

**TRINITY
CHURCH:
ANNUAL
REPORT
2014**

REPORT ON CHURCH ACTIVITIES

All I really want to say here is a really big THANK YOU to everyone who contributes to the mission of Trinity. And I especially want to THANK God for his faithfulness. No matter what, He is the rock and I believe, as a community, we are learning this more and more, even though at times it feels a bit like it's sand underfoot, and each step is hard work. Thank you too to those who've contributed to this report.

This year has seen several well-loved members at Trinity either pass away or move away, which has been very sad. This resulted, in part, in key leadership positions also becoming vacant. Potentially this was going to leave a significant gap, but God, in his goodness raises up people, and this is exactly what has happened. I am extremely grateful too for all that those who have had to, or have chosen to step down have done, and feel really encouraged by those who've stepped up. We have a different looking Leadership Team now which is learning the ropes, and a Church Council which is working hard to become more of a team, which is exciting. Gradually, too, our business is being increasingly underpinned by prayer which is exciting and crucial.

This report reflects a busy year in which many things have continued as in previous years, but in addition, there has been a growing recognition, in me at least, which I'm seeking to share with others, that if we are to really grow and expand God's Kingdom and become a community of 1,000 people plus over the next years we need to properly prepare and organise ourselves for this. Some of the work begun this year reflects this.

God has amazing plans for Trinity. May He bless us and help us as we help each other to keep seeking life to the full in Jesus Christ.

Every blessing in Christ,

Jon

1. Our Vision

1.1 *Vision Statement, values and purpose*

- 1.1.1 We have continued to try and underpin what we do with our Vision Statement for Trinity: ***Our vision is to see people living life to the full by loving, following and being transformed spiritually by Jesus.*** This continues to serve as a dynamic and meaningful vision and we seek increasingly to make it, and its accompanying values, central to our decisions, activities, worship and preaching. Concrete inroads, however, remain very limited into meeting ***our objective*** of seeing 1,000 people in the next 10 years come to know and love Jesus. We need to look more strategically at this in the next couple of years.
- 1.1.2 Our focus remains on the agreed key areas of ministry – ***Children and Families; Youth work; Whole of Life Christianity, and Men's work*** – supported by the ***strategic use of the building and tools for the job***, all underpinned by prayer and worship. In practice most effort has been concentrated on children, families, youth and developing more effective ways of organising how we manage our facilities.

1.2 *Youth Ministry*

- 1.2.1 Trinity's ***youth work*** has continued to support and encourage young people in Trinity and, where possible, the surrounding community to enable them to experience God for themselves and to provide a stable and welcoming environment where they can feel valued and accepted regardless of their level of faith.
- 1.2.2 Mid-way through the year Suz, our student youth-worker, finished her placement with Trinity. She passed her degree with flying colours by gaining a First! We were not able, in the time available, to organise funding to turn the post into a full-time

youth worker position and Suz left for new pastures in Finchampstead. It was encouraging to know Trinity had played a significant part in shaping Suz's ministry, and, by the end of the year decided to aim for another student youth worker for the academic year 2015/16.

- 1.2.3. Necessary changes came about in the leadership of our youth work. In addition to Suz leaving, Bethan stepped down from her role as a **Youth Net** leader to become Trinity's Senior Steward. However, Bethan remained involved with FEST (see below) and offers support to the other Youth Net leaders. Emma joined the team alongside Mike and Martin in May 2014 to ensure Youth Net could continue.
- 1.2.4 Youth Net continues to meet every Wednesday during term time and has a core group of six to eight young people. Over the last year the Urban Saints Storylines course has been completed which looked at major threads and themes in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. At the request of the young people some life issues have been and continue to be explored from a Christian perspective, such as relationships, sex, drugs, consumerism, stress and pressure. Youth Alpha will be run again in 2015. In the summer a group went to Soul Survivor and three of the group served "on team" in two of the many cafés on site. This is a highlight for the youth and attendance is planned again for 2015.
- 1.2.5 The youth has also led **FEST** on the third Sunday evening of most months. This offers a time of informal worship and reflection for all ages. The FEST Team is really growing in confidence and talents and gifts are being developed which is great to see.
- 1.2.6 **Pilots** needed a new Captain when Suz left. Margaret Goddard took this on in May 2014. A slight change in format was introduced incorporating a more structured session with religious input and games but less running around. Earlier in the year Pilots had been divided with the older children moving onto Youth Net. This left Pilots with a relatively small number of 5-11 year olds. Some additional children were attracted but some left as well leaving 4-5 children. Some advertising didn't attract new children from Junior Church or from outside Trinity and so the decision has been taken to stop Pilots and appraise how to move forward. Significant thanks go to Margaret and John Goddard and Claire and Alistair Jackson for stepping in and running Pilots.

1.3 **Family Ministry**

- 1.3.1 Our family ministry continues in much the same vein as last year, seeking to ensure that all people, young and old, are able to experience what it means to belong to the family of God, to contribute and to receive, be valued and recognised as people of faith, be transformed by the love of Christ, to share the good news in the wider community¹ and have fun, all within a safe, supportive and nurturing framework. There are various opportunities and threads to this ministry which include the following:
- 1.3.2 **The Nursery Service** is a tremendous opportunity to serve the community. It has been another busy and rewarding year with some fluctuations in numbers but there has certainly been **growth numerically and spiritually**. We are pleased with the consistent requests for prayer and pastoral support from families and the encouraging and **mutually supportive relationships** that are being built throughout.
- 1.3.3 **NS volunteers work incredibly well together as a team**, (and Ann Baker does an amazing job in heading this up) supporting and helping one another wherever necessary and the parents and carers also contribute significantly. This team work was very visible and much appreciated following Ann Baker's accident in October. Because of this we were once again able to provide a very enjoyable **Christmas lunch to 97 children and adults in December**. We sadly said goodbye and gave an enormous thank you to **Joan Guile** for all she has done over the years to support our Nursery Service ministry.
- 1.3.4 **Monthly lunches** continue to be very popular with an average attendance in the 70's. Normal services are usually around 25-30 children plus accompanying adults but have been much larger than this on several occasions throughout the year. We really enjoyed our annual outdoor service, summer picnic, games and Bear Hunt, when the sun actually shone for once and our interactive Nativity service this year was a joy.
- 1.3.5 The two **Trinity Toddler Groups** have each had a tremendous year and have grown beyond expectation with an average of around **50 children plus parents and grandparents attending sessions**. Monday's session is run by Kat

1 Adapted from 'Taking Children Seriously', Mother's Union Christian care for families leaflet.

Brickley, one of the parents and supported by Trinity, Thursday's group is run by Sarah Pugh on behalf of Trinity and both groups **provide a much valued and vital service to the local community**. They also contribute financially to Trinity.

- 1.3.6 The organisers and their helpers do a fantastic job providing craft activities, play, refreshments, action songs and the opportunity to access support and build friendships. Our **thanks go to Sarah and Kat and to the many others who so generously give their time to contribute throughout the course of each term**. Relationship and interaction with wider church activities has continued to grow and we are seeing more Toddler Group parents also coming along to Nursery Service and coming forward for baptism. Our Christmas services this year were very well attended by Toddler Group and NS families from many years past as well as those who currently attend.
- 1.3.7 Our **Cradle Roll** continued to grow with 9 baptisms in the calendar year 2014. A First Bible is given as a gift to children during Baptism services and they are actively encouraged to attend Nursery Service, which many do. We continue to send details of family friendly events & services to families on our cradle roll with children under 5, in an effort to welcome and encourage families to come to these and we also send Birthday cards to all children under 3yrs.
- 1.3.8 We continued serve the Trinity and local community through weddings and funerals. Two Trinity weddings took place in 2014 and several Trinity funerals were held.
- 1.3.9 The **Chalfont Group** continues to be a success. The last twelve months have seen an increase in those regularly attending the weekly meetings. The Committee's aim is to make a welcoming, friendly atmosphere where people can relax and enjoy listening to and asking questions of speakers. The latter covered a wide range of topics, e.g. The Red Cross, National Trust properties, managing finances, services provided by Age UK, the history of underwear, wild birds, light music and three praise services. A cuppa and biscuits follow. We went on a successful summer day trip to Portsmouth, despite a thunder storm, and in 2015 we're going to Eastbourne and plan to have a cream tea with Joan and Gordon Guile. Grateful thanks to the committee and especially Rosemary. We are also hoping to have some fresh input from the ASDA Community Colleague in 2015.
- 1.3.10 The **Trinity Walking Group** continued to organise monthly walks for exercise and social contact. There continues to be a core group of approximately 20 walkers, most taking a turn to organise a walk/pub lunch. The highlight again was the annual walking holiday with visits to Brunel's magnificent Ironbridge and the adjoining Black Country Museum, as well as the Acton Scott working Victorian farm and the beautiful Dell gardens in Shrewsbury.
- 1.3.11 The 2014 **Summer Holiday Fun Club** ran for 3 afternoons, led once again by Anna Meadows and a fabulous team of 15 plus volunteers. Thirty-one different children attended over the 3 days, including 4 young people helpers. We had a maximum of 24 children each day, with some coming for just 1 or 2 days. Everyone enjoyed the journey on the Starship Discovery theme which explored some of Jesus' miracles and considered that God is with us wherever we are. Activities included parachute Bible stories, cooking, making their own spacesuit out of junk, maze making, balloon rockets, creating moons, suns, rockets and flying saucers, games, singing and a collaborative art project of creating our huge rocket! We all had a great time. Anna is unable to co-ordinate 2015's Fun Club, so a massive thank you goes to Anna for all she has done over the last few years.
- 1.3.12 Once again we ran a **nativity service** at Trinity for **the Yellow Brick Nursery** which was fun and enjoyed by all.
- 1.3.13 We continued to aim to run a regular pattern of **courses** throughout the year. This year, in addition to a Lent course on Grace we ran a parenting teenagers course. For various reasons beyond our control plans for an Alpha course had to be delayed until 2015.
- 1.3.14 Over and above the different activities that have been taking place, Trinity has agreed to make the part-time pastoral post a full-time children, families and pastoral worker position. Much effort was made in the course of the year to work on this. It was more involved than desired because of a likely change in employer for this post, from the Methodist Circuit to Trinity, and HR matters are increasingly complex. Funding as well needed to be examined. By the end of the year good headway had been made but it was very slow. Working on this and the youth worker position highlighted a need to develop our staffing committee into an HR team which would be able to manage these kind of processes effectively given the current and future rigours of HR management. There are lots of plans for further developing the children and family ministry but until the role is expanded it is not possible to make headway.

1.4 *Men's Ministry*

- 1.4.1 We continue to aim is to see increased numbers of Trinity men growing as disciples and becoming more involved in worship-related and Spirit-focussed activities (corporate and small-scale), to see increased numbers of Trinity men reaching out to other men on their frontlines, and to see increased numbers of men making a personal commitment to Jesus and being disciples. For such a ministry to grow we need the right men to lead it, and it is clear that this year hasn't been the right time to see this ministry take root, and so it remains on the back-burner whilst we continue to be alert to the Spirit's prompting. That said, some of the Reading Churches Men's Group breakfasts were attended.

1.5 *Whole Life Christianity*

- 1.5.1 This really important area of ministry for Trinity continues to percolate on the back burner as well. A preaching series on Lives on the Frontline in the Bible took place and our frontlines continued to be referred to. A series from the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity on Fruitfulness on the Frontline is planned for Lent 2015. We need patience and perseverance to enable this ministry to "catch". Andrew Rixon who had responsibility for this ministry has had to prioritise his new role as Chair of Trustees and Church Council but early in 2015 another Trinity member has emerged as willing and able to take on the leadership of the ministry. It will be exciting to see where God leads us with this work.

1.6 *Tools for the Job*

- 1.6.1 Our lives should focus on our relationship with Jesus and be about going and introducing others to Jesus and supporting them as they also get to know him – being a disciple and making disciples. This doesn't just happen. We need support, including resources, and this ministry is about helping with this.
- 1.6.2 Various materials have been produced to support activities for spiritual development at church including:
- A5 booklet on 'Reflections at the Cross', which was originally developed for Good Friday 2014. It was adapted for the recent 24/1 Easter 2015 Prayer Vigil and used again for Good Friday 2015.
 - A5 leaflet on 'Resourcing Trinity's Growth', which looked at how Trinity might resource its Family and Youth work in the future.
 - A6 leaflet on 'Making Worship Accessible for All', which explained the rationale behind the trial of a different service pattern
 - A6 Feedback Form on the experiment of the different service plan
 - 'Going Deeper' – various leaflets on the Vision for 2015
 - A General 'Introductory Leaflet to Going Deeper'
 - 'Spiritual Buddies'
 - 'Reading the New Testament in a year – reading plan'
 - A5 booklet on 'Fruitfulness on the Frontline for Lent'
- 1.6.3 The aim is to continue to produce our own material where possible and signpost material from other sources. Producing such materials is considerable work and thanks go to Anita Stubbs especially for her commitment to this ministry.
- 1.6.4 We continue to manage a small **library** thanks to Gaynor. Sixteen new books were bought out of library funds, spread over a range of Christian topics. Recorded loans were again low this year (only a dozen, again on various subjects). There is however continuing evidence that people are browsing the material and just leaving books out nearby. This is the case most weeks and offers some encouragement. There is evidence too, however, that many people source information from the internet.

1.7 Strategic Use of the Building

1.7.1 Progress has continued in working towards making sure our building serves our vision as best it can and to serve God's purposes in Lower Earley. The building continues to be widely used by a variety of user-groups. How strategic its use is in relation to achieving our objective and vision is not clear, but with all the users we have an opportunity to serve and be salt and light. The danger continues that the space gets so booked up that church-based activities find it hard to squeeze in. An on-going challenge is the development of an efficient centralised room booking system. This is more complex than might be imagined. Margaret Evans has done a great job steering a path with this day-to-day. A process got underway towards the end of the year to really look into the detail of how to improve the system. This is a gradual process as well.

The improvements to the kitchen made in 2013, which were funded by an Oxford Diocese grant, have been extremely useful in enabling improved hospitality for users of the building. With increased and varied use of the building taking care of and organising the rooms effectively is an on-going challenge.

1.7.2 Unfortunately, for no reason to do with Trinity, the True Food Market which opened its doors on Saturdays last year had to close. Instead Karen Green and Vanessa Fairhall have worked hard with having a number of Open Saturdays, including throughout Advent. These have been popular and been the source of income for different charities which Trinity has match-funded. Such events require considerable work and a team of volunteers has stepped up but it is a challenge.

1.7.3 Plans were emerging by the end of the year to install solar panels on our roof and to double glaze the windows in the hall and offices. Thanks go to Richard Cocks for spearheading this project. He took on the role of **Property** Steward from John Goddard in September 2014. Thanks go to John as well for all his hard work and for his continued involvement. Key tasks in maintaining the building undertaken in 2014 were fixing a retractable screen/blind over the South West window, redecorating the hall, installing an automatic door lock to the external door opposite the library, and acquiring further new chairs for the hall. Thanks go to those who help with the countless jobs, including the maintenance of the flower beds. The Brownies, WI members and some Trinity members worked hard on these during the year, which was much appreciated.

2. Our Relationships

2.1. Relationships are key to growing God's Kingdom – we need deepening relationships with each other so we can encourage and support one another on our frontlines and in the stuff of life, and we each need a deepening relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit so he can guide and lead us, and we need relationships with others outside God's Kingdom on our various frontlines because these days it is through relationships that people begin to see who Jesus is and what impact he can have on their lives. As a church this is becoming more a part of our culture and identity.

2.2 Our **small groups** continue in much the same way as last year. They do an amazing job continuing to meet with minimal input and support which needs to improve. We continue to have approximately 80 people committed to small group membership which is really encouraging. This is a very effective way to build relationships and to offer and receive encouragement on the journey of faith.

2.3 Our small but dedicated **Community Chaplaincy Team (CCT)** continued to work quietly in the background visiting people whenever possible and making a valuable difference in the lives of Trinity members. This team has still to really take off but there is a limit to what is possible without the team expanding and efforts have been made in this regard.

2.4 The CCT continues to play a regular role in two local residential care homes (individual visits and regular communion services). The Bible Study group in Liberty of Earley House, in partnership with St Nicolas Church had to end because numbers of group members dwindled and no one was the obvious person to lead the work. It was useful for the period it lasted and it was good working with St Nicolas Church. Our relationship continues with ASDA and the door has remained open for chaplaincy work in the store. A new store manager at the start of 2014 and then again at the start of 2015 is interesting. This is, in part, why chaplaincy work in store still has yet to begin but we are wary of starting something if it isn't really sustainable to begin with which is how it continues to feel.

2.5 Relations with ASDA, the leisure centre, Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and various other local stakeholders are being developed through the minister's invitation to sit on a **Community Forum** run by C-Salt, the education and leisure charitable trust that manages WBC's sport and leisure facilities. Through this initiative Jon has proposed the idea of setting up a community allotment and healthy living project. An initial grant was allocated from the forum. It took a while to get things

going but by early 2015 a steering group had been set up and Hillside School were enthusiastically on board as well and a site agreed on the school grounds. Jon has also accepted an invitation to become a community governor at Hillside School.

- 2.6 We continue to maintain relationships with various charities and mission organisations. Locally we have a team who oversee our donations to **Readifood's** food bank, we also continue to have some **Street Pastors** among us, and towards the end of the year we contributed to the new Reading Christian Network initiated **Home for Good** project which is working with Reading Borough Council to try and find foster or adoptive parents for 50 children in Reading over the next three years. We continue to support **Traidcraft** but sales are falling:- £2,460. We do have some young people who are becoming increasingly enthusiastic at selling when we have the after-church stall. Most sales now though are through the St Barnabas' monthly stall which supplies Trinity with tea and coffee etc. We could do with explaining to Trinity how Traidcraft helps transform the lives of thousands of small producers.
- 2.7 **Christian Aid Week** was again supported. In the absence of a Christian Aid Representative, Richard Cocks organised the collection. A record 31 people volunteered to distribute and collect envelopes, largely from their neighbours. Excluding generous donations from the collectors themselves, £616 was collected. Collectors' donations and those of other church members added £464 and taking into account Gift Aid from both groups we raised £1,206 for Christian Aid's brilliant work. Also around Christian Aid week £158 was donated at a soup lunch and cake sales raised £63. This is a great job and well done everyone involved! Can we do even better in 2015!
- 2.8 **Time 4 Us**, a group for women which mixes social times together with discipling and life issues, continued to run with a mix of activities and a new leadership team. On average 20+ women have attended the programme of activities.
- 2.9 Trinity continues to maintain its relationships with the three 'parent' denominations. The new **Basingstoke and Reading Methodist Circuit** was launched in September. Circuit Meetings are usually attended, as are the monthly Circuit staff meetings. Trinity takes its turn in hosting both these. A new Anglican Area Dean for the **Reading Deanery**, the Reverend Stephen Pullin was instituted as Priest-in-Charge of Reading Minster. Deanery business during the year focussed on agreeing new pastoral areas and a new parish share formula. The **URC** Wessex Synod has two gatherings per annum and is attended whenever possible. The 'Sharing the Vision' newsletter is posted on the church hall noticeboard. The Synod's Wessex Children and Youth Spring Festival in April was attended by several at Trinity.
- 2.10 Trinity continues to play a part in **Churches Together in Berkshire (CTB)**. Its sponsoring body had two meetings in 2014. We also remain involved in the local **Churches Together in Earley and East Reading (CTEER)**, with Jon continuing to sit on the Steering Group. He is also a member of **Reading Christian Network**. Trinity continues to support **RE-Inspired** financially and with volunteers, especially Janet and Kate. Jon remains a trustee. Gordon Guile had to step down as a trustee when he moved. The REI team came and led a service at Trinity during the year. 2014 has seen this project develop its local base and reputation but also increase its influence nationally and it is increasingly well recognised within children's ministry nationally.
- 2.11 **Social media**, notably **Facebook**, continue to facilitate relationships within and outside Trinity. They are very helpful tools for advertising events and activities as well as providing feedback. This works especially well with the Nursery Service. Trinity has its own accounts, including Facebook and Twitter, which an increasing number of people are using. Our website, too, is still being more widely accessed and more imaginatively used. Various additions were made including booking forms for the Summer Holiday Fun Club, resources for Going Deeper in 2015 and some cosmetic changes undertaken in response to feedback. We continue to add service information, sermons, weekly news, the monthly magazine and a diary of events. Some initial work started on a replacement website that would make it easier for different users to update pages but this has paused for the time being.

3. Our Worship

- 3.1 For the first 6 months of the year the worship experiment referred to in last year's report was undertaken. This sought to see if we could develop a more viable traditional service, given the often very small numbers at 8am services, and, in addition, whether separating out worship styles a bit more would aid deeper worship. Once a month we had a 9.30am family service, with Junior Church, followed by an 11.15am traditional service. Refreshments were served between these services. There was also an afternoon service called The Edge which was more informal and contemporary, and which moved to the evening. Feedback was sought and was varied. The other weeks we continued with our 8am and 10am services. In reality, the experiment wasn't explained well enough and didn't last long enough. That said, the 11.15am attracted 25-40 people each time instead of the 4-10 normally at 8am, and was appreciated but the time slot wasn't ideal. Finding a suitable

time for this style of service isn't easy. The 9.30am was able to be a little more explorative in style which was positive but needed more time to develop. A small number valued The Edge and this led to the development of the youth led FEST service, which continues now. Practically speaking, Junior Church found having to be organised that much earlier was a push, and sometimes the 9.30am service went on too long which impacted on the setting up of the 11.15am service. Others felt they preferred the mixed economy of the 10am service.

- 3.2 It was decided that we should return to the 8am and 10am pattern but on 5th Sundays the 9.30am and 11.15am pattern would continue, with the 9.30am being an all age service. This is a development to 5th Sundays which previously only had an all age family service.
- 3.3 The second half of the year saw our corporate worship continue much as before, and throughout the year the festivals were celebrated in much the same way as in previous years. At Christmas, however, we held our Christingle in a 10am service instead of separately in the afternoon. The church was full and had a real buzz. Generally speaking this was considered a success and worth seeking to build upon next year.
- 3.4 At all our services a high level of lay participation continued, working with the Minister and Curate, in leading, preaching, praying, taking the everybody slot and leading music. The lay involvement is wonderful and much appreciated but has been squeezed somewhat. Joan Guile left a big gap when she moved away but it's been good to have Megan Cann begin getting involved. Giles had to step back from leading due to work commitments as a police officer, and Sarah stepped back from preaching because she was pregnant. And, in the autumn, after many years at Trinity Cath, having completed her curacy, moved on to the Loddon Reach Benefice. Her departure left a big gap. God is good, however, and more or less at the same time has brought the Revd Chris Evans and family to Trinity. Chris is a Methodist minister, member of the local Circuit, and full-time Chaplain at Reading School and it felt right for the family to settle at Trinity, with Chris playing a role in leading
- 3.5 **All-Age services**, in addition to 5th Sundays, are planned in periodically, and occasionally too Junior Church returns to the service to join in with Communion. We now have a brilliant all age-team who plan and deliver these services with children helping to lead the services. There is great scope for this to really develop.
- 3.6 **Preaching and teaching** themes during the year included the following: a series on Grace, using the Freedom in Christ course which ran during Lent; a mini-series on Psalms; 1 and 2 Peter; making our lives count; and key personalities in the Bible.
- 3.7 **Mid-week** we brought the **small prayer service on Wednesday mornings** to a close as its season had come to an end. We need to find an appropriate alternative. We also had praise services for the **Chalfont Group** at Easter, Harvest and Christmas and held evening services for Ash Wednesday, Passover and Ascension Day. We should remember too that the **Nursery Service** is a time of worship mid-week, and **Youth Net** also spends time worshipping, as do our **small groups**.
- 3.8 **Musically**, we have continued to use a variety of musical styles in our worship, mixing new material with older, more traditional hymns. Once every 6 weeks or so the more traditional 8 a.m. service is a quiet service. In the main family service a wider range of music is led by several different musicians. At least once a month a fuller band, sometimes up to 13 strong, is led by Peter. Brass, woodwind, strings (guitar, violin, electric bass), keyboard and vocal are included and some young teenagers are involved and being nurtured. This band played at one Trinity wedding, and two memorial services at The Duchess of Kent House. Andrew, Chris, Keith and Megan lead as well with different groupings of musicians and vocalists, and each brings their own style and flavour to the services. New material is being introduced as well, some of which are becoming favourites. Effort is made as well to include 'all-age' relevant songs before the children leave for Junior Church.
- 3.9 At Christmas, Andrew, once again organised a singing group of approximately 20 people, which performed at the carol service and the midnight service. The group sang a few songs, including a great song entitled "Mary, did you know ...?"
- 3.10 **Junior Church** consists of 4 classes of Nursery, Infants, Junior and Senior, and between 18 and 25 children attend regularly, with 20 teachers and helpers. The children enjoy their classes together when we hold our Praise Parties. There is a real sense of team work, especially when we have the challenge of making 100 Mother's day gifts in 20 minutes!
- 3.11 The children have been keen to raise money for charity and have raised £200 for "East meets West" by encouraging members of the church to write Christmas messages on penguins, and £120 for Comic Relief which church match-funded. The children are now thinking of the next fundraising activity to do in the summer of 2015.

- 3.12 The children love getting involved, from helping, planning and running these events, to getting stuck into church life and are a real service to our church community. It is truly joyful when they are enthusiastic about being involved with the worship and this past year they have taken up the offering, read the bible, been involved in drama, and led prayers in our 10 am services. The all-age team referred to above has done a brilliant job working with and encouraging the children. For the second year running they have been issued with their own Trinity Junior Membership Card to increase their sense of belonging. As a church we need to continue to welcome, smile at and love the children at Trinity as Jesus demanded.
- 3.13 Trinity continued to be blessed with some beautiful flowers from our very talented **flower arrangers**. This is much appreciated and helps worship.
- 3.14 Our faithful band of **cleaners** also helped keep our worship space, and the building as a whole, clean and this is much appreciated too.
- 3.15 This year has also seen the **upgraded sound system** become operational, with a number of dedicated operators doing a grand job working hard each week to learn and use the system. This is making a positive difference to our worship and the full benefits will be realised in 2015 when the projector system and sound recording are integrated fully into the system. Considerable work has been put into setting up this system and the on-going management of it, neither of which has been or, in fact is, easy. Significant thanks go to all those involved.
- 3.16 The Vision-to-Action Team has done some initial work looking at how Trinity might explore what we understand and mean by "worship" to help us develop our worship. Musical worship is a component part of this. Part of this work is the development of a fresh role of Worship Team Leader.

4. Our Prayer Life

- 4.1 The practice and influence of prayer in Trinity corporately, in small groups and personally continues. In services there has been some increase in spontaneous open prayer. The email prayer chain has over 20 members and is used a considerable amount. Those asking for prayers frequently comment that this is such an encouragement and increasingly the chain receives feedback about how prayed-for situations have developed. Informal prayer ministry continues to be offered at the 10am service. Take up remains variable but is valued.
- 4.2 Jill Duncan took over the prayer chain and intercessions rota when Joan left and is doing a great job. During Advent we had prayer stations and for Easter a 24-1 prayer event is planned.

5. Our Management

- 5.1 **Church Council** and **Church Meeting** met as scheduled and worked on a variety of issues: including developing the Pastoral Worker role into a **full-time Children, Families and Pastoral Worker** position with Trinity as the employer; continuing to pay for either a full-time or student **Youth Worker**; the use of **solar panels** on Trinity's roof in response to a commitment to be as environmentally friendly as we can; agreement on a revised meeting schedule for both Church Council and Church Meetings; agreement to set up, and initial development work for a new Human Resources Team to take on the full range of HR matters at Trinity, and to replace the Staffing Committee; and the minister becoming the vicar in response to the Church of England lifting the suspension on benefice of Trinity. The Church Council also agreed a charter for Council members.
- 5.2 The **Chair of Church Council, Church Meeting and of the Trustees** has been taken on by **Andrew Rixon**, after **David Paine** stepped down. Thanks go to David for his commitment during his term of office. Church Council has been well attended and meetings have been increasingly positive and productive. Attendance at Church Meetings continues to be less than ideal given its importance. The change in meeting schedule is partially in response to this.
- 5.3 At the very end of 2013 **Chris Edgar** became **Church Secretary/Church Warden**, and at the AGM in 2014, **Bethan Jones** became **Senior Steward/Church Warden**. Thanks go to **John Goddard** whose 6 years as Church Secretary had passed, and to **Anita Stubbs** who needed, for personal reasons, to step back from her role. **Gordon Guile** also completed his 6 years as **Treasurer** just before moving away from the area. **Dave Mbawa** became the new Treasurer. These are all

demanding roles especially for those in full-time employment as the three incumbents are. Thanks go to Chris, Bethan and Dave for their willingness to step up and take them on. This means a new look Leadership Team at Trinity.

- 5.4 **Trinity's committees** have evolved to some extent in places. Focus is gradually shifting more towards "teams". As reported last year the **Events and Communications Team** (ECT) took a leading role in progressing this. Wendy, the team leader, stepped down because of a house move away from the area, which left the team hanging. Simplifying the role of this team was identified as important towards the end of the year and clarification of this was planned for 2015. During the year The **Vision to Action Team**, which continued to meet to co-ordinate the implementation of the vision work, began a piece of work to look at what 'worship' means in Trinity. This has been an intermittent task but emerging is the need for a **new worship 'team'** with a **'Worship Team Leader' role** which will be much more significant than the previous Worship Committee convenor. Finding the right person for this role will be essential. The Charter for Church Council will also, hopefully, help make it more like a team. Richard Cocks took over as Chair of The **Property Committee** in September. Where necessary he will continue, as John Goddard had been (thanks to John for all his hard work), to look beyond the committee to draw on different people's skills for different tasks.
- 5.5 As noted above, **Rev. Cath Spence** moved on from Trinity to pastures new. She had been a member at Trinity for 20 years, and for the last 4 had been in training as a Curate. She successfully completed her curacy mid-year and felt it right to move on. This she did in the autumn. Her input, range of skills and enthusiasm will be missed. It has also been noted above that Jon's job title changed in December from Priest-in-Charge to Vicar when the Bishop of Reading instituted him as Vicar. This happened because the Church of England lifted the suspension on Trinity's benefice which was no longer required due to recent changes in employment legislation. He will continue to be primarily called 'Minister'.

6. Our Membership

- 6.1 Our church database is made up of 265 entries (275 in 2013). Of those, 160 are members (169 in 2013), 62 adherents (61 in 2013) and 43 children (45 in 2013). Sixteen members were removed, primarily from relocation and passing away. Seven new members were welcomed. Towards the end of the year, and in the first quarter of 2015, a variety of new faces were attending services, which is great to see. Membership data excludes the Nursery Service, which, as reported above, includes on average approximately 25 adults weekly and more at the monthly lunch. Most of these are not Trinity members/adherents. We also serve two small gatherings, in total about 15 people in local residential homes.

7. Our Finances

7.1 **General Outlook**

- 7.1.1 We ended the year with a surplus of £9,418. This was achieved by a combination of cost cutting measures and a single donation of £10,000 from a family. This donation is restricted to Youth and Pastoral care costs. The scenario could have been worse if this donation was not taken into account.

7.2 **Income**

- 7.2.1 Total income for the year stood at £138,975. This amount is £7,000 more than the same period last year. Envelope giving was slightly down on last year and so was cash giving. Standing order giving on the other hand was marginally up. Lettings maintained a steady income stream like last year and contributed substantially to the overall income figure. The church leadership are working on various modalities to increase giving both cash and standing orders.

7.3 **Expenditure**

- 7.3.1 Total expenditure was marginally lower than last year but some expenditure items repairs and maintenance, photocopying and music and worship were higher than budget. The rise in expenditure was mainly due to various reasons such as routine maintenance of the building and purchase of a new projector and other music accessories. The coming year should be

characterised by lower expenses in those expenditure items.

- 7.3.2 Gas and Electricity bills continue to rise and plans are underway to scour the market for cheaper rates or to switch to solar power which should reduce utility bills in the long time. Solar power will also make Trinity a greener church and help to reduce the carbon foot print.

7.4 Mission Giving

- 7.4.1 Mission giving amounted to £5,267 which was 7% of income. This is well below the required 10% minimum threshold. The leadership team is determined to address this trend and there is hope that in the next financial year, the church will reach its 10% threshold in mission giving.
- 7.4.2 Notable donations in the year were £1,000 to Christian aid, £2,100 to a Tanzania orphanage and £650 to St. Mungo's homeless charity.

7.5 Three Year Budget

- 7.5.1 A three year budget from September 2013 to August 2016 was agreed by the Finance Sub-Committee in May 2014. Church Council ratified the budget and it was also discussed at the general church meeting in June 2014. Following the Methodist Circuit purchasing a new Manse for the Superintendent our Manse at 1 Strand Way was let from 30 November 2013. It was agreed with the Circuit that the income generated between Dec 2013 and Aug 2014 will be split two-thirds to the Circuit and one-third to Trinity. The income will then be split 50:50 from September 2014. The church is expected to receive the first manse contribution in March 2015. The income for years two and three has been budgeted. It is our policy to designate the income from the Manse so that we could use this income to support the General Fund.

7.6 Trinity Vision Budget

- 7.6.1 To help bring our new Vision for Trinity Church into action £8,000 of Expenditure was added to the 2013/14 Budget, partly funded by £5,000 of new income. The £8,000 is split up into £1,000 Promotional Material, £500 Worship and Prayer, £750 Young People, £800 Making Disciples, £400 Men's Resources, Building/Training Materials £2,000, Improved Storage £1,000, £400 Whole Life Christianity, the balance to continue to support our Trainee Youth Worker. The Income would come partly from gifts from members and growth coming from developing the Vision work in the Community.

7.7 Reserve Policy

- 7.7.1 Our Reserve Policy has been changed by Church Council from 6 months to between 3 and 6 months cover. So we should never let our reserves fall below 3 months turnover and also never let the amount go above 6 months. The Reserves refer to Unrestricted Funds. The lower amount based on last year's turnover, without the one off Grant, would mean we need £33,000 in reserve. We currently have £31,000.

7.8 Summary

- 7.8.1 While we achieved a substantial surplus in the year, Trinity still has many financial challenges over the coming three years. In terms of spiritual growth, Trinity needs to increase the Pastoral Worker hours so she can do more work around the community. Funding for the extra hours will have to be identified. Some members are already giving towards this cause but a lot needs to be done.
- 7.8.2 Another crucial area which needs attention is discipleship. Trinity has not done a lot in this area and a concerted effort needs to be put in place to ensure that outreach activities are increased in the coming year and beyond.
- 7.8.3 There is also need to increase income mainly membership giving so that Trinity can operate comfortably and also be able to give donations to as many charities as possible. The leadership team is well aware of these challenges and is keen to improve the situation in the coming year.