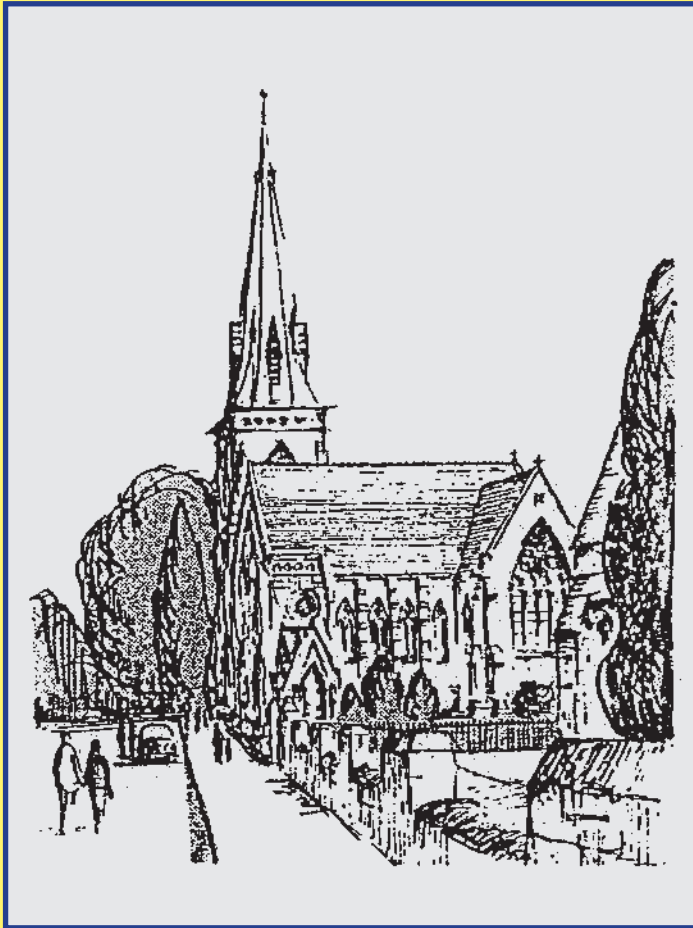




TRINITY TRIANGLE

APRIL 2024



'Serving God, serving each other, serving community'

TRINITY CHURCH

Methodist/United Reformed/Church in Abingdon

Conduit Road, Abingdon

TRINITY'S WEEK

Sunday Services at 10.30 am, occasionally 4.00pm.

JAM (Jesus and Me) normally meets every 2nd and 4th Sunday morning during the Church Service. It is designed for children who are aged 3+ and parents may stay with their children if they wish.

Communion is normally on third Sunday of the month at 10.30am and as announced in the Calendar.

- Monday** 2.30 pm Evergreen Club: 3rd Monday in month.
5.30 pm Beavers.
6.45 pm Cubs.
7.30 pm Scouts.
- Tuesday** 7.30 pm Abingdon Operatic Society.
- Wednesday** 5.00 pm Brownies.
7.00 pm Guides.
- Thursday** 9.30 am Toddler Group.
7.30 pm Thursday Group. Ladies' Monthly Meeting 2nd Thursday in the month.
- Friday** 10.00 am Prayer Support Group (in their homes).
11.30am-12.30pm. Abingdon Larder (SOFEA)
- Monthly** 7.30 pm Friendship Group - see calendar.

Conduit Centre, Conduit Road, Abingdon OX14 1DB

Church Office Manager: Eluned Hallas, Tel 520282

e-mail: trinity.abingdon@gmail.com

Office open : Thurs and Fri 9.30am -4.30pm. Closed Mon, Tues, Wed

Trinity Learning: Education Development Officer: Nicola Williams, Tel. 07754 116004

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CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Minister's letter | 4 |
| Church family news | 5 |
| New Charity | 7 |
| Calendar | 8 |
| The Kindness of strangers | 10 |
| Rwanda | 14 |

God of the way,
You are the road we travel
And the sign we follow.
You are the bread for the journey
And the wine of arrival.

Guide us as we follow in your way;
Holding on to each other,
Reaching out to your beloved world.

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The editors reserve the right to edit articles.

Trinity Website: www.trinityabingdon.org.uk

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

The celebration of Easter doesn't last just for a day, and some of those Easter hymns still ring loudly in the ears. Perhaps one of my many favourites has this as its chorus:

And we are Easter people, risen with Christ;
Easter people, alive in him:
Easter people, dancing, singing, praises
bringing to our risen Saviour, Lord and King.

It is a helpful reminder to me, that WE are the Easter People. We are those who celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead. It is we who live life in the hope and joy that Easter brought. Personally, I am no dancer, and some of us may not rate our singing that much, but we can all bring praises to our God and King.

In a world where conflict seems ever present, whether it be in Sudan, Israel/Palestine or Ukraine and Russia, it is easy for our spirits to be squashed by these and many other things. Indeed, I find myself taking my own advice from the Covid lockdown days and measuring when and how often I listen to the news. Yet despite this, we are still an Easter People.

Very often, when we talk of special "mountain-top" experiences of God we talk about peace and wonder and awe. And this is of course very true. I recall once being driven around Cumbria and into Scotland and as I looked out at the scenery my heart started to sing "Every valley shall be exalted", a chorus from Handel's Messiah. It was as if the joy that was within me could only be expressed through the delights of song.

To be an Easter People, is to have the JOY of the Risen Lord Jesus in our hearts. This does not deny the mundane things of life, or that there are troubles in the world. But it lifts us up and brings our focus upon the wonder and glory of God and all that God has promised for us.

'Look straight ahead with honest confidence' says the proverb, 'don't hang your head in gloom'. For us, as Easter People, maybe we can hold our heads up and look out with confidence and joy because Jesus is Risen. There is a desperate need for joy in our world today, and we, as Easter People, can reflect some of that divine Easter Joy to those we meet in and out of the church. Let us not be afraid to share the joy of Easter this April.

Every blessing

Trinity Learning Update Experience Easter 2024



Plasticine cut and rolled, flannels folded, beads tied onto string, stickers packed, and Trinity Church decorated and prepared – our brilliant volunteers have been amazing as they have worked alongside us to make sure that we are able to deliver our annual Experience Easter event to hundreds of local children either online in their schools or in person in Trinity Church.

Experience Easter ran in Trinity Church for two weeks, ending on Friday 22nd March, with schools taking part online in the run up to the Easter holidays at the end of the month.

In addition to all the hours of preparation, our volunteer storytellers continued to support us during the event as they shared a simple, scripted story with groups of primary school children and helped them to take an active part in the stories in lots of different ways, from writing their hopes and dreams onto palm crosses to working their way through their angry and fearful thoughts using plasticine.



“Over 500 children took part in Experience Easter this year thanks to the time and skills given so generously by our dedicated and caring volunteers and we are so very thankful for all that they do,” Nicola Williams, Education Development Officer.

We’ve already received some lovely feedback from some of the primary schools who have taken part this month - “Calm, relaxing atmosphere. The class were focused and engaged. A great opportunity for the children to reflect on the Easter story. Thank you.”

We look forward to sharing photos and lots more feedback from the event next month.

Calling all knitters!



Can you put your knitting skills to very good use by knitting a small teddy for one of our Bereavement Packs? The packs contain resources and activities and are used by school staff to help support bereaved children. A small handmade teddy is a very welcome and cherished addition to each pack. We can supply the pattern and all materials – we just need your knitting know how! Please contact Nicola on nic.trinitylearning@gmail.com if you are interested.

TRINITY CHURCH CHARITY FOR 2024

At our church meeting on 24th March, we were asked to choose a charity to support for 2024. As we had supported a UK charity, Crisis, in 2023, it is appropriate to choose an international one this year.

Ruth Dams proposed The Mines Advisory Group, which was immediately agreed.

The Mines Advisory Group (MAG) is a global humanitarian and advocacy organisation that finds, removes and destroys landmines, cluster munitions and unexploded bombs from places affected by conflict.

MAG also provides education programmes, particularly for children, so people can live, work and play as safely as a possible until they clear the land.

MAG works in communities to reduce the risk of armed violence through weapons and ammunition management programmes which keep guns and munitions safe and secure.

Since 1989, MAG has helped over 20 million people in 70 countries rebuild their lives and livelihoods after war. It is unacceptable that millions of people are trapped in danger and poverty for years after wars end.

MAG aims to help communities get on with their lives, and get back their futures.

MAG was set up in 1989 by two brothers, Rae and Lou McGrath, who worked from an office in Cumbria. But it has evolved into a major international operation, sharing the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for its role in banning landmines.

For more information and photographs, see their website: www.maginternational.org.



April



| | | |
|---------------------------|---------|---|
| Mon 1st | | No Beavers, Cubs or Scouts -Easter Break |
| Wed 3rd | | No Brownies and Guides - Easter Break |
| Thurs 4th | | No Trinity Toddler Group - Easter Break |
| Fri 5th | | Virtual Prayer Group 10.30 – 11.15am SOFEA Larder South Oxfordshire Food Bank – Milton Trading Estate |
| Sun 7th | 10.30am | Morning Worship led by Stephen Atkinson. |
| Thurs 11th | 7.30pm | Thursday Group – ‘Objects of Interest’ |
| Fri 12th | | Virtual Prayer Group 10.30am – 11.15pm SOFEA Larder |
| Sun 14th | 10.30am | Morning Worship led by Malcolm Newton. |
| Mon 15th | 2.30pm | Evergreen Club – A talk on SCAMS |
| Fri 19h | | Virtual Prayer Group 11.30am – 11.15pm SOFEA Larder |
| DEADLINE FOR MAY TRIANGLE | | |
| Sun 21st | 10.30 | Morning Worship led by Daphne Savage. |
| Mon 22nd | 5.00pm | Beavers 6.45pm Cubs 7.30p.m Scouts |
| Wed 24th | 5.00pm | Brownies 7.00pm Guides |
| Thurs 25th | 9.30am | Trinity Toddler Group |
| Fri 26th | | Virtual Prayer Group 10.30 – 11.15am SOFEA LARDER |
| Sun 28th | 10.30am | Morning Worship led by Libby Bolton. |
| Mon 29th | 5.00pm | Beavers 6.45pm Cubs 7.30p.m Scouts |



Wed 1st 5.00pm Brownies 7.00pm Guides
10.30am – 11.15pm SOFEA Larder

Fri 3rd Virtual Prayer Group

Sun 5th 10.30am Morning Worship led by Revd. Keith Underhill,
Superintendent Minister.

DEADLINE FOR MAY TRIANGLE

FRIDAY 19th APRIL

Trinity Evergreen Club -Monday 15th April

This month we are having a talk from Age UK about SCAMS. We are all very aware of how vulnerable we all are - especially those of us of mature years!!! I have been assured that the speaker is very easy to understand and this should be a valuable talk for us all.

We start at 2.30 and there will be the usual refreshment and raffle.

Tricia Cook

The KINDNESS of Strangers

Colin Thompson tells the remarkable story of a Jewish girl saved from Czechoslovakia in 1939

My mother, Hertha, celebrated her 100th birthday on 17 July last year. The story of how she came to be in this country at all is inextricably linked to some of the most traumatic events of the 20th century.

She was born Hertha Buchbinder, the younger daughter of two daughters of Jewish parents who were from Czechoslovakia and had married and moved to Vienna soon after the First World War. They retained Czech citizenship, as did their two daughters, though my mother grew up as a German speaker. Her parents only spoke Czech when they didn't want their daughters to understand, which must have been increasingly the case as the political situation worsened. My maternal grandfather, Paul, ran a business making machinery for shoe factories all over central Europe.

After the Anschluss, in March 1938, when Austria was incorporated into the Nazi Reich, Hertha was sent to live with her grandparents in Ostrava on the Czech-Polish border. There, following the Munich Agreement, she witnessed for a second time the Nazis taking over. Meanwhile, my grandfather's business was 'aryanised', that is, confiscated and handed over to a non-Jewish owner, and both he and my grandmother, like all Viennese Jews, had their assets (bank accounts, insurances, valuables) confiscated by the Nazi authorities. I acquired many of the relevant documents when I made a claim for restitution from the Austrian government at the beginning of this century.

At the end of July 1939, my mother found herself, aged 16, on a Kindertransport train leaving Prague for the United Kingdom. She is one of the 669 children rescued by that great humanitarian Sir Nicholas Winton. Some of you will have seen the recent film *One Life*, which tells his story.

Quite how my mother came to be on the train is a mystery. I have been in touch with the daughter of Sir Nicholas, who died in 2015 at the age of 106. She assumes that everything was done by word of mouth, because the situation was so dangerous. At the beginning of August 1939 Hertha arrived in Harwich and as met by members of the English family who had made the necessary arrangements to take her in as a Jewish refugee. Ernest and Ann Thompson were members of Eastgate Union Church, Louth, in Lincolnshire. They were inspired to house her by their Christian faith and by the example of a fellow-member, Abbie Haynes, a First World War widow, who had already taken in a child.

My mother spoke no English but was greeted by Ernest on the doorstep with the words, 'Welcome to our house', close enough to the German for her to understand. Ernest and Ann treated her as a daughter.

Letters arrived from Hertha's parents until April 1940, smuggled across the border into Switzerland by a family friend. I have these too. By then they had been evicted from their flat and forced to share accommodation with other Jewish families. On 15 May 1942 they were transported to the Jewish ghetto of Izbice in Poland. After that the trail goes cold. Virtually all the Viennese Jews who survived Izbice were sent on the extermination camp at Belzec.

Their eldest daughter managed to get to the United States where she married and raised a family. She died many years ago. All the couple's efforts were directed at ensuring their daughters' survival. They succeeded, at the cost of their own lives. About half the members of Hertha's immediate family met a similar fate.

Ernest and Ann's elder son, Rowland, was a married man when they welcomed Hertha. He had served with the London Missionary Society in Madagascar, then a French colony, but his marriage broke down there and after the fall of France in 1940 he went home to Louth. He longed to return to the missionary field, but a divorced minister was not acceptable in those days.

Arriving home, he found a Jewish refugee girl had been added to the family. To cut a long story short, he and Hertha were married in 1944 at Providence Place Chapel, Cleckheaton. I and my younger brother came along soon afterwards. My father served in pastorates at Alfreton, Christ Church Clacton, Buckingham and Ramsgate. He died in 1977, and when my stepfather died in 2019 my mother come to live with me in the Oxfordshire countryside.

She often says that the only way she was able to cope with her past was by drawing a curtain over the horror, though she has been back to Vienna several times. I accompanied her there in 2000 so that I could see where the family lived, where she went to school, and where my grandfather's business was located. In later years my mother struck up a remarkable friendship with a German countess who in her youth had known all the leading Nazis. But closure simply isn't possible; you can only learn to live with the burden. As a child, I dreaded Remembrance Sunday because that was the moment in the year which was the hardest for my mother to bear. Now, limited in sight and hearing and mobility and with time on her hands, she finds her mind going back to those terrible years.

As a child of central European Judaism and English Congregationalism, I honour them both. Growing up with such a background has also formed many of my social and political views. My hackles rise whenever a particular minority group is targeted for discrimination, let alone persecution, because I know where that leads. Bullies must be challenged, or they will take more and more, as Hitler did. But amid all this darkness one light shines clear and strong; the response of individuals – in this case Sir Nicholas and my paternal grandparents – to an unfolding tragedy, as they did what they could to help its potential victims. In a world in which so many of the problems we face seem so intractable we should not understate the power of individuals to make the difference between death and life. For without the kindness of strangers my mother would not have

survived, her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren would never have been born and she would have disappeared, like millions of others, into that darkest of nights. Revd Colin Thompson is a retired URC minister.'



Hertha and Rowland in 1944

'This article appeared in the March edition of Reform. As some members of Trinity will know, Colin was ordained at Trinity in 1971 and the church was his first pastorate.'

Help for Rwanda

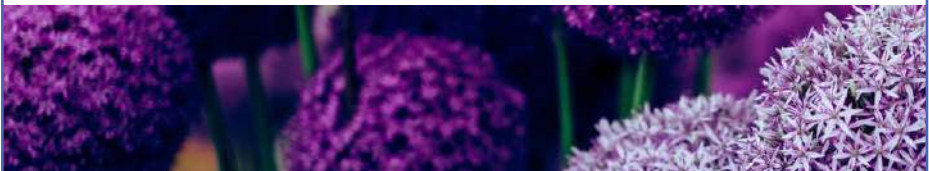
Trinity supports the work of the Methodist and URC Churches overseas through allocation of church funds and through Mission Boxes. A recent article in the Methodist Recorder gave the following example of what these funds are used for. This is a digest of the article.

In May last year, Rwanda experienced exceptionally heavy rainfall causing floods and landslides in many parts of the country. It is estimated that this affected at least 51,905 people in 10,381 households. More than 5,470 houses were destroyed and over 4,909 homes were put at risk. Livestock drowned and with it the livelihood of thousands.

Local Church Funds were supplemented by those sent from the Methodist World Mission Fund to buy food including beans, rice, maize flour and cooking oil and provisions such as mattresses, blankets and buckets. Some of the land has since been replanted with beans, groundnuts and potatoes. Local churches provided temporary housing for people within church buildings while also supplying direct assistance like food and clothing. At the same time, the local Methodist Church worked on more permanent rehousing initiatives.

Methodists in Rwanda have expressed their “heart-felt” thanks to those who donated money to help them cope with the torrential rain and floods. They also say “Please continue to pray for the work of the church in Rwanda.”

Ruth Dams



*May the God of love,
who is the source of all affection for
each other here on earth,
take our friendships into his keeping,
that they may continue and increase
through life and beyond it,
In Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen*

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