

Draft: for approval at Church Meeting

7 October 2018

**TRINITY
CHURCH
ANNUAL
REPORT
2018**

REPORT ON CHURCH ACTIVITIES

2018 has been a significant year for Trinity. Last autumn, we saw the start of a vision refreshment exercise. Our new vision was strongly supported by the AGM in 2018, and we are now working to take this forward. Part of this has involved looking at how we best deliver our vision, in terms of getting God's message out there. This has involved looking at how Trinity presents itself to the outside world and how we could improve on this. You can read more about this below.

We have also benefitted significantly as a whole church from having Sam with us as our first full-time youth worker. His energy, enthusiasm and clear love for Jesus has been inspiring. It's really encouraging to see the impact his ministry is beginning to have on the youth in Trinity, but also in the community with community-based youth work in partnership with Earley Town Council, other local churches, and Urban Saints.

Our other areas of ministry have continued with commitment and energy which has been a real blessing. We have, however, had to say goodbye to Andrew and Helen Rixon and Jill Duncan who have moved out of the area. All three have played really important roles in Trinity for approximately 30 years and it was both sad and hard to say goodbye. I felt a little daunted by the need to replace Andrew as Chair of Church Council and Trustees. However, God is a gracious and faithful God and I believe Trinity has been learning much about this since stepping out in faith to raise the funds for a youth worker. God has not only provided Dianne Berry as Andrew's successor, who has tremendous experience in all matters related to chairing and who has embraced the role with amazing commitment, but we've also been blessed by some other new members who come to us with loads of leadership experience in other churches.

I believe it has been a really good year and I'm excited by what is coming next year. What is coming will only be possible because of the many volunteers and staff who faithfully give so much time and energy to keeping Trinity following God's lead. My heartfelt thanks go to them.

Every blessing in Christ,

Jon

1. Our Vision and Ministry

In autumn 2017, we decided to revisit and refresh our vision as a church moving forward, with the aim of approving a refreshed vision statement at the AGM in 2018. This was done and the revised vision, values and priorities received strong support from the membership. Our vision 'Living life to the full; showing and sharing Jesus' is at the heart of what we do and how we feel. We aim to be as much like Jesus in character as we can and to demonstrate it through our behaviour towards others, as well as to let people know about the good news of Jesus. We identified four values that describe our heart, character and personality: these are, to be Christ-centred, Community focused, Compassionate, and Courageous. Coming out of this, our initial priority activities are:

- Fostering new disciples and empowering and nurturing everyone as followers of Jesus
- Responding with love to human need and injustice
- Acting on concerns for God's creation.

We will apply these to our whole church family, our local community, and the wider church and world.

Delivering our vision

Our next step was to ask one of our members, Grainne Leyton-Smith to lead a working party to look at how we deliver our first priority 'fostering new disciples and empowering and nurturing everyone as followers of Jesus'. The group met several times, focusing on questions such as 'who are we trying to engage with', 'how can we get our communications to resonate with others', 'how can we as a congregation draw new people in to Trinity', and 'what should our communications (leaflets, posters, emails, website) look like'. Two key lines of work that have come out of this are talking with a Christian branding and design company about revamping our website and various key documents, and creating a leaflet to support members when trying to explain their faith and beliefs, or what Trinity is like, to non-Christians. Exciting times.

1.1 Youth Ministry

Trinity welcomed Sam Ruck, our first full-time youth worker, at the start of December 2017 and he has made a significant positive impact over his first nine months with us.

Tremendous credit and thanks also go to our team of youth work volunteers (Emma, Mike, Anna, Kirsten and Bethan) who continued to faithfully serve us and the youth through this time of change and transition. Youthnet is flourishing and there are plans to extend it in the coming year to allow a new space for the younger teens to go deeper with God and each other. There are also plans to add a third 'Something on a Sunday' session each month.

It was excellent that another trip to Soul Survivor was possible in August 2018, with financial support from many Trinity members. Twelve of our Trinity youth attended, and all benefitted considerably from the experience, with two giving their lives to Jesus whilst there.

Trinity is making good progress in fostering a new chapter of youth work within the church and community. Exciting progress has also occurred with planning community youth work in Centrepoint in partnership with Urban Saints, other local churches and Earley Town Council. Much of the credit for all this goes to Sam. Plans for the coming year include regular drop-in sessions and a proper mentoring programme.

1.2 Family Ministry

Care and encouragement for Trinity's families across the generations, and the wider community it links with, has continued during the past year.

The weekly term-time **Nursery Service** has continued to cover a wide variety of key Christian themes and benefitted again from its committed team of volunteers led by Ann Baker, our Children, Family and Pastoral Worker. It continues to be popular with 20-30

mums and carers and their children. Highlights included a picnic, bear hunt & service in the park, a Christmas lunch and Nativity. Nursery Service lunches were, once again, held at Easter, Harvest and Christmas, and were well attended by the regular congregation.

Messy Church was held at Easter and Christmas (Christingle service). Both were really well attended (around 30 children plus adults), and Ann and the team delivered two excellent sessions. Looking forward, the plan is to run Messy Church at Easter, Harvest and Christmas and then continue to run a Messy Church Holiday Fun Club in the summer holidays.

The **Messy Church Holiday Fun Club**, run over three consecutive afternoons in early August, proved popular and successful with approximately 38 children attending. The theme was Messy Mischief. Activities included building a pyramid and decorating Joseph's dream coat. Each child attending was given a bible to reinforce what was covered in the bible stories each day. Several of our youth helped out over the three days, which was much appreciated.

At Christmas, Trinity once again hosted and led a Nativity Service for the **Yellow Brick Nursery**. This has become an annual community event and is well attended by parents, grandparents and carers from the local community.

Trinity continued to host and lead **two toddler groups** (Monday and Thursday mornings). These are busy (over 30 children), regularly attended and lots of fun. Santa's visits are a highlight. Elsie and Cecilia run the Monday group and Sarah and Cecilia the Thursday group and deserve significant thanks for their hard work and commitment to these groups. Ann Baker supports both. These two groups extend our links into the local community, and make a contribution to Trinity's funding each year.

It has been good to see families we've linked to through baptisms etc. come to some of these activities. In 2018 we conducted three infant baptisms and sent Birthday cards to all 0-3 year olds on our **Cradle Roll**.

Trinity's **Chalfont Group** continued and flourished this year thanks to Rosemary and John. New people joined the group so that around 35 people attend most Thursday afternoons. Popular talks during the year were about Malawi, the work of the Mustard Tree charity, exploring the Antarctic, and the River Thames (Oxford to Windsor). Talks planned for autumn 2018 include ones on Compton Acres, Great Ormond Street Hospital, King Arthur, and juicing apples. A spin-off once a month informal get-together in the church hall on the second Monday of each month from 2.00 to 3.30 p.m. has been running since February 2018.

During the year we continued to provide **pastoral care** for those in need. This involves a small number of faithful members. Of course, we don't always know when a need arises, and regret missed opportunities to show love and care. A good deal of care, support and friendship takes place within mid-week **small groups** (see below).

In the course of the year we undertook ten **funerals** but, unusually, no **weddings**.

1.3 Men's Ministry: Who Let The Dads Out (WLTD0)

Monthly morning gatherings continued, each second Saturday of the month. Approximately 20 dads participate, with a monthly average of 10 dads (excluding two team members with young children) and approximately 15 children. Some dads are much more committed and attend most months. Friendships between the dads are developing; they enjoy the time with each other and with their children. The atmosphere is positive and vibrant and the opportunity, including the refreshments, seems to be much appreciated. The team now has WLTD0 T-shirts. There is a strong sense of team. Looking ahead, bathing the work in prayer more, deepening the relationships within the group, and finding ways to show and share Jesus with the guys will be important.

2. Our Relationships: in Trinity and with the Community

As a church, Trinity is increasingly aware of the importance of good quality relationships and the opportunities to serve and care for each other and the wider community locally and beyond, and in doing so share Jesus' love. Our 2016 Annual Report stated, "In our full and fast-moving multi- and social-media oriented world it is a constant challenge as a church to keep pace with change and to maintain and develop our relationships." This remains true especially as we seek to foster relationships across all generations.

Trinity continues to use various tools, including **social media**, its **website**, a **monthly magazine**, **weekly ENews** updates and an informal **email prayer chain** to encourage closer and deeper relationships and shared understanding. Informally, mid-week small groups and individual church members use a variety of means to maintain and develop relationships.

There is always room to further develop the use of these tools. We have continued to upload news, reports, sermons as well as booking forms to the website and the event information page has been used regularly. Facebook and WhatsApp have increased in usage and the use of **ChurchSuite** has developed too. As noted above, we are currently planning a revamp of the website, and this will include making online giving straightforward, as well making the site more engaging and accessible.

Within Trinity our **mid-week small groups**, still under the continued faithful leadership of the group leaders, have continued to provide opportunities for friendship, worship, Bible study, teaching, prayer and pastoral care. Eight groups, with two running in the day time, with a combined membership of 62, continue to meet either weekly or fortnightly. The Children & Families Pastoral worker has taken on the leadership of one of the daytime groups, and two others are undergoing leadership changes. An important process to further develop the groups, so that they become much more a feature of life at Trinity, is underway and is a real priority for the coming year.

Time for Us, Trinity's group for women, led by Laura Draper and Kate Robinson, has continued to meet during the year and provided a really encouraging and appreciated range of social, craft and spiritual activities and resources. Attendance has been consistent and encouraging, with approximately 20-30 coming along to the various meetings.

The **Trinity Walking Group** enjoyed the walking holiday in Selworthy, Somerset, with thirty-seven taking part. In addition, local walks were organised on the late spring and August bank holiday weekends.

Looking out to the community:

Trinity continued to host **Open Saturdays** on the first Saturday of each month, with 10 being held between October 2017 and September 2018, and another two planned for October and November. These continue to provide an opportunity to serve the community by supporting local, national or international charities which are doing work that demonstrates Christian values (they don't have to be Christian organisations). A total of £3,733.36 was raised for charity over the period, as well as £306.35 at an event held to support Trinity's youth work in September 2018. A large number of volunteers continued to support and make these events successful, to enable us to demonstrate our hospitality and welcome lots of new people into Trinity's midst.

A weekly **Community Chaplaincy** presence in ASDA (two mornings) and Loddon Valley Leisure Centre (one afternoon) has continued to attract positive feedback. Partnering with a newer chaplaincy project at Maiden Place shops was explored but the project did not progress. The coming year will require additional volunteers if the service is to be maintained or grow, as one of the team of four has needed to step down and another (Craig) returns to the USA in November this year.

The Hillside Community Allotment project, which John Harris now chairs, continued into its third season. The project continues to develop (with annual funding from Trinity Earley for 3 years, which has been gratefully received). The polytunnel has been an important acquisition, and was used to raise plants for a sale, jointly with the school PTA, to help with running costs. It currently houses tomato plants which promise a fine crop. All beds are now in cultivation, with most of the produce (e.g. potatoes, beetroot, courgettes, green beans) going to local deserving families, and charities. The membership has steadily grown, helped by another successful summer BBQ, but more volunteers are always needed (at any stage of gardening expertise). Contact John Harris on 07808 296987, e-mail: harris735@btinternet.com.

Trinity has continued to support **Traidcraft** with thanks once again to Richard and Margaret for their faithful hard work. We have also continued to support **Readifood** and **Street Pastors** as well as **REinspired** – the latter financially and with volunteers, and Jon continues as a trustee.

Our **mission giving** in the year to 31st August 2018 involved giving £13,344 from mission funds. This was in addition to the £4,360 raised directly for and paid over directly to charities e.g. through Open Saturdays and Special Collections. The following charities benefitted from this:

Bed For The Night
Breast Cancer Care
Children's Society
Christian Aid

Churches in Reading Drop In Centre (CIRDIC) - coffee supplied via Trinity Traidcraft
Churches in Reading Women's Centre (CIRWC)
Friends of Kagando
Friends of Royal Berkshire Hospital
Hillside Community Allotment Association
Home for Good
Hope for Justice incorporating Retrak
Link Visiting Scheme,
Mustard Tree Foundation
Oxfordshire MIND
REInspired
Reading Schools Project via CTEER
Remembering Reece
Samaritan's Purse
Traidcraft Exchange
Water Aid

We continue to maintain our **relationships with our three parent denominations** and fulfil the various annual reporting requirements. It still hasn't been possible to fill all the denominational representative posts that have become vacant.

Trinity is also represented by Jon on the Churches Together in Earley and East Reading (**CTEER**) Steering Committee, and the **Churches Together in Berkshire** Standing Committee.

Trinity has also continued to support two local care homes with monthly Holy Communion services.

Sam is now involved in working with **Just Around the Corner** (JAC) at Maiden Erlegh School and, as noted above, our relationship with Earley Town Council is developing through the plans for using the **Centre Point Community Centre** for community-facing youth activities.

3. Our Worship

Sunday worship has continued much as last year focusing on two morning services (**the quieter and much smaller 8am and the 10am family service**) with the same pattern of Holy Communion. Our **All Age services**, led by an All Age Team on the first Sunday of the month, have been very successful. Over the past year different people have been involved with some taking the lead in shaping and delivering the service. The services have become increasingly intergenerational, and combine a great fun time with a real sense of worship.

Home Throne, a new informal worship night, has been introduced and is gaining momentum, with around 25 attendees. It usually runs on the third Sunday of each month, starting at 6pm. The aim is simply to create a space to let God in, to hear, respond, and share together.

The regular weekly services benefit from a great group of participants, increasingly intergenerational, sharing the various roles. It has continued to be difficult to recruit new stewards, so we aim to divide the current role into volunteers who are interested in helping with the services, and others who would prefer to stand to be a member of Church Council.

Musically, a variety of musical styles have continued to be used with a mix of new worship and traditional hymns. The aim remains to reflect the traditions of the three denominations as well as Trinity's individual character that continues to change as Trinity seeks to follow God's lead in worship. In the coming year, we will make use of songs in groups to create opportunity for longer periods of collective and personal worship.

Following a well-received experimental **café-style service** in August at 10am, plans are developing for having these more frequently. In the coming year, Junior Church will come back into the main service for Holy Communion on the second Sunday each month and the older young people will continue to have breakfast church on the fourth Sunday at Jon and Jo's house.

Attendance week by week remains similar to last year with 8am services varying between 5 and 15 people and at 10am it is approximately 100 adults. Additionally, attendance varies from week to week as per recent years, which, as noted in last year's report is similar to many churches, having implications for teaching, sharing news and building the worshipping community.

It is encouraging that week by week new faces are welcomed to our services. How we welcome them and encourage them to feel they belong is an on-going opportunity and challenge, and we are in the planning stages of a new project to look at this in more depth.

We celebrated the main **festivals** during the year, notably Easter with a Maundy Thursday evening service and a 24hour prayer vigil. This year the open-air service in the ASDA car park on Good Friday was not held but a number of members joined a walk of Witness and Service through Reading town centre and culminating in an open air service in Forbury Gardens. This was followed by an Hour at The Cross service at Trinity to conclude the prayer vigil in the afternoon. Sunrise on Easter Sunday was celebrated with St. Nicolas Church at Maiden Erlegh Lake before the 8am and 10am services. Christmas included the usual menu of carols, Christingle, Crib Service (church very full again) and Midnight Communion and a family celebration on Christmas Day. Attendance at the various services was really encouraging. Our Carols and Midnight Communion once again enjoyed a specially formed singing group.

Trinity's **Junior Church** has continued to be vibrant and energetic, and is well led by Lisa and a team of very committed volunteers. Several of the teachers and helpers have been serving in this way for over 10 years, and it would be great to have two or three more people join the team to help share the love of Jesus and His story. Between 20 and 30 children attend each Sunday, with a total of 49 under 18s who regularly worship at Trinity. For the first time this year, the team wanted to publically celebrate the children and their transition beyond Junior Church into the Trinity youth. In early September 2018, the 11-14 year olds were therefore presented with a New Testament to encourage their walk with Christ and as a reminder of His promises and faithfulness. The book plate read 'from your Trinity family'.

4. Our Prayer Life

Once again prayer continues to play a significant part in the life of Trinity. Prayer in services, especially in the All-Age services, is undertaken in a variety of creative ways by different people. Our small groups continue to explore and become increasingly rooted in prayer and once again the **24-hour prayer vigil** at Easter with various, really interesting and interactive prayer stations appealed to all across the generations. It is a shame more people weren't able to come during the 24 hours. Bathing the building in creative prayer for 24 hours however is really valuable and contributes to changing the spiritual atmosphere at Trinity. Thanks go to Ann for faithfully making this happen. Our **email prayer chain**, co-ordinated very effectively by Jill, continued until summer when she moved to Mudeford, and is now being organised and coordinated on a more informal basis. However, it will continue to involve about 30 people and provide very much appreciated prayer cover for many people.

The early morning mid-week leadership prayer meeting continued. However, we still need the right person to take on the co-ordination and further development of our prayer ministry.

5. Our Management

Church Council continued to meet as scheduled and has continued to build a positive culture, with prayerful respect for others and a shared desire for Trinity to flourish being at the heart of this. The increased use of SharePoint has continued to improve communication, with meetings becoming more paperless. Dianne Berry took over from Andrew Rixon as chair (and also Chair of Trustees) in June this year.

Trinity needs to find a way to attract more people to the role of steward so Council can get to full strength. We are currently exploring dividing the role into two parts; contributing to welcoming and service support on Sundays, and sitting on Church Council.

Church Meetings continued to be held after Sunday services, and this has resulted in the improved attendance being sustained. These meetings are a really important opportunity for members and others to contribute towards the future of Trinity and how we move forward with our new vision and priority activities.

The **Leadership Team** continued meeting monthly. Jon hopes to set up a new **Vision Priorities Team** in the coming year.

Trinity has also worked hard to be compliant with **safeguarding**. This is another issue requiring careful and ongoing management. Thanks go to Ann for her persistent work with this, including managing the transition to online DBS applications. Recent legal changes to **data protection** (General Data Protection Regulations – GDPR) commenced in May 2018, and Anna Meadows (with support from Jon and Dianne) has taken a firm lead in helping Trinity put in place necessary processes and documentation.

The use of **Office 365** and **ChurchSuite** has been valuable for Trinity in streamlining its operation and should help further with transition to GDPR-compliant procedures. The children's module has also been trialled in 2018.

6. Our Membership

Membership at Trinity includes 157 adult members, 62 adherents, and 49 under 18s. Of the 211 adults, 65% are women. There are also 10 new people to be welcomed into membership in the autumn. However, if we look more widely at the community of people Trinity has relationships with, i.e. including those we spend time with when undertaking Trinity activities, then we have a much wider influence when considering Trinity's immediate mission field. Between the Nursery Service, Chalfont Group, Care home folk, Who Let the Dads Out? and Toddlers groups there are readily another 115-120 children and adults. This increases our community to approximately 400.

This is not the same as saying Trinity's worshipping community is 400. Equally it doesn't include other people that Trinity members are praying for. If each member prays for three people an additional 660 people are added to the picture. This enlarged sphere of influence needs factoring into how Trinity prioritises, plans and organises itself.

7. Our Finances (y/e 31st August 2018)

The church's financial position has been transformed from a deficit of (£4,807.99) in y/e 31.8.17 to a surplus of £20,251.91 in the y/e 31.8.18. Our new and more detailed coding structure has enabled us to gain a much better understanding of where our income comes from and where our expenditure goes.

We were able to employ a full time youth worker from 1st December 2017, with all but one of the pledges to support this, made in the previous financial year coming through, and a number of additional people adding their pledges to enable this to happen.

A gift month, which turned into a gift quarter, was launched by Jon and Andrew, the Chair of Trustees in January 2018, explaining why we needed additional income on our general fund to meet day to day expenses, and underpin our vision. This brought in a mixture of one-off gifts and increases in regular giving, which has really increased our income. Sadly, we have lost some of our long-standing members during the year, but many of them have offered to continue to support the church for a while after their departure. We will miss their wide-ranging contributions to Trinity but are expectant about new members joining, and their future contributions.

Our cleaner gave notice mid-year and a decision was made to move from employing a cleaner to using cleaning contractors.

We have spent time trying to reduce our expenses, for example moving to a cheaper telephone and broadband provider and reducing our use of colour photocopies.

As a result of all these changes, our depleted reserves have been restored, enabling us to remain within our agreed reserves policy despite taking on the youth worker, by the end of

the financial year. Looking forward, we want to develop various areas of our revised vision, and we will need to spend money on the fabric and content of the church. We will need to keep a good watch on our expenditure and income going forward to ensure that we have the finances to go ahead with our exciting plans for the vision.