and the system, which enables safe movement of hot drinks and sufficient accessibility, seems to be working well. The Trustees are grateful to all those who provide coffee and tea after the morning services.

Ministry

Background

When the Methodist and United Reformed churches came together in Abingdon, it was assumed that normal practice would rotate ordained ministry from one denomination to the other. Trinity has a history of having, at one point, two ministers, one from each denomination, and then a full-time minister from one or other denominations. However, as time has moved on, both denominations have found it increasingly difficult to fill vacancies. Revd Ian Griffiths' appointment in 2014 was understood to be at most a half time appointment at Trinity, given his additional responsibility for All Saints Methodist Church in Abingdon. Given the history of rotation, it would normally be expected that the URC would provide the next minister for Trinity. However the wider context of the URC means there are fewer ministers that can be scoped in this area, and the Methodist Circuit faces a situation where the number of members in the Circuit cannot support three Presbyters across its eight churches. In addition to this, the Circuit as a whole would now struggle to afford that level of ordained ministry even if the post could be filled.



During 2022-2023, the Trustees discussed issues relating to future ordained ministerial support for Trinity. On the morning of 22nd November 2022, the Trustees met with Clare Downing (URC Moderator of the Wessex Province), Keith Underhill (Superintendent of the Wantage and Abingdon Circuit), Carolyn Roche (Senior Circuit Steward), and Gordon Skidmore (Circuit Treasurer) to discuss future ministry. The current situation for both Trinity and All Saints Methodist Church was complicated and both the URC and the Methodist Church had a shortage of ministers. The different processes and practices of the two denominations in relation to a change of ministry were outlined and the difficulties discussed. Related topics discussed included finance, leadership and the provision for Holy Communion.

The Church Meetings in February 2023 and April 2023 also discussed future ministry. For the April meeting, Revd. Ray Stanyon, the Development and Support Officer for the Wessex Synod, Revd. Glyn Millington, the URC Ecumenical Officer for Oxfordshire (URC ministers representing the Wessex Synod) and Revd. John Anderson, the

Methodist Ecumenical Officer for Oxfordshire were present and in May, the URC Wessex representatives attended again together with Carolyn Roche and Gordon Skidmore, Circuit Stewards.

The current situation relating to ministry in both denominations was outlined at the Church Meeting in February. The Methodist Church had more vacancies than ministers to fill them and this had been the case for the last few years. Technically ministers are appointed to circuits and not to individual churches. There were three ministers in the Circuit currently but by 2025, there would be two, whose ministry would be divided between seven churches (Childrey and Wantage are now effectively one church). The Methodist Church has had some vacancies in recent years.

The URC position was similar. There were more vacancies than ministers available. However, the system was different: ministers were attached to a specific church or, as most ministers are now, to groups of churches. Across the UK, ministers have not been evenly spread and so the Wessex Synod has had a moratorium on appointments for the last few years in order to enable ministry to meet the demands equally throughout the country and it was reported that this was likely to be the case until at least 2026. Normal practice has, in the last few years, therefore involved a vacancy in churches of at least 18 months to 2 years. Realistically the likelihood of getting a URC minister in the near future, who would be attached to Trinity and other local churches, was remote.

Further discussion took place in the Church Meeting in April and it was decided that the matter would be put to a vote in the May meeting. In the Church Meeting in May 2023, Ian confirmed that he would be leaving the Circuit at the end of August 2024. He noted that he and Tabitha would have lived longer in Abingdon (10 years) than anywhere else since they had left university.

At the May Church Meeting, it was confirmed that both the Methodist Church and the URC would support Trinity in whatever ways they could, whichever way the vote would go. It was also noted that the Trustees had discussed these matters but were clear that the Church Meeting should have the opportunity to vote without being 'steered' in any particular direction.

A secret ballot was then held on the question: 'Which church should we approach for help with ministry 2024-2029?' The result was: Methodist Church: 20 votes, URC: 1 vote

The Circuit was then informed that Trinity would like to approach the Methodist Church for ministry between 2024-2029. The expectation would be that URC traditions would continue to be, as now, respected. This vote had been taken because Trinity is a Local Ecumenical Partnership and it was noted that this was one of the ways in which Trinity was different from All Saints.

Wantage and Abingdon Methodist Circuit Plans

During the April Church Meeting, Ian introduced some of the future concerns about the leadership of services which arose from considering the Preaching Plan. By September 2025, there will be two active presbyters across the 8 or 9 churches in the Circuit; there was already a shortfall of lay preachers and others might well retire shortly. Churches were already being asked to make local arrangements for some services. Ian illustrated the problem by indicating to the meeting a shortfall of 19 services in three months which would not be covered.

Four different Preaching Plans were presented as examples for churches to consider of different ways in which the shortfall of preachers might be met. One involved changing the times of some of the Sunday services; another assumed that churches would be willing to unite for one service a month, reducing the shortfall to 10; another provided an example where, for three churches – Wantage, Wallingford and All Saints – ministerial appointments would be prioritised, still leaving 19 services as Local Arrangements and the last, more radical, proposal suggested three worship centres in Wantage, Wallingford and Abingdon.

In the Trustees' meeting in May, a discussion about leadership in worship reflected on issues relating to the use of lay preachers, and the possibility of groups within churches leading worship sometimes. It was thought that more use might be made of URC lay preachers and the kind offer from Revd. Ray Stanyon to lead worship at Trinity once a year was noted. It was agreed that an offer of £30 as a fee to lay preachers would be reasonable and the possibility of offering travelling expenses at 30p per mile which not all lay preachers would be likely to claim.

Sabbatical

Dcn. Selina embarked on her sabbatical in September 2022 and completed it at the end of November. The project she chose to explore during this time related to her work in school, and to a particular occasion on which she was offering pastoral support to a child attending the funeral of a grandparent. She was aware that many children would have no knowledge of what to expect on such an occasion and so she developed the idea of a model crematorium which would be accessible to children of all faiths or none. The September edition of the Triangle (2023) contains an article written by Selina about the project and its development.

Profile for a new minister:

In July 2023, starting with the profile which had been produced for the appointment of Revd. Ian Griffiths, the Trustees made some suggestions for Trinity's contribution to the profile and a draft was drawn up. Space was limited and the draft needed to include All Saints' comments as well. The final draft was circulated to all the Trustees and sent to the Circuit steward.

Personnel

Verger

Tom Jarratt gave the Trustees notice of his retirement as verger at the end of February. On Sunday March 19th, the church made a presentation of a card and a voucher to Tom to mark the occasion. Tom has been involved in work on the premises of one sort or another since 1995 and in the last twenty years or more has taken on the role of caretaker, organising and taking part in the maintenance of the church and the Conduit Centre. He will still continue to act as verger for wedding and funerals and with arrangements for school services. The congregation celebrated his work for the Church with coffee, tea and cake after the service.



The Trustees discussed the roles which Tom had taken and those responsibilities which now needed to be reassigned or managed differently and the Trustees are gradually working to finalise arrangements.

The following roles have been filled during the year:

- Safeguarding Officer: Ian Brawn
- Christian Aid representative: Adam Hagar
- Leader of the Prayer Group: Ruth Dams
- Evergreen secretary: Rebecca Brawn
- Payroll: Gwen Carter and Neil Oastler

The Trustees are very grateful to those who have agreed to take on these responsibilities and for the work they are doing.

Note: Ian kindly organised Foundation Level Safeguarding training on 29th March at Trinity which Keith Underhill led. This was well attended.

The Joint Church Council:

Those present at the November Church Meeting 2022 confirmed that they were happy to continue with the Joint Church Council as appointed in 2021:

Methodist Representation: Neil Oastler, Malcolm Newton, Selina Nesbitt and Heather Townsend

URC representation: Rosemary Richards, Eve Newton, Cynthia Bartlett and Margaret Langsford

Appointments of Trustees

In November 2022, Alastair Fear's three-year term of office had been completed. He was prepared to stand again as a Trustee and the meeting was delighted to appoint

him for a further term. During this first term, he had given advice as the Health and Safety Officer and had completed work in relation to the Archives.

November 2023 marks the end of the term of office for Neil Oastler. Heather Townsend and Stuart Townsend, all of whom have expressed a willingness to serve another term. The Trustees have been very appreciative of the contribution they have made and continue to make, both to the meetings and to the work of the Church. There are also two vacancies carried forward from last year. Therefore, the Church may elect two more Trustees.

Church Charity Support

Commitment for Life: Trinity donated £100 to this charity this year.

Crisis in Oxford: at the Church Meeting in September 2022, the rise in homelessness and rough sleepers in Oxford was noted and it was agreed that this year, 2022-2023, the church would support Crisis in Oxford. In December 2022, the Triangle included an article by Ruth Dams about the work of the charity and on Sunday 11th December, Ian 'launched' the year's collection for the charity. In the Church Meeting in May 2023, it was reported that the church had already raised over £1000 for Crisis.

The Food Bank: It was possible in the early summer of 2023 to begin once more supporting the Food Bank. The food will now be given to the Food Bank at Christ Church Abingdon and Katie Doney kindly offered to transport the food there.

Action for Children: A coffee morning was held on Saturday 19th November and £460 was raised. The proceeds of the Christingle service were also devoted to Action for Children and the home boxes were collected in during December 2022.

See also Mission & Outreach p 30 - 32

The Charity of Richard Belcher

The Trustees met on 6th November 2022 and 9th May 2023

The accounts for 2021-22 were approved in November and in May Tom Kyffin reported that there was now £4750 available in the account to be spent. He was also glad to report that the fund was now earning a little more interest.

The Trustees would in due course need to consider how this might be spent but it was decided to hold this sum in the account for the time being.

Policies

The Trustees have reviewed and approved, with amendments where appropriate, the following policies during the year:

- Capability Policy (reviewed May 2023)
- Policy for Funerals and the interment of ashes on the Church site (reviewed September 2023)
- Trinity GDPR Report and Data mapping Exercise (March 2023)

- Health and Safety (reviewed July 2023)
- Safeguarding (annual review May 2023)
- Lettings (reviewed July 2023)
- Equality policy (reviewed May 2023)
- Disciplinary Procedure (reviewed May 2023)
- Grievance Procedure (reviewed May 2023)

Safeguarding and Health and Safety

Both policies have been reviewed and updated this year and the Trustees are grateful to Ian Brawn and to Alastair Fear for their work for the Church with regard to the monitoring and overseeing of practice in relation to the respective policies.

Finance

Tom Kyffin, the Treasurer, has reported on the financial position of the Church in each of the Trustees' meetings and in the Church meetings held within the last year. During the year, the Trustees have discussed how to maintain and increase the regularity of freewill giving, how savings might be made and ways in which the Conduit Centre might increase its lettings.

In November 2022, the Church Meeting noted that the payments made by those who wished to have paper copies of the Triangle and the advertising income received now covered the costs of Triangle production. In summer 2023, Triangle acquired a new computer doctor advertiser!

In response to the paper by Eluned circulated to the Trustees in autumn 2022 and the discussion which followed, further consideration was given to different rates and practices. In January 2023, charging policies in relation to lettings and weddings and funerals were reviewed by the Trustees who are grateful to Tom, Ian and Eluned for their subsequent work in checking and setting rates. Much information has now been gathered and new rates will continue to be set in accordance with comparative local rates and with regard to the increasing utilities costs.

Following earlier discussion in the Trustees' meetings, in February 2023, it was reported that letters addressed to church members, asking for increased voluntary giving, had been written and addressed and the Trustees made arrangements for their delivery. The response from the congregation was very encouraging as may be seen from the financial statement for this year.

During this year, following specific needs raised in the Property reports, Trustees have authorised additional payments when needed in order to make the buildings safe and usable. However, the Trustees have discussed a number of other repairs/replacements which are likely to need to be done within the next five years.

The Trustees and the Church Meeting have expressed their gratitude to Tom Kyffin both for the work completed on the accounts but also for his careful monitoring of

the financial situation and his sound knowledge and advice from which the Trustees and the Church Meeting continue to benefit. (See also p 18)

Property

The Trustees are most grateful to Ken and Lin Clarke, Alastair Fear, Adam Hagar, Nick Hallas, Tom Jarratt, Malcolm Newton, Neil Oastler, Heather and Stuart Townsend, Reg Williams, and Eluned for their continued vigilance and willingness to take appropriate action on property matters relating to the premises within the last year. The Trustees have received regular property updates from Malcolm Newton and Neil Oastler at their meetings and have discussed a number of issues raised.

At the end of February, the Trustees received a report following a meeting with Savills, a commercial agency, which had reviewed options relating to the site and to the potential use of the Church and the Conduit Centre, including estimated rental value.

(See also p 18)

Sustainability & Conversations with All Saints

The Trustees held an additional, one-item agenda meeting on 8th November relating to sustainability and this issue formed part of most of the Trustees' meetings during the year. In March, the Trustees received and discussed advice from a senior solicitor from Blake Morgan LLP who had written a report on legal matters relating to the property. This had been done as a free service for Methodist Church clients. However, any further advice would need to be paid for.

In April the Church Meeting had a further opportunity to discuss in some detail issues relating to finance and sustainability.

Conversations have taken place with members of Trinity and of All Saints about the desirability of joining together as one church. There has been an awareness of the difficulties in providing ministry, including lay ministry and that, as the congregations are not getting younger, there are significant challenges, not just in financial terms, which need to be faced. The Trustees have discussed these issues during the year and on 26th April 2023, the Church Meeting discussed sustainability and questions related to where worship might take place in future and the possibility of merging the congregations of Trinity and All Saints. These discussions are ongoing. (See also p 20)

Other Matters

Growth Plan 2018-2021

A formal **review** of the Growth Plan has been postponed this year because of the need for discussions on ministry and sustainability.

The Toddler Group

At the Trustees meeting in May, the salary of the leader of the Toddler Group was reviewed. (See also p 46)

The Church Garden

Visitors this year continue to comment on the beautiful and well-kept garden at Trinity. The Toddler Group have used the garden several times in the summer and this has been a great asset. The Trustees have expressed gratitude to Heather and Stuart Townsend and others who helped to ensure that the garden continues to be carefully reviewed and looked after.

TrinityLearning

The Trustees welcomed the arrangements being made to host Experience Easter in the Church once again. Between 21st March and 23rd March, 200 children from St Edmunds School, Carswell School and St Nicolas School were welcomed to Trinity and another 200 children were involved in activities online. The Trustees are grateful to Nicola Williams and her team and to the Trustees of TrinityLearning for the regular updates of the work of the charity which have been circulated in Triangle. The profit raised from the Joint Lunch held at Trinity to which the All Saints congregation were invited was given to TrinityLearning.

(See also p 32)

The Church in Abingdon

The Baptist Church: In early December 2022, Revd. Rachel Hughes was inducted into the pastorate at Abingdon Baptist Church.

CiA News: Trinity continues to appreciate the work of Debra Mcknight, the CiA Administrator, for the production of the CiA news which provides a range of excellent information about the local churches, local events and the work and activities of local related groups meeting in Abingdon. Much of what is included is circulated to Trinity through the Church Notices and through the Triangle. (See also p 30)

Circuit Matters

Trinity Church Meetings were all attended by a representative from the Circuit.

On Saturday 4th March 2023, an Open Methodist Circuit Meeting was held at All Saints and this meeting focused on the future sustainability of ministry in the Circuit. Members of all churches in the Circuit were invited to discuss the matters which were arising from the documents circulated and to share their views and suggestions. Circuit representatives from Trinity attended Circuit meetings during the year.

New appointment to the Circuit: Revd. Bruce Thompson was welcomed into the Circuit on Saturday 2nd September at Didcot Methodist Church. This is a two year appointment.

(See also p 27)

URC Involvement

On Sunday 2nd October 2022, a service was held in Trinity to mark the 50th anniversary of the URC. The national celebration due to be on 1st October 2022 in London had to be postponed due to train strikes and was held in April 2023.

We have been grateful to the Wessex Synod for advice and guidance during this year and particularly to Revd. Ray Stanyon and Revd. Glyn Millington for their support while matters of ministry have been discussed.

Memorial Book

In September 2022, the Trustees noted that the Memorial Book had been brought up to date and returned to the Church. Our thanks go to Petronella Rasmussen.

Table-Top Sale 4th February 2023

This had been suggested as an alternative to the Christmas Fair and was well attended. Tables were taken by Abingdon Baptist Church, Carswell School PTA, Trinity Learning, the 6th Abingdon Guides, local artist Margaret Horton, as well as other neighbours and friends. Trinity folk ran some 'fair' tables - cakes, scarves, jewellery, preserves - as well as some with more personal offerings - dresses, baby clothes, ornaments, toys - while the tombola was great fun as its odds



With thanks to the Abingdon Blog

gradually shortened. The kitchen did its usual busy trade in bacon butties, and all this together created an ethos which enabled people to enjoy themselves and enjoy being together, at the same time as raising funds. A good morning all round.

The Trustees were appreciative of the work which Malcolm Newton and others did to arrange and organise this sale.

Dates for Future Meetings

Trustees' Meetings:

Thursday 9th November 2023

Tuesday 16th January 2023

Tuesday 12th March 2024

Thursday 9th May 2024

Thursday 6th July 2024

Church Meetings scheduled:

Sunday 15th October 2023 AGM

Sunday 25th February 2024

Thursday 30th May 2024

In Conclusion

Visitors to Trinity's meetings have commented on several occasions on the positive and thoughtful way in which members of Trinity have faced the challenges this year. The support which people continue to provide in a great variety of ways is not taken for granted and results in helping to keep Trinity moving forward, in spiritual matters

and practical concerns and in mission. Both the Trustees' Meetings and the Church Meetings have again recognised the helpful guidance, reminders and considerable effort which Eluned provides in the Church office. The collation of the annual report, and the considerable work completed for GDPR, in addition to the weekly support and encouragement for worship arrangements and community use of the Conduit Centre form just part of her work for which we are all grateful.

*Cynthia Bartlett on behalf of the Trustees
October 2023*

FINANCE REPORT

Although the annual accounts have yet to undergo independent examination, we can report that they show that we had a small surplus of just under £3,000 in 2022/23. This time last year we were predicting a large deficit of around £20,000+. There are three main factors that have improved our financial position in the last 12 months these are:

1. We received two bequests totalling £12,000;
2. Interest rates increased significantly during the last year, so our savings and investment interest was almost £9,000 more than in 2021/22;
3. Earlier this year we asked members to review their freewill giving and the congregation responded very generously, increasing their donations by an average of 15%. This, together with the associated Gift Aid increased freewill giving by £4,000 in the financial year. This increase in giving was only for part of the financial year, so the impact will be greater in 2023/24. The Trustees would like to thank everyone for responding so readily to our appeal.

Tom Kyffin

PROPERTY REPORT

We were very pleased, (for all the right reasons), that Tom Jarratt retired earlier this year from operating the boilers and heating system in both the Church and the Conduit Centre, other than being very happy to offer advice, (which is invaluable). Adam Hager, Nick Hallas, Reg Williams and Malcolm Newton now operate the Church boilers on a monthly rota.

Heating in the Church (from 8.2.23) and the Conduit Centre (from 2.2.23) is now controlled remotely on a Hive system, both buildings from the broadband facility in the Conduit Centre. Success in reaching the Church via the existing CC broadband owes much to the ingenuity of Josh Harris, (our heating engineer), and Nick Hallas. All of the anticipated benefits have, so far, been realized. For example, a great deal of use is made of the Centre by different groups; some of these groups are better served by different temperatures; variations in temperature may lead to small cost

savings; and there is some variety week by week in the bookings, sometimes at short notice. Because of the extent and variety of use, Eluned and Nick continue to deal with the heating in the Conduit Centre. Being able to do so remotely means that Eluned is 'on call' out of hours a good deal less than presently. The Church boiler room will continue to be visited at least monthly.

Water heating and central heating in the Conduit Centre operate from the one boiler, but now independently of each other again when required. The necessary wiring repair was completed on 8.3.23.

Repairs to Church boiler 2 were completed on December 4, and it was possible thereafter to restore normal heating in the Church. (Members may remember how cold it was!) A service on the Church and CC boilers and a gas safety check were also completed. Further gas safety checks for the Conduit Centre were satisfactorily completed on 16.2.23.

- Annual Property Return: completed w/e 11 November, 2022.
- Annual Test & Service of CC Fire Alarm System: done by Chubb on 8 Dec., 2022.
- Guttering of the Church and the Conduit Centre cleaned w/b 30.1.23; and a safeguard installed to protect the gutter outside the Minister's vestry and help prevent the ingress of water.
- Lightning conductor passed its annual test on 20.1.23.
- Personal Appliance Testing (PAT) satisfactorily completed on 27.2.23 & 3.3.23.
- Lights over the stairs in the Conduit Centre replaced on 8.3.23 to give immediate full illumination.
- Slab levelled near Church outside tap to eliminate possible trip hazard (9.1.23)
- Easing of bottom inner door and repair to bottom outer door of Conduit Centre completed on 22.3.23 to allow ready access and egress to and from the CC, for both normal use and in emergencies.
- Paving stone at entrance to driveway, a potential trip-hazard, excavated and re-seated 14.4.23.
- Ceiling light bulbs in CC storage cupboard replaced (27.5.23)
- SOFEA fridge installed in CC storage cupboard; Church fridge-freezer moved to other side of cupboard to accommodate it. (8.6.23 & following week).
- Door handle mechanism to the loo next to the Gents loo/Cleaners in CC Reception Area replaced 28.6.23. Failure of mechanism on 22.6.23 caused the (very) early morning imprisonment of a Toddler adult for a short while. This is the second door handle mechanism to be repaired/replaced. Should another fail, we plan to replace the remainder with heavy duty mechanisms, (as has been done this time). The additional cost is not significant.

The list above gives some idea of the range and size of the work involved as far as property is concerned. Other larger jobs – for example, addressing the efflorescing plaster on some of the walls of the church – await decisions on sustainability; and this

year, (at the time of writing on 9.8.23), no major repairs or work have been necessary.

If you're at all buildings-minded, have a word: there's always plenty to do!

*Malcolm Newton and Reg Williams
& on behalf of Adam, Alastair, Ken, Nick, and Tom J,
with thanks to Eluned for her constant monitoring of fabric and fittings.*

SUSTAINABILITY

The Trustees have continued throughout the year to grapple with all of the issues around the immediate and long-term sustainability of Trinity. The annual budget deficit continues to be a concern. However, a generous response to an appeal to the membership in early 2023 to increase free-will giving, and an increase in investment income has given us a little temporary breathing room.

The Circuit as a whole and other churches within the Circuit face similar problems. The Circuit Plus special meeting identified that the Circuit had no option but to reduce the number of presbyters to two from the current three in 2025 and the idea of having three worshipping centres across the Circuit was muted. A further Circuit Plus meeting will take place in October 2023.

Logically one of the worshipping centres will be Abingdon based, which gives fresh impetus to the prospect of the worshipping communities at Trinity and All Saints working more closely together.

Consideration has begun as to whether a formal merger is a viable option.

To this end representatives of Trinity and All Saints Trustees and Stewards have met to consider the feasibility of this and will continue to meet in the coming months. Trinity has already sought a professional appraisal of our facilities in Conduit Road, but at present All Saints are not as advanced as us with this process but have the matter in hand.

Current mission profiles and future aspirations have been shared.

At present no firm decisions have been made as to the future direction of travel.

Independent guidance and advice will be sought as all of the options are considered, be that merging and worshipping at Trinity; merging and worshipping at All Saints and leaving Conduit Road entirely; continuing to worship and base mission at both sites or remaining independent and rejecting merger. Whatever is decided it will only be with the agreement of both worshipping communities.

Neil Oastler

DIACONAL REPORT

Dear Friends

I cannot really believe that the Methodist Church has begun a new Connexional year, and that of course means it is time for another report! My year began with my Sabbatical from September until the end of November, (which I have previously written about in the Triangle), and I eventually emerged into a terribly hectic December. I have decided to break down my report into the liturgical seasons this time.



ADVENT/ CHRISTMAS

The season of Advent began with the Nativity at Rush Common preschool based at All Saints and it was a real joy to be a part of this and to see what I had prepared for them in the summer come alive!

Another joy for me was the Carswell Key Stage 1 Nativity at Trinity. I always marvel at how the children cope with the overwhelming size of Trinity, and the confidence they have in sharing the account of the birth of Jesus in their own beautiful way ALWAYS makes my heart sing!



We ended the Toddler term at Trinity with a Christmas Celebration service in the Church, with my puppet family champing at the bit, eager to have their moment of fame, and they all did so well! Father Christmas gave up some of his precious time to visit us to give out presents for which we were most grateful and I hear he is returning this year! **All are welcome to our end of term services.**

I was delighted to be invited to put together the Carol service for All Saints last year, the theme of which was “from the stars to the manger,” a service of wondering and longing in confounding times.

Christingle took shape at Trinity around a few tables in the Conduit Centre, as a team of sterling volunteers bagged up the contents for a DIY Christingle which were given out at the service on Christmas Eve. We used up all 60 oranges which were given to children and glow sticks to little ones so with parents and other family members we had an excellent turn out.

On Christmas Day at Trinity, I led a service which was based on the nativity scene and the (possible!) animals around the manger, and it was a joy to have plenty of visitors. Thankfully, Ahmed the camel, donkey and sheep and oxen were all well behaved as we explored who Jesus is through the attributes of these animals.

The Manse window was decorated for Christmas again, and this year following the death of Raymond Briggs, I decided to offer a tribute to him in the form of a wintry scene and the snowman, who eventually made his way to the board

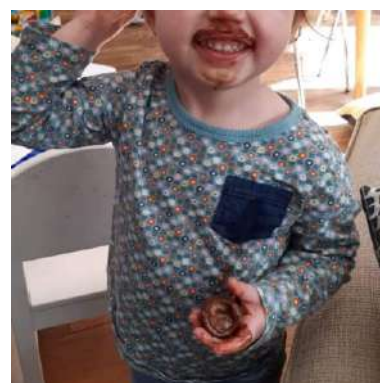


at Trinity Toddlers, but not before he received his very own Christmas card from a nearby resident!

LENT/ EASTER

I was pleased to lead all age Palm Sunday service at Trinity, and it was good to see some of our children and young people participating in our parade. Everyone participated in our Palm Sunday prayers written on donkeys.

Donkey came to tell our toddlers about the first Easter day at our end of term service and we made the Easter Garden for Trinity. All the children got a crochet chick which I had made with a chocolate egg, and I am more than grateful to Lindsay for helping to sew them together!



I was really privileged to accompany All Saints Church for the rest of Holy week, leading the Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday services with Rev'd Eileen Appleyard (who was once a Deacon!) I found it to be a very moving way of journeying through the 3 days and I was once again aware of how the two orders of ministry overtly come together in the Maundy Thursday service as we "walked in the footsteps" of Jesus, through the sacrament of service in the washing of hands, and in the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Good Friday afforded me an opportunity to write a service based on the "Crux Fidelis", which had been in my head for a long time! (*The Crux Fidelis is a hymn about the cross of Christ written in the year CE 570 by Venantius Fortunatis and it rejoices in the victory over sin and death, by Christ, the New Adam, and the Cross [Crux]/ the tree of life*). It focussed upon the stories of four significant trees in the world, and their relationship

to the betrayal, fortitude, release and finally to the cherishing of Jesus's body as he is laid in the tomb.

On Easter Sunday in a joyful all age service, we explored the unfathomable resurrection of Jesus, its meaning for our lives and of course broke open a chocolate Easter egg with children being given an egg of their own and the challenge to share the story of the first Easter with someone else.

PENTECOST/ORDINARY TIME



We rejoiced in the weather for our Toddler summer celebration in Church and made good use of the beautiful garden at Trinity. Because it was partly outside, I was able to offer a more sensory experience, (I even discovered a recipe for play mud!), and the toddlers and carers went off on their bear hunt. We were so glad that Carolyn Roche and Anne Matthews (two of our Circuit Stewards) were also able to join us on our bear hunt, a story which always links in

beautifully with Psalm 139. There were lots of busy hands making their own bear hunt story in a "3D collage."

The garden was so inviting, and the Toddler group put on 4 Summer Toddler "meet up sessions" over the long holiday which I went along to support. The garden has been so appreciated this year by many more people and we are so thankful we have this beautiful space so well maintained by Heather and Stuart.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

I returned to school to offer sessions to year 1 and 2 on emotional intelligence and it has been an eye opener to see children still affected by lock down. The early years are such an important part of a child's life and to miss out on the development of social skills does impact their ongoing learning, but as always it has been a real joy and privilege to go in and it is always life giving for me! I am appreciative of the invitation extended to me by Carswell, to participate in a small way in the lives of the children in our community.



I have continued to fill the Plan, mainly on the first Sunday of the month at Trinity, to lead all age and baptism services which do take quite a lot of planning. It has been a huge privilege to lead a few funerals this year too when time permits, and this year I

had the greatest honour to prepare a liturgy that was “child centred” especially for a group of children who were grieving.

Singing through the Trinity Learning singing group at Kingfisher is a huge blessing, and as a result of our engagement, I have prepared a sensory Christmas service which will be held once at Trinity for those more mobile, and twice at the school which I am really looking forward to immensely! I have continued to support the JAM group this year and go to Evergreens when I can.

I have also participated in Synod, MDO Area Group meetings where possible, and CLT meetings as we have focussed upon where God is leading us all in these challenging times.

CONTINUED LEARNING/ NEW EXPERIENCES!

We are encouraged to keep on learning, and sometimes I wonder where there is space in the diary, but I have learnt more about the Foodbank which Trinity supports. I have completed my EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) training which challenges us to think about who is **not** included in our church communities and to proactively think about how we might include them and how we in the Methodist Church, can live out our commitment to being a church which is inclusive and justice-seeking.

I completed the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Training and have attended an interesting lecture with Janina Ramirez on “Ritual,” and thanks to the URC, I was able to do a course on personal resilience and the resilience of the church which was very insightful.

As most of you will know, I was appointed as the Mayor’s chaplain this year and have additional duties attached to that, including opening the council meetings in prayer, leading the Ock Street Fair service, the Civic service, and the Remembrance Day service in the town and of course to pray for our public representatives as they seek the common good in a fractured world.

I have also supported people in the community with various difficulties in their lives, both in person and remotely.

THE MDO

Just before my sabbatical I completed the “wise-senior” training for the MDO (Methodist Diaconal Order, of which I am a member) and have been supporting a probationer Deacon in growing in her understanding of what it means to be a member of a religious order. In May I went up to Telford to Convocation which was a life-giving experience as we learned from one another, worshipped together as a community, and completed the business.

As you can see from this “snapshot” it has been another busy year, for which I am so thankful to God, and to you all for enabling my ministry in Abingdon.

Dcn SELINA NISBETT

CHURCH NEWS

Baptisms

This year has seen the Church packed at times as we welcomed families into church for their children's baptism and the chance to join the Trinity Church family. In the year ending August 2023, we held 3 Baptisms and we have had the pleasure of more planned winter bookings, which is wonderful. A few families have had the service in the Church and then gone over to the Church Hall for their celebration with their family and friends. Again it has been wonderful to see the Hall used for friendship and community of all ages. My grateful thanks go to Rev Ian, Deacon Selina, Eluned and Tom who all support me in co-ordinating the baptisms. What a delight it has been to light the candle each service knowing that this light will be passed on to a new family having their little one baptised.

We welcomed the following members into the family of Christ during the year:

Parents

05/02/23	Aderyn Peter Cole	Angharad Saunders & David Cole
05/02/23	Edith Rose Johnston	Edith & Aran Johnston
12/02/23	Milo Newton Worsley	Kate Newton & Andrew Worsley

In Celebration

We rejoice with Heather Donna Southey & Christopher Neil Cooper married in Trinity in August 2023

In Memoriam

We remember with thanksgiving the following people, whose lives were remembered and celebrated at Trinity during the year:

30/11/22	Linda Margaret Didcock
09/01/23	Roy Albert Brett
24/01/23	Brian George Nichols
11/05/23	Anthony (Tony) Rupert Garrard
18/08/23	Trevor Evans James
23/08/23	Alice Lamb
31/08/23	Christina Janson

Stewards' Report

The Stewards' team is now 19 people strong, and includes trustees, stewards, door stewards, and others who want to help. Malcolm Newton and Alastair Fear check availability and make a three-monthly rota.

Stewards typically serve 1 or 2 Sunday mornings per quarter. They do not need to address the congregation from the front but will be paired with someone who will do

so if needed. An extra person may be asked to help with baptisms. There is a list of people who can provide specialised skills, such as first aid.

We have made several changes since the pandemic. We are now a much larger team, so there are fewer demands on individuals. We have created a checklist of tasks that stewards need to do, and we update it as needed. The latest version is circulated to all stewards by email, and a copy is displayed in the steward's cupboard. The Prayer Book and the Prayer Box were re-introduced on August 14, 2022, and are now normally brought to the table during the second hymn with the offering.

If you want to become a steward, please contact Malcolm or Alastair. You will be paired with someone experienced for the first time.

Alastair Fear & Malcolm Newton

Bible Reading Rota

I am glad to have the opportunity to thank the many people who offer to read throughout the year. More than thirty take turns which makes it quite easy to compile. If there are others who would like to read please let me know.

Eve Newton



Creativity at an All Age Baptism Service

SPONSORING BODY NEWS

Circuit Stewards' Report for Autumn 2023



The Circuit has had a very busy year with stationing. In April, we held a farewell service for Rev

Jocelyn Bennett who then had her Sabbatical prior to moving in August. In October 2022 we were matched with Rev Bruce Thompson, the ex-Chair of the Lincolnshire District. He and his wife Karen have now moved into the Didcot manse which is currently undergoing decorating and updating. The Circuit Stewards would like to thank all those who have come to help, especially with the work in the garden. It was good to worship with Bruce, Karen and their family at the Welcome Service held at Didcot on 2nd September. Bruce is looking forward to working with the Didcot, Milton and Wallingford churches and also with the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT). In May, Ian let the Circuit Stewards know that he and Tabitha would be leaving the Circuit in August 2024. Trinity Church informed us that they would be happy to seek another Methodist presbyter. The Circuit Stewards in consultation with All Saints church stewards, Trinity trustees and the Circuit Invitation Committee prepared a Circuit Profile which has now been sent to Rev Helen Cameron and Sue Walters (lay stationing representative). Keith will be sitting down (retiring) in August 2025 and the Circuit will then be served by two presbyters. We are hoping to find a presbyter to replace Ian who is willing to become Superintendent, having shadowed Keith for a year.

The CLT have continued their work on providing a sustainable Circuit for the future. The Circuit Plus 1 meeting in March was able to devote more time to this than can take place in regular Circuit Meetings and any members of the church congregations were invited to take part. At this meeting, in view of the coming changes in 2025, we looked at the questions 'How could worship be organised?' and 'What should our presbyters be doing?'. Following Ian's mock-up Circuit Plan it was realised that there would be a deficit of preachers on the Plan from September 2025. If by that time we still have 8 churches then worship will need to embrace Sunday closures, shared services, local arrangements and the use of IT. The CLT have considered the responses and will be bringing these for further discussion to Circuit Plus 2. This will be held at All Saints on 8th October. Matt Forsyth, the District Mission Enabler, will also be taking part. The CLT are also intending to consult with the Oxford Circuit who are currently having to deal with a reduction in presbyterial staff. Discussions will look at whether any areas of working together might benefit both circuits.

Some churches have begun to hold meetings to look at future sustainability. Due to their particular circumstances, All Saints and Trinity have begun exploring together what a merger might mean. We thank Ian for all the work he has done to facilitate

these discussions. Just to emphasise that the Circuit does not close churches. This is currently the decision of the church councils as managing trustees.

Childrey is now a class of Wantage and continues to hold services on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.

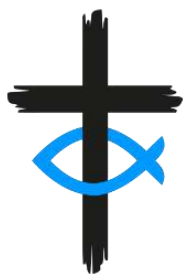
In June we met for the third Circuit gathering of the year. We began with a Bring and Share tea in the lovely grounds at Milton. This was followed by a service during which Local Preachers Marlene Chalkley and Barbara Kershaw were presented with certificates marking 60 years of being a Local Preacher.

The Circuit Steward team currently consists of Carolyn Roche, Geoffrey Maunder, Anne Matthews, Gordon Skidmore (Circuit Treasurer), Mary Hancock (Property Steward). Carolyn and Geoffrey are both due to step down in August 2024 so we are looking to add to our team. Please pray for our Circuit and that we have people willing to take up this important and interesting work. May be this is you! Do please contact one of us if you wish to know more about the role.

I would like to finish by thanking Keith for his encouraging leadership as we look to the future and also Ian and Selina for all the work they do for the Circuit. It is good to belong to such a committed CLT.

Carolyn Roche, Senior Circuit Steward

Wessex Synod of the URC



During the last year, the United Reformed Church has celebrated its 50th Anniversary. The Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration, due to take place at the beginning of October 2022, had to be postponed due to train strikes and eventually took place on 15th April 2023 at Methodist Central Hall in Westminster. Church House in Tavistock Place in London was also open during the morning for people to visit and see some of the history of the URC.

Synod meetings were held on 8th October 2022 in Woking and on 2nd February and 25th April 2023 online.

The General Assembly for the URC was held at The Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick between 30th June and 2nd July 2023. The Assembly formally received the Bristol Korean Church as a new local church of the URC. It has also made the online meeting yoURChurch a congregation of the URC. yoURChurch began meeting during the first lockdown in 2020, and has continued ever since. The Assembly sent messages of support to churches in the Ukraine and instructed the Mission and Finance Committees, with Synods and ecumenical partners, to determine what help might appropriately be offered to the Transcarpathian Reformed Church as a result of the Russian invasion and the ongoing consequences of the war in Ukraine. The General Assembly also debated ways of challenging poverty and the structures that cause marginalisation, the need for a formal ministry for Children and Young People, the provision of anti-racism training and affirmed the human dignity of transgender,

non-binary and gender nonconforming people considering the implications for churches.

In December 2022 it was announced that, Clare Downing, Moderator for the Wessex Synod, would be leaving the Synod at the end of March 2023. She had accepted a call to serve North Western Synod as Moderator for a period of three years, in a transitional role. On Sunday 19th March 2023, Mothering Sunday, Trinity welcomed Clare Downing to lead worship at the morning service. This was one of the last services which she led before leaving the Wessex Synod to take up her new post in the North West. Clare has been an active member of the North West Pastoral Committee and supportive of Trinity in relation to the discussions on its future ministry. The Synod recognised the work that she has done in her time as Moderator and wished her well in a Farewell Service held at Basingstoke URC on 1st April 2023.

In September 2023, Wessex Synod announced that a new Moderator for the Synod, Revd Dr Michael Hopkins, had been appointed to serve from March 2024. The new Moderator has served in pastoral charge of local churches since his ordination in 2002, and also as Clerk of the URC General Assembly since 2014. His term of office as Clerk finishes at the end of General Assembly 2024. He currently serves as minister of the Spire Church (a Methodist and United Reformed Church local ecumenical partnership) in Farnham, Surrey; Elstead URC, also in Surrey; and in the Hants-Surrey Border Methodist Circuit.

Karen Bell, the Wessex Synod Clerk reported,

'We have been privileged to have Michael as a minister in our Synod for many years and have benefitted from his vast Assembly and Synod experience in committees and at Synod Meetings. I am delighted he has accepted the call to be our new Synod Moderator and am looking forward to sharing this next stage of his ministry as we discern where God is leading our Church in 2024 and beyond.'

The Synod staff and the Pastoral Committees continue to provide good advice and support for churches. In particular, Revd. Ray Stanyon, the Development and Support Officer for the North, is in touch with many of the churches, leads worship and where appropriate supports local developments and provides pastoral support. Revd. Glyn Millington, the Ecumenical Officer, has also provided much support for churches in the North of the Synod.

The Synod continues to be engaged in providing assistance and guidance for development projects and in planning to meet the needs of local churches in relation to future mission and ministry.

Cynthia Bartlett, October 2023

MISSION & OUTREACH

Church in Abingdon

In May 1988 eight separate churches in Abingdon entered into a legal covenant with each other and agreed among other things to “work together to proclaim the gospel and encourage neighbourly care in the town.” Now, some 35 years later, and with 14 churches, the ethos is the same.



The CIA Christmas carol singing in the Market Place went well and we are hoping it will become an annual event. Plans are in place for a live donkey and a crib scene on Dec 16th this year.

In March the World Day of Prayer service, held in St Michaels and led by the Rev Charles Masheder, was well attended. The service had been prepared by the women of Taiwan and was followed by refreshments including some Taiwanese delicacies. Later that month there was a National Day of Reflection to remember the many people who had been bereaved during the covid pandemic. At Abingdon Baptist Church we provided a community wall of reflection where people were encouraged to put up photos, light candles, think and pray.

In response to the National Initiative on the Warm Welcome Campaign the CIA set up Warm Spaces in several Abingdon churches. This was to give people somewhere to go during the colder months as the cost of heating was so high.

The Good Friday Procession of Witness gathered by the library and, led by the cross, walked through the Precinct to the Market Place where Rev Paul Smith took a short service. Easter flyers and small Easter gift bags were handed out to passers by.



For 4 weeks around Easter four major art works by Rev Ian Griffiths were exhibited in St Helens Church. These were entitled “The Word beyond Words”.

The Abingdon Passion Play is planned for next year and already various events have happened to raise funds for that.

Christian Forum continues to be published monthly in Abingdon Round and About magazine.

Scilla Griffiths

Action for Children



Thank you again to the Trinity Community family that continued their warmth and kindness collecting this past year for Action for Children with their collection boxes, giving their great support to the coffee morning last November, and the Christingle Service in December. This has resulted in a total of £1,165 being sent to Action for Children this

year to aid their important work in the communities they serve.

As a quick reminder, with our help:

- They have been helping children for more than 150 years. In 2021/22 they helped 671,275 children, young people and families.
- Since 1869 they have helped more than two million children and young people.
- 111,800: the number of people reached with mental health support in 2021/22.
- 469,900: the number of people reached by the online parenting advice service, Parent Talk, in 2021/22.

So a charity that is really making a difference to children currently.

This is some feedback from a Mum of two recently: "There's no way we can survive like this, it's just impossible. We have a food bank near us, but it's on a Friday at 10am and I'm in work. A lot of people think that foodbanks are just for people who don't work, but people who do work need them now."

So a heartfelt thank you for all you have done to contribute to this important charity in the lives of children who need our help most.

Fiona Perkins

Mission

Trinity Church has supported many charities over the past year both at home and abroad, TrinityLearning and Water Aid being the largest amounts. The special charity for 2022-2023 is Crisis Skylight Oxford, replacing Water Aid from last year, and many people kindly sponsored Ellen Busby and myself as we faced our Icy Plunge Challenge earlier in the year. *Thank You!*

Our Harvest service last year raised money for Asylum Welcome and items for the Foodbank, which were very gratefully received. Action for Children managed to raise a substantial amount from the annual coffee morning, individual coin boxes and the very well attended Christingle service.



Katie & Ellen after they returned to room temperature!



Christingle

The Friendship Group and Thursday Group worked together again this autumn to fill the Christmas Shoe Boxes, organised by Lindsay Busby for Foundation for Social Change and Inclusion (FSCI) in south west Europe, sending 33 boxes in total.

Generous donations were received for the DEC Turkey/Syria appeal in service collections in February and March.

We were fortunate to hear all about Mercy Ships from Dr. Rachel Buckingham this year as she kindly gave informative talks to both Trinity

and All Saints churches, during which we were able to donate to this extremely worthy charity.

Other financial giving has continued to Methodist Mission in Britain Fund, Methodist World Mission Fund, Methodist Church Fund, All We Can, Abingdon Bridge, Council for World Mission and Commitment For Life.

Obviously, the mission of the Church involves much more than charitable giving of money and items required, such as for the Foodbank. We also reach out to our town and community in other ways such as the Evergreen Meetings, TrinityLearning and Trinity Toddlers, all of which have their own reports.

Katie Doney

TrinityLearning

Supporting local schools: 2022 – 2023 highlights



2022 – 2023 has been another busy school year for TrinityLearning.

We saw a full return to 'live' workshops, as well as regular volunteer and in-school activities. The impact of the pandemic continues to be felt by school communities and our large-scale projects such as Experience Easter and Toolkit for Happiness proved particularly popular. As always, none of our projects would run

without our wonderful team of hardworking and skilled volunteers who share their time so generously with us.

We were also delighted to welcome Katie Doney as our new Chair of Trustees in September 2022, and we're deeply appreciative of all the hard work our outgoing

chair, Eve Newton, has put in over the last three years as well as in her ongoing role as a Trustee.



TrinityLearning has directly worked with or supported over 700 children during the year and has supported about another 700 indirectly (through gardens or church events), so we're delighted to be able to share our work highlights with you through this annual overview.

Training: September 2022 was very busy with Thinking Books training as well as Safeguarding Training for all volunteers who work in schools. We are qualified to deliver this Safeguarding Training to the same standard as schools, enabling us to fully prepare volunteers for their varied in-school roles.

TrinityLearning Projects – working and supporting children in schools

Kingfisher Singing Group: The Kingfisher Singing Group continued to go from strength to strength this year. The Group meets weekly to sing nursery rhymes and action songs with children with a range of impairments and health conditions. Kingfisher School really



appreciates the connections built with the singing group and this year these were expanded to include visits to school open days and events as well as inclusion in other TrinityLearning projects such as the specially adapted Experience Easter workshop supported by the Kingfisher Singing Group.

Thinking Books: This has been our first full year of Thinking Books and has been really successful with nine volunteers delivering ten sessions each to over 40 children. Generous grants from Abingdon Town Council and Christ's Hospital have enabled us to give each child a copy of the book they have worked with over the 10 sessions.

The Toolkit for Happiness project and Larkmead's Make A Difference Week:

We were back at Larkmead School in July where a total of twelve 6th form students volunteered for our Toolkit for Happiness project and gave between two and five days each of their time to deliver wellbeing workshops to around 180 year 7 pupils. Following training from Taz and Nicola each morning the students then led workshops in two teams, with each team leading workshops for three year 7 classes over the rest of the day. We especially enjoyed their music and dance suggestions and all enjoyed learning the Macarena and the Cha Cha Slide as well as playing singing games to finish our Physical Activity and Creativity workshops. The students really impressed us with their enthusiasm and commitment to the project.



Experience Easter 2023: Experience Easter returned 'live' to Trinity Church! After two



years of being fully online, we were finally able to bring schools back to Trinity Church for Experience Easter. Due to changes in volunteer availability and circumstances we decided to completely re-evaluate Experience Easter and consider new ways to present and share the message. This resulted in simpler staging, working with Trinity Church's regular layout and offering the experience to one class at a time. This approach allowed all the

children to experience the workshops in the correct order. It also enabled children who were struggling with a large group activity to work away from the main group while still being involved and able to take part in all the activities. We used a mixture of live storytelling with volunteers and videos from the online Experience Easter to ensure that, even with a lower number of volunteers, children still benefited from hearing the story from a range of voices.

Some schools still opted to use the online Experience Easter to reduce travel costs and we were able to support one new school in learning to use this effectively. Overall, 445 children from approximately 15 classes and eight different schools took

part in Experience Easter either live or online. The change in layout enabled us to leave the Experience Easter staging in place for longer enabling Trinity Church congregation and Trinity Toddlers to use the spaces for services.

TrinityLearning Projects – working and supporting children and wider school communities generally

Getting Outdoors: Our regular team of volunteers has continued to maintain the beautiful garden at Kingfisher School which was originally designed by Rosemary Perrow. A small team of volunteers also gave up a morning to tidy the Carswell School Peace Garden. We have also been able to provide volunteer support for Carswell School's 'Forest School' sessions.



Knitters and Crocheters: Our fabulous, and ever-expanding group of knitters and crocheters have created over 40 tiny bears and rabbits over the year. These are added to two of our packs, bears in the Bereavement packs which support adults working with bereaved children and rabbits in our Thinking Books packs. These small creatures, made with such care and love, are truly appreciated by the children who receive them.



Supporting Christmas Events: This year saw the full return of Christmas Events to Trinity Church. TrinityLearning worked with Trinity Church to support schools in rehearsals and welcome around 1200 children, staff and family members to four performances in just over a week.

Out and About

Methodist Lay Workers Conference: Nicola, Taz and Chair, Katie, attended the Northampton District Lay Workers Conference in early December. The theme was 'There is Room' and the conference provided a prayerful and thought-provoking day which prepared us well for the busyness of the Advent period.

Getting together

Meeting up: TrinityLearning has been hugely supported by the Trinity and All Saints Church communities this year, both through volunteer support and through the shared events in the autumn, hosted at All Saints, and summer, hosted by Trinity, which have raised around £500 for TrinityLearning.

TrinityLearning's AGM: our third AGM was held online on 17th January. Trustees welcomed volunteers, church representatives, and supporters as we launched our 2021 - 2022 Annual Report, and shared news and project updates. Despite being another 'virtual' AGM it was great to be able to get together! Our Annual Report can be found online at [Trinity Learning Annual Report 2021 – 2022](#)

Volunteer celebrations: Around 20 TrinityLearning volunteers joined us on Thursday 15th June as we hosted a special Volunteer Celebration to say thank you for the fantastic work our volunteers do to support our TrinityLearning projects and events.



We worked out that our 80 or so TrinityLearning volunteers provide an amazing 3,276 volunteer hours a year!

Thinking of calling into the office? TrinityLearning staff and volunteers work a mix of both home and office-based hours so please do email before popping in to see us.

Thank you

We continue to work closely with and feel supported by the Trinity Church community. Please remember TrinityLearning and the wider Abingdon School communities in your prayers and if you would like to know more about our volunteering opportunities, please contact me at nic.trinitylearning@gmail.com

*Nicola Williams
Education Development Officer, TrinityLearning*

Church and Hall Bookings

The Conduit Centre and Church have continued to be well used by the congregation and others. We welcomed two new groups – supporting local dementia sufferers – which have taken regular slots in the Hall. Over the summer we were also a base for an Oxfordshire healthcare initiative.

Last autumn the windows of the Church glowed blue and pink, as we hosted a nationally acclaimed folk group, and we have been delighted to welcome the schools back post-COVID for Harvest, Christmas and End of Term Services.

Eluned Hallas

MINISTRY OF PASTORAL CARE, FELLOWSHIP & SUPPORT

Evergreen Club

We started the year with our first meeting cancelled – due to the Queen's death. So the year started in October, with the briefest AGM possible and then we all sat back and enjoyed as HUG – Hendred Ukele Group – entertained us all.

In November we sat fascinated and awed to listen and admire the amazing carvings of Paul Dalby – yes you are right, another of this talented Church's members – and his Decoy Ducks.



Our Annual Christmas Party ended 2022. We started the new year with a talk from AGE UK to keep us up to date with what services they can offer us all. A beetle drive in February followed by our annual Songs of Praise. We do sing well – and we were delighted that Ian could lead us on that afternoon.

A return visit from Ali Blood of the Community Police was interesting and informative. Ann Latham and her poodle Mya came and talked about Pets as Therapy. What she said was new to most of us and the ways that pets can help disturbed unhappy children and adults. June brought us Massage and Skin Care from Jackie Marsh – enjoyed by both our male and female models.

The year finished with our own Treasurer – Carolyn – leading us in a wonderful Craft Session. What talented artists there are among us as our painted butterflies were applied to Carolyn's backdrop (*see below*).

A brief word of thanks to Mr Taxi – Malcolm – who organises our transport taxis, which is so appreciated and also to our Furniture Removers.

During the year we have co-opted two more committee members: Angie Goodman and Bobby Tyler – and we are extremely grateful to them for joining us. As always I also want to thank Madge, Myra, Carolyn and Rebecca.



Tricia Cook

Friendship Group

Is a group of ladies who meet once a month, for friendship and support. We have lots of fun - all welcome.

This year we have been doing lots of different things:



- Children's boxes in October with the Thursday group.
- We made flower wreaths for Easter with Judith Payne.
- We had a craft evening with Caroline.
- Millets farm to see the falconry and lunch.
- A lovely evening walk in Drayton followed by a lovely supper with Carolyn
- Flower show at Blenheim Palace with Angie.
- Afternoon Tea at the Cosener's House
- A coffee and chat in Albert Park
- A film night and nibbles with Judith Fear

Any ladies wishing to join us in any of our meetings, will be made very welcome.

Lindsay Busby

Prayer Support Group

The members of the group still pray in their homes on Friday mornings from 10:00-10:30am for Trinity members and friends in need of support, for the life of Trinity and the wider church, and for the needs of the world. Each week we pray for the churches and people listed in the prayer support book and in the prayer box. We are informed of these each Thursday evening and sometimes receive other requests by email.

There are now five members of the group and we would be pleased to welcome new members. If you feel you can commit to spending this half hour in prayer, please let Margaret or me know so that you are included in receiving the Thursday evening bulletin.

Ruth Dams and Margaret Langsford

Trinity Thursday Group

Since the last annual report Thursday Group has been very active despite the health



problems with our ageing membership. We started in September with an excellent illustrated talk by Pauline Main on Birds and the Bible followed by our annual joint venture in October with the Friendship Group to cover and fill shoeboxes as gifts for deprived families in Eastern European countries. Our next meeting in November was an open evening to hear about the recent developments of the NASIO Trust

project in Kenya. £150 was raised for them through a bring and buy sale. In

December we had our Christmas party with fun, fellowship and food although the very cold weather made us finish early.

2023 started with our AGM when we thanked Margaret Langsford on her retirement for the many years of leadership she had provided to keep this group thriving. Her hard work was much appreciated. We now have 18 members and each evening meeting is organised including providing refreshments by 2 or 3 members. We had an interesting illustrated talk about a winter visit to Finland by Fiona and Kathryn Perkins which was most professionally presented. This was followed by an open evening given by Scilla Fellows' daughter about her time volunteering on 'Mercy Ships' to provide medical care to impoverished nations in Africa. We raised £250 to help the work they are doing. Selina came to talk about her sabbatical showing us the aid she had created to help children understand the concept of funeral rites in different cultures. She also read us some interactive stories for small children to see how we responded. In June we had our annual walk (this year around the Radley lakes) before returning to the Conduit Centre to share supper with those who felt physically unable to walk. A barbecue at Val Dalby's house in July and coffee evening at Barbara Deakin's house in August were activities which finished our annual programme.



Margaret Greaney

Trinity Triangle

The Triangle editorial team would like to thank everyone who has contributed an article or has passed on to us something which they felt our readers would like to see. This has been very helpful and we would encourage people to continue to make suggestions about future content. All photographs or written material should be sent to both Val Dalby and Cynthia Bartlett; this ensures that nothing is missed. The magazine continues to be appreciated by those who now live away from Abingdon but enjoy hearing about church activities or reading articles which give food for thought - and sometimes for prayer.

We have continued to appreciate this year the help we have received from Mike Coleman, his attention to detail and his creative expertise, and to Eluned for all she does in printing and distributing Triangle. Our thanks to all those who purchase paper copies (£10 pa for a black and white edition and £15 pa for a colour copy) and for those who support the magazine by advertising in it. These contributions mean that the Triangle is self-financing.

If you would like to be sent a paper copy, please contact Eluned in the Church Office or if you find someone who would like to advertise in the Triangle, please contact one of the editorial team. We look forward to your contributions for the coming year.

The Triangle Team:

Cynthia Bartlett, Val Dalby, Barbara Deakin, Carolyn Hawkes, Pauline Main and Gloria Sandford

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRY

JaM / Crèche

JAM stands for 'Jesus and me'. This is for children aged 3 and upwards and we meet twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. We also enjoy an all-age service at regular intervals throughout the year. When there is a 5th Sunday there is plenty to do in the Welcome Area, such as activity and reading books, with parent supervision.

We have been in contact with our families through the year by email letting them know what's going on week by week. To know the children is a privilege, they show understanding of all sorts of situations and in all sorts of ways, as well as expressing the care they have for family, friends and for each other.

JaM usually starts with a talk and a story followed by a craft activity which, sometimes, there is an opportunity to take back to the Church family to show what we have been doing that day.

Things we have covered are thanking God, love, Lent, water, the story 'You are special' (story of the Wemmicks, by Max Lucado), Jonah and the whale, The Lost Sheep, and Jesus and the storm.

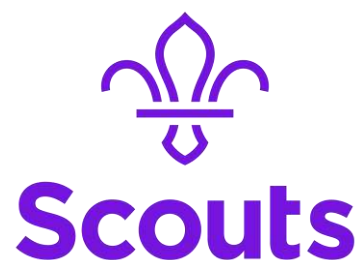
Memorable moments from the last year include sharing a couple of Sundays with All Saints Church and their children; making and giving out posies of flowers for Mothering Sunday, also distributing flowers to people who were unable to be at church that day by us and other members of the Church.

We have been lucky to have help from our Deacon Selina for yet another year, which we are very grateful for: many thanks Selina for all the things you do.

BABIES

There are toys in the Welcome Area where babies/ toddlers can play with their parents but still listen to the service.

Lindsay Busby



Trinity Brownies



We started our Autumn term in September 2022 focussing on a fun badge named 'Forest Fun'. This included us having a campfire at Youlbury, making bird feeders for the upcoming cold weather and painting pebbles to hide in public places. On a more serious side, we looked into fire safety in preparation for the campfire. Alongside this,

we also worked our Charities badge – which included looking into the importance of the food bank, advertising the food bank to those who may not know about the work they do and bringing in donations for the local collection points. We took part in the annual Remembrance parade and made our own felt poppies to wear. After the parade, the leaders planted a tree in Albert Park for the Queen’s Jubilee earlier in the year.

For a little bit of fun, the Brownies were invited to bring in blankets and wear PJs for an evening of den building.

There was a badge for the Brownies who had the most creative den and also for the team who worked well, including everyone and taking on all participants’ ideas.

For fireworks night, we created our own firework pictures using chalk and glitter on black paper. It was a really simple activity, but the Brownies loved having the freedom with the resources (and creating a bit of a mess).

In January 2023, we started the term with the Brownie Baking Badge. We made Winnie the Pooh themed biscuits and decorated them. We were then challenged to create a storyline in small groups using the biscuits. Following on with the story telling theme, the Brownies were asked to create sock puppets and tell a story to the rest of the pack. The Brownies loved coming up with a range of scenarios and characters – we had cats, owls and people to name a few.

In February, we celebrated World Thinking Day, where we took the time to think about our Guiding sisters across the world. This year, the Brownies made and sent cards to 20 other units across the country and we were pleased to receive cards back. Every Brownie was given one to open and could keep the card inside. We also made ‘Guiding light jars’ to serve as a reminder to keep our Guiding light shining. The Brownies loved turning the lights off and sitting in the dark with the glow of the fairy lights.

To celebrate Mothers’ Day this year, we invited all of the Brownies to invite their mum (or another special woman) to the session to make lavender bags. It was a really lovely evening teaching the Brownies valuable sewing skills and spending some 1:1 time with who they had chosen to invite.





We finished off the term with 5 Brownies gaining their bronze awards and making our own threaded Easter decorations (as well as an Easter egg hunt of course). In the summer term, we decided to focus on the 'emergencies' fun badge – written and designed by another unit. This meant we kicked off our meetings with a trip to the local fire station. The girls were able to try on some of the firefighting gear, learn about all the different items in the fire engine and sit in the driving seat. The girls made a thank you card and gave our host a Fire Safety badge to thank him for looking after us. We completed the badge with a session learning about when we should call 999 and role-playing scenarios to practise what we would need to say to the dispatcher in case of a real-life emergency. We also completed our 'Canals and Rivers' badge which taught us all about water safety. We had planned a trip to the Police Station too, but sadly this was cancelled on the night. The girls walked back to the hall and we decided to work on our Mindfulness badge instead. The Brownies were brilliant with the very last-minute change of plan.

This term also saw the celebrations of King Charles III's Coronation. The girls had a joint meeting of 2nd Peachcroft Brownies and 6th Abingdon (Trinity) Brownies at Trinity Church. The girls brought food for a bring and share tea party and made their own King's Guards and crowns to take home. We also got a response from Buckingham Palace for the card we sent to King Charles III last term, which was exciting.

To make the most of the sunny weather, we had an evening down at the Abbey play park which the girls really enjoyed. They love having the freedom to do what they want to for the evening.

This upcoming term starts on 6th September 2023 with a parent meeting to discuss the upcoming Pack Holiday at the end of September with 2nd Peachcroft Brownies. We also have planned to complete the jobs badge, Countdown to Christmas badge, and making peppermint creams and pencil cases. We have three new girls starting and continue with a leadership team of four. Brownies enrolled – 19 (including 3 new Brownies); 18+ volunteers – 4

Trinity Guides

The 6th Abingdon Trinity Guide unit has steadily grown this past year ending the year with 21 girls on roll. We're pleased that we now have a team of 4 leaders; Megan successfully completed her Leadership Qualification this year, and Ellis is about to start her training! We were thrilled that Emily had a baby this year, and Lewis has already visited us. Many congratulations to Megan who successfully applied to the Police this year, and she has completed her initial training.

As we had girls wishing to remain in Guiding beyond 14 years, we trialled a Ranger unit. Just like the Guides they have enjoyed a range of activities to fulfil the Guide and Ranger programme. All the Rangers completed their Cooking badge – with some very tasty meals! We've also held a joint meeting with Brownies to encourage the younger girls to move into Guides

Just over a year ago, a small group of girls attended a large festival style camp in the New Forest, "Wellies and Wristbands". They had a great time trying new activities, old favourites, listening to bands and musicians, and meeting thousands of Guides from all over the country! Patsy performed on stage herself.

A highlight of the year was the Sleepover at Trinity, with a visit to the cinema for the special showing of Matilda just for Guides.

The guides made bird feeders, using popcorn when it was National Popcorn Day! We also participated in Fairtrade Fortnight, learning about the work of Fairtrade and trying different products. Ellis organised the Science Challenge for the Guides and they earned the Science Challenge Badge, planned by graduates at RAL here in Oxfordshire. They made electronic playdough, crash-proofed space vehicles, learned about satellites and the solar system and much more! We also had two guides join the Girlguiding Oxfordshire Science Day.

In the summer term we were incredibly busy with more of the Guides' favourite activities. The guides volunteer to litter pick in and around Albert Park each year – and





this year locals commended them for their work. We always enjoy a Penny Hike – no spoilers but it usually ends up with sharing chips! We held a meeting at Youldbury Scout Camp where the girls had a go at crate stacking – testing themselves to climb high and work with a partner.

We visited Cadburyworld, which has been on the Guides wish list for some time! They had a wonderful time learning about chocolate – and tasted some too!

A team of Guides competed in OxyGen, a patrol competition for Oxfordshire Guides. Sadly, this year we didn't win but the girls worked well together, learned new skills and were a great team! Our name is on the trophy as we won it a few years ago.

A highlight of the year was assisting with the Abingdon Bun throwing to mark King Charles' Coronation. Guides and leaders assisted with moving the buns up onto the roof – and earned themselves a special bun. Guides then

participated in the party in the park – persuading the Mayor to join in.

We are very grateful for the support we receive from Trinity; if anyone would like to visit us to share their skills, or consider becoming a unit helper, or like us, gain the leadership qualification, please get in touch. We would love to increase our leadership team so we can encourage more girls and carry out even more activities with them. We also have spaces at Guides for girls aged 10 years and over, and we hope to continue the Ranger Unit for girls aged 14 years and over.

Carol, Emily, Megan and Ellis
6thabingdonguides@gmail.com

Trinity Scout Group

The aim of Scouting is to engage and support young people in their personal development and to empower them to make a positive contribution to society. We do this by involving them in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities which challenge them and make them think and work as individuals and in teams. We try to make this fun.

The Scout Group is grateful to the Church for providing us with a base where we can meet to hold our weekly meetings and to store our equipment. We have 55 young people in our 3 sections with 9 adults supporting them by providing an interesting, enjoyable and varied programme.

Beavers (age 6-8)



Beavers enjoyed a well-planned and varied programme with lots of fun indoor and outdoor activities. They kept fit and learnt about keeping healthy and eating healthily. They cooked pancakes and pasta, made fruit kebabs and decorated biscuits. They shared their hobbies, and learned about disabilities and the work of the food bank. They built bird feeders and models, learnt how to tie their shoelaces and how to put up a tent. They went tracking, exploring, navigating assault courses in the dark, and learnt the green cross code. They did science experiments at Abingdon School Science Centre. There were many art and craft projects including leaf art, making sock puppets, Halloween bats, Christmas cards & decorations and Mothering Sunday favours. And, of course, they played lots of games.

The Beavers are looking forward to our joint Beaver & Cub camp at Youlbury in September where we will have a fun packed weekend of adventurous activities.



Sock puppets

Cubs (age 8-10½)

The Cub pack had a full programme over the year. They shared their hobbies, played lots of games, learned new sports and did lots of art and craft projects, including making poppies for display in St Michael at the Northgate Church in Oxford, sock puppets, Chinese New Year decorations, Christmas decorations and Mothering Sunday favours. They learnt about climate change, renewable energy, energy conservation and recycling. They learnt about a





Scrap heap challenge

balanced diet, healthy eating, keeping fit, cooked a healthy pasta meal and (unhealthy?) pancakes on camping stoves, made fruit kebabs and decorated biscuits. They learnt how to tie knots and did pioneering.



They went exploring, litter picking, tracking, played wide games, put up a tent and went on a late-night hike. They solved construction challenges, learned about space, the solar system and constellations and carried out science experiments at Abingdon School Science Centre.

The Cubs are also looking forward to our joint camp in September.

Scouts (age 10½-14)

The Scouts improved their navigation skills both theoretical and practical with both map reading and compass related activities and they went geocaching. They have improved many of their Scouting skills by mastering a greater range of knots and lashings and learnt how to use knives, axes and saws safely. They have improved their DIY and camp skills, have been bell ringing, tent pitching, hiking, fire lighting, have played wide games and built cardboard box forts. They shared their hobbies, learned about fair trade and completed many cooking tasks including backwoods cooking and a Christmas themed 'bake-off' challenge. They are currently preparing for their expedition which the older Scouts will do in September.

In the summer holidays, several Scouts went on a week-long summer camp in North Yorkshire with a number of troops from around the UK. They looked after themselves and each other for the week - cooking and baking on an open fire. It turned out to be the wettest summer camp we have ever had!

Leaders and Helpers:

The leaders at Trinity will continue to ensure that our young people are able to develop a wide range of skills consistent with their ability which will help them in their future and help them to contribute to society.

Our position with respect to leaders and adult help is difficult. We usually have sufficient adults to be able to run a safe and challenging programme but we rely on a small number of people to be available for every meeting. There have been a number of occasions in the last year when we have had to ask parents to help or have cancelled meetings at relatively short notice.

We need to build up the team of leaders and helpers so that we don't put undue demands on any individual. Offers of help, even if not on a regular basis, would be very welcome - so please think if you know of someone who can help; it is very rewarding. We particularly need someone to take overall lead in the Scout section and more regular adult help for the Beaver and Cub sections.

We thank the Church for use of its facilities.

Tom Kyffin

Trinity Toddlers



Trinity Toddlers continues to thrive, every session is a joy. The atmosphere is always positive, supportive and very friendly. Approximately twenty families attend each week, with toddlers and babies bringing Mums, Dads, Grandads, Grannies and other guardians.

Each session includes a craft activity, usually led by a team member and a singing session at the end again led by a team member. During the session the children have a vast choice of toys and games.

These include: a slide, a tent, push along / sit on vehicles, role play activities (workbench, shop, kitchen, dolls and teddies), play doh, painting, chalking, water play, jigsaw puzzles, cars, trains... to name but a few. It is interesting observing the children develop during their play.



The craft sessions are pre-planned and sometimes themed, for example Mothering Sunday card, and the galloping horses during Michaelmas Fair week. Selina leads a church service at the end of each term. These are very well attended. It is wonderful to see the Church with so many children and babies, exploring and learning. At the end of the Summer Term the service extended to a Bear Hunt (inspired by Michael Rosen's book, 'We're going on a bear

hunt'), in the Church garden – including swishing through long, wavy grass and squelching through thick, oozy mud! Much fun was had by all.

We made further use of the Church garden during the summer holidays when we held three 'Casual Meet Ups'. This was much appreciated by many parents. We provided a questionnaire giving the parents the opportunity to offer their opinions of the group. We have had amazingly positive feedback.

Positives

- Supporting, caring volunteers
- Environment and general room layout



- Cleanliness
- Room layout is adapted depending on the age of the children
- Wide range of toys for all age
- Parents' and children's confidence has improved

Areas of Improvement

- Children walk around while eating
- Oxfordshire County Council list of Toddler Groups requires updating.

We will of course address these points.

Obviously, none of this would happen without our fantastic volunteers who provide help in setting up and putting away equipment and making refreshments. All the volunteers are involved with the families (the parents love having someone to hold their babies) and provide valuable support through conversation.

A final positive note - this September we have the baptism of two of our Toddlers

Hayley Webb
Toddler Group Leader, August 2023

MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY

Coffee

The stainless steel trolley is proving useful, especially for joint services, and saves carrying heavy trays. As always we are grateful to all our volunteers and if anyone feels able to join the “team” your help would be much appreciated as our numbers have dropped a little over the last couple of years.

Heather and Stuart Townsend

Trinity Garden

The end of summer reminds us to arrange for the yew hedge and the larger shrubs to be trimmed. With all the rainfall this summer, the garden has grown vigorously so the job is particularly urgent this year, otherwise we may not be able to see out of the windows on the south side of the church! One advantage of the wetter weather is that we have had hardly any watering to do. Nature has done the job for us.

Heather and Stuart Townsend

Housekeeping

Many people help keep Trinity running smoothly – working quietly in the background, so thank you to the willing army of volunteers who do so much, quietly, efficiently and usually without recognition. There are always opportunities to help, so don't wait to be asked – just offer!



Friendship Group Easter wreath

IN CONCLUSION

One of the people in the New Testament who I have always been fond of, is a Levite from Cyprus, called Joseph, better known by his nickname, Barnabas, meaning “Son of encouragement.” He possibly first heard the Gospel on the day of Pentecost whilst he was in Jerusalem, and as a Levite, a tribe commonly responsible for sanctuary services, he was likely to have been a teacher of the law in a synagogue in Cyprus, giving him a certain status. But the Gospel message set him on a new path. He abandoned his status and his land, which he sold, the proceeds of which went to the early church, and he became totally committed to Christ. His actions and the way he lived were selfless.

He convinced the very hesitant disciples in Jerusalem of Paul’s conversion and commitment to Christ and was sent by the church leaders in Jerusalem to Antioch where he encouraged the people in their faith. He ministered and taught alongside Paul and, because of the way in which he modelled Christ, he became a great influence, and due to that the followers in Antioch were the first group of people to be called “Christians.”

Barnabas was greatly trusted and at the outbreak of a famine in Jerusalem aid was sent through himself and Paul, in the knowledge that it would reach the right place. He was one of the delegates at the Jerusalem conference as discussions took place of how to transition the new Gentile believers into the early church, and he liked to give people second chances, taking John Mark under his wing, who Paul regarded as a bit of a let-down, mentoring, and preparing him, just as he had with Paul. Perhaps the only flaw we can identify in Barnabas, is that he got swept up with Peter’s unwillingness to eat with the Gentiles and was termed a “hypocrite” by Paul! But don’t we all go through learning curves?

Today we hear about Paul and Barnabas, with an emphasis upon Paul, rather than Barnabas, but it was Barnabas, the encourager, the one who “slipped from view” in the New Testament, who set the foundations to further the Gospel message.

As I read through Trinity’s annual report this year, I was reminded of the selflessness of Barnabas, and of all the “Barnabases” at Trinity who commit to serving and witnessing to God, each other and most importantly, the wider community. Whilst many names may not specifically appear in the report, you are all essential to furthering the Kingdom of God in this place. You serve with humility, and work with a graciousness and willingness that I feel is hard to match. You loyally commit to God and his church week by week, taking on many essential roles; your faithfulness and selflessness is a HUGE encouragement!

There is a saying that is attributed to a Greek proverb, “A person has come to the full meaning of life when they are willing to plant trees under whose shade they will never sit.” Barnabas, was just such a person, committing himself, even in the face of adversity, to advance the Kingdom of God, even as his ministry and name became obscured and hidden.

Whilst Paul’s name is the one that stands “loud and proud” I like to think that he was profoundly influenced by Barnabas the encourager, and in reading St Paul’s letters, I see the sparkling hallmarks of Barnabas shine through, telling us that we should not neglect meeting together, as some do, but encourage one another and build each other up.

Thanks be to God for the vibrancy of ministry and witness at Trinity, and to ALL who serve and share in it, with willingness and faithfulness.

Dcn SELINA



“Unison” by Sieger Koder



Don't forget

Trinity Church Website: <http://www.trinityabingdon.org.uk/wordpress/>

Trinity Church Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/TrinityAbingdon>

Trinity Toddlers Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Trinitytoddlergroupabingdon/>