

# TRINITY CHURCH ABINGDON



ANNUAL REPORT  
2014/2015

Dear Friends,

When I was growing up, people always used to say to me “time flies you know”. It is true, I can barely believe that here I am a year later writing again introducing the AGM Reports.

What these pages contain is only a mere snapshot of everything that happens at Trinity. Yet as I read I am reminded of this picture:



It is known as “The Hospitality of Abraham” and is perhaps one of the most famous depictions of the Holy Trinity. As I read all these reports the words that comes to mind are *Generous Hospitality*.

We welcome people, we invite people, we act as host. Whether that is at worship, or fellowship. It might be with the young, or with the young at heart, there is a wonderful sense of wanting to share the generosity of God’s love for us in a wide variety of ways. This generosity of spirit is seen not just in the times when we are together, but also in those times when there are jobs that have to be done, alone or by a few. Whether it be administering accounts, or folding and stapling papers together, reading constitutions or making sure that there is bread for communion. The list could go on.

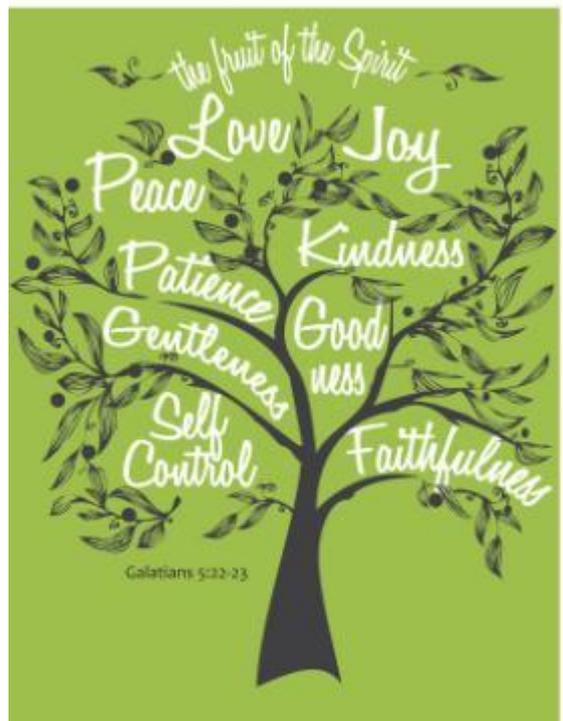
If that is one image, then this is another: The familiar “Fruits of the Spirit” from Galatians chapter 5. As you read these reports and think of all the people that they involve, you, like me, will, I hope, see the fruits of the Spirit of God evident among us all.

As it says in Galatians, there is no law against any of these things. The apple trees I can see from the manse are over laden with fruit, there will be far more than the households can cope with I am sure. But so it is at Trinity. The Fruit of the Spirit is clearly evident and bountiful. Which simply serves to remind us that God is with us, and working through us.

This has been a very full and busy year, with many joys as well as sorrows. Yet in them all we have continued to encounter God who has been with us every step of the way, and will be in the year ahead. So read with wonder this snapshot of life at Trinity Church and give thanks to God, praying too for wisdom in the year ahead.

Every Blessing

Ian



**Trinity Church Abingdon,**  
**Annual Report**  
**September 2014– August 2015**

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# WORSHIP

## ***Worship***

As Ian enters his second year at Trinity we look at the subtle changes in our pattern of Worship. The most obvious is the use of the new Hymn book, given in memory of June Etheridge and Marion Jarratt, with its new, up to date words and challenging tunes, which are sometimes too challenging for us so familiar tunes are substituted.

There has been the usual clash, sometimes, of Baptisms and Communion on the same morning, but this can hardly be avoided as families are eager to have their children Baptised and this is an ordained minister's role, not one for Local Preachers. We are becoming used to seeing Ian for fewer Services as he is also All Saint's Minister. We try to have URC Preachers twice per Quarter and are fortunate to have both Kate Pryde and Cynthia Bartlett in our congregation. We are also well served by Local Preachers from the Circuit. Evening Services have adopted the one per month pattern, and this is always a Communion Service. Ian plays the piano for this and in the morning Organ playing is shared between a few of our members.

It has been pleasing to see a few new worshippers in the congregation and the return of former members as they have come back to live in Abingdon.

*Margaret Langsford*

## ***Baptisms***

Well what a year it has been for Baptisms since Ian took over the ministry at Trinity. Ian had never done so many baptisms in a year!!! I must say everyone has been impressed with the way the Baptism services have been conducted and have sent thank you emails for all the organisation that is put in place. The families welcome our visits. Selina our new Deacon is eager to get involved with the families and will be following up with the contacts that we have



made and will be very much involved with the baptisms/dedications in the future which will be of great support to us and the making of our future church (our children). We welcome Selina with open arms and I am very excited to have her here at Trinity.

The total Baptisms /dedications are listed below:-

Total Dedications	1
Total Baptisms	11

We recently did a dedication service for Riley Preston. This dedication was requested by Riley's mother as her previous two children had had the same service and the family felt that they wanted to keep them all the same.

Ian and I had a discussion about dedication/baptism. Dedications were only started as far as I am aware when Richard Bittleston was our minister. Dedications will still be done on

request. We do feel that some families get confused over baptism/dedication. Basically dedication is without water and it gives the child the opportunity to have the full baptism when they are older. Whichever service is chosen these children are welcomed into God's family and given every blessing.

I look forward to another year with excitement and encouragement for our future church.

*Angie Goodman, Baptismal Co-ordinator*

### ***Bible Reading Rota***

The purpose of the Bible reading rota is to ensure that there are people available to assist the preacher at a Sunday morning service by reading the selected lessons. We have a small group of very loyal and reliable individuals who are happy to commit to reading the Bible during Sunday morning services; their contribution is very much appreciated by the preachers and the congregation and I would like to thank them for what they do. Over the last few years a number of our regular readers have had to give up for various reasons so we really need some new volunteers to add their names to the list. Please let me know if you feel you could do this.



*Bible Sunday at Trinity*

*Sue Kyffin*

### ***Communion Stewards***

The Communion Stewards work in pairs from a quarterly rota, providing the elements and setting the table. The bread and wine is on clean linen and veiled. If it is a seated Communion the clips are placed in the seats for the glasses. During a communion at the rail or in a semi circle the Communion Stewards assist the congregation as they come forward to take Communion to ensure that it all flows smoothly, that no one is forgotten and that those unable to walk to the front receive the elements while remaining in their seats. An Elder liaises with the Minister and discussion takes place on how the elements are to be distributed. From the list of Elders the required number of servers assist the Minister in this Sacrament.

*Margaret Greaney/Chris Foskett*

### ***Flowers***

Thank you to Christine Hutchinson, Rosemary Richards, Rita Gilbert, Alison Duncan, Val Dalby and Marjorie Wallis for their help in 2015. We have missed Petronella so much while she has been disabled and hope she will be fit soon.

We trust that you find the flowers in church uplifting. They are then distributed to people who are unwell or need support.

Thank you for those who have paid for flowers; please continue to put your names on the list in the welcome area – so important.

More help is always welcome

*Judith Payne*

I will continue to compile the Ministry of Flowers Rota in the North Porch entrance, and donations for flowers should be passed to one of the Flower Group. If you would like to, please arrange your own flowers as this would help the Flower Group. Two simple vases

are all that is required for the main altar. Elaborate arrangements are not needed, and although nice, the Flower Distribution Group prefers flowers that can be made up into bunches for distribution to sick and housebound friends. If you are not a key-holder access to the church can be made on Friday between 9.30am and 4.00pm when Eluned is in the office.

*Tom Jarratt, Verger*

### ***Music in Church***

Where are we going with our music in church? In some ways this has been a good year, with support to buy new Singing the Faith hymnbooks, and the donations to do this in memory of June Etheridge and Marion Jarratt.

We have also had the services available of three very competent organists from within our own congregation. Thank you so much, Nigel, Anita and Kathy, not to mention Ian from time to time at the piano.

We also thank Christine Hutchinson for her long-serving stint as choir mistress and wish her a well-earned retirement.

The choir cannot function properly without regular training and practice, but in the absence of a new musical director will continue to try to lead the hymn-singing.

We really need to look for new musicians to help with our worship. Is there anyone out there willing to help?

*Ruth Sillitoe*

### ***Stewards Report***

Looking back over the past 8 reports that I have submitted – little seems to change.....the Stewards not only try and support our preachers, both lay and ordained, they try and ensure that the congregation is helped to prepare for worship. The Stewards are very supportive of each other and I feel we are a very cohesive team, and I hand over to Douglas, knowing that he will be an excellent Senior Steward. Finally I always mention the valuable work of the Book Stewards – their folding skills and their welcoming smile.

*Tricia Cook*

### ***Welcome Duty***

As ever we are grateful to those who volunteer to do welcome duty which comes round twice a year. Recently we have had some new comers to the rota in place of others who have stepped down for one reason or another. If anyone else would like to volunteer they would be very welcome.

*John Cook*

*Trinity was open for Heritage Open Days and Stride and Ride (and had a visit from the Bishop of Dorchester and entourage on bikes)*



## ***In Celebration / Memoriam***



### ***Baptisms / Dedications***

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

Parents		
05/10/2014	Amelia Rosetta	Aisha Froude & Thomas Mullee
23/11/2014	Morgan	Sian Caswell & Ryan Taplin
21/12/2014	Chloe Bessie	Memory & Harry Nzunga
21/12/2014	James Kai	Memory & Harry Nzunga
18/01/2015	Ewan James	Nicola & Andrew Bunce
15/02/2015	Keiran Lee	Natalie & Matthew Swindon
08/03/2015	Felicity Anne	Katherine Brown & Nathan Buckle
28/06/2015	Harry Frederick David	Loren Edmonds & Pete Smith
19/07/2015	Zac Sallis	Cassandra Russell
16/08/2015	Quinn	Sam Preston & Leigh Robinson
16/08/2015	Seren	Nikki & Darren Price
06/09/2015	Riley Robert	Kelly & Adrian Preston

### ***Weddings***

We rejoiced with these couples, married in Trinity during the year:

13/09/2014	Jane Claire Firkin & John Ward
04/10/2014	Zoe Giles & Andrew Leeds
18/10/2014	Claire Major & James Caldwell
07/03/2015	Angelina Sidhu & Vinay Kumar Sahota
30/05/2015	Nicola Peddle & Jon Ambrose
13/06/2015	Beckie Underdown & Calum Mackay
13/06/2015	Jonathan Mullan & Jackie White
08/08/2015	Kate Macklow & Darren Spraggs



### ***In Memoriam***

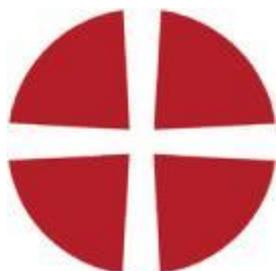


We remember with thanksgiving the following people, whose lives were celebrated at Trinity during the year:

12/09/2014	Pearl Maunder
26/09/2014	Marion Jarratt
24/10/2014	Gary James (Stan) Hughes
07/11/2014	Grace Pryor

07/11/2014	David Hutchins
11/11/2014	June Etheridge
21/11/2014	Wendy Wiggins
26/11/2014	Peggy Whitehead
15/01/2015	Frederick Donald (Don) Roblyn
20/01/2015	Rachel Aldridge
23/01/2015	June Hutchins
13/03/2015	Vera Constance (Connie) Sylvester
24/03/2015	Margaret Killick
08/04/2015	David Hancock
10/04/2015	Linda Wallis
17/04/2015	Robert George Fuller
09/05/2015	Gordon Preston
19/05/2015	Agnes Johnston Wrynn
24/06/2015	Linda Patricia Joel
25/06/2015	David Alexander Hegarty
07/07/2015	Betty Turner
15/07/2015	Marilyn Anne Stimpson
13/08/2015	Owen Henry Hughes
24/08/2015	Eileen Broad
01/09/2015	Florence May Whittington

## PARENT DENOMINATIONS



### *Wantage & Abingdon Circuit,*

Report from Circuit Stewards (for 2014 -2015)

Trinity Church is part of the Methodist Wantage & Abingdon Circuit which is the primary unit in which Local Churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help. It is in the Circuit that presbyters, deacons and probationers are stationed and local preachers are trained and admitted and exercise their calling. The purposes of the Circuit include the effective deployment of the resources of ministry, which include people, property and finance, as they relate to the Methodist churches in the Circuit, to churches of other denominations and to participation in the life of the communities served by the Circuit, including local schools and colleges, and in ecumenical work in the area including, where appropriate, the support of ecumenical Housing Associations.

**Circuit Staff September 2015.** In August we said farewell to Rev. Peter Bennett and are pleased to welcome Selina Nisbett to the Circuit as our first Deacon. We look forward to all Selina brings and to the development of this appointment. Seeking a new Minister for Peachcroft has not proved straightforward. The most recent active conversations have been though the Baptist Union.

**Circuit Staff September 2016.** Martin Smithson had been approached over the summer, as required by the stationing process, given that his current appointment ends in 2016. Martin has indicated that he will not be seeking a further extension to his appointment in this Circuit. We are therefore seeking a Presbyter to be appointed to this Circuit as Superintendent and to have responsibility for Wantage, Grove and Childrey churches from September 2016.

**Sale of Blewbury, Upton and Southmoor.** We are disappointed that there has not been more progress. Work has been going on, and we thank Geoff Caudle and Mary Hancock in particular, but we continue to face obstacles. In summary:

**Blewbury:** Geoff Caudle is taking the lead. The hope is that we sign a contract with the two neighbours so that in exchange for 10% of the proceeds of sale they will each release a 3m strip of land to allow for cars to be parked at the side of the chapel. This should address the main obstacle to our change of use planning application. However, this does not look possible at the moment so we may have to sell the church without planning permission.

**Upton:** Mary Hancock is taking the lead. Following the rejection of our first planning application we engaged West Waddy as planning consultants. They have now submitted a proposed scheme for the site and will make a pre-planning enquiry on our behalf.

**Southmoor:** Although the society at Southmoor was the first of the three to cease to meet we spent at least a year trying to negotiate a lease with a Christian group in the village which in the end proved impossible. It has proved difficult to try to progress the sale of three properties at once. We agreed that it would be better to ask Geoff to remain focused on Blewbury and to engage someone else to take forward the Southmoor planning application so we have asked Kemp and Kemp to do this work.

**New housing Developments:** Great Western Park, appointment of part-time Chaplains. We agreed a number of years ago that new housing developments were to be among the Circuit's priorities and have had many conversations about how we might respond in various gatherings. We asked a small group: Alan Smith, Katherine Pickering and Peter Bennett (subsequently replaced by Helen Carter) to look at how we first engage with Great Western Park, bearing in mind that we hope that this first venture will inform our subsequent responses elsewhere in the Circuit. The Circuit Meeting agreed to their proposals for the appointment of two part-time Chaplains. However, the recruitment process itself will not be initiated until the Circuit has received proceeds from property sales sufficient to meet the cost of the project OR a grant or grants have been awarded which will meet not less than 50% of the cost of the project.

**Circuit Stewards:** Helen Carter completed her six years as Circuit Steward at the end of August 2015 and we were delighted that the Alan Smith from Wallingford and Mary DeVere from All Saints joined the team at the beginning of September.

**Circuit events:** There should be a PowerPoint training next year.

It is proposed that we would organise a 'What is a Chaplain?' event in a similar way to the event we held last year focussing on Deacons.

There will also be a circuit discussion as part of the consultation from the Methodist Conference on Marriage and Relationships at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 18th January at All Saints.

**Circuit Directory.** Being compiled by Andrew Lockley. Due out in a few weeks.

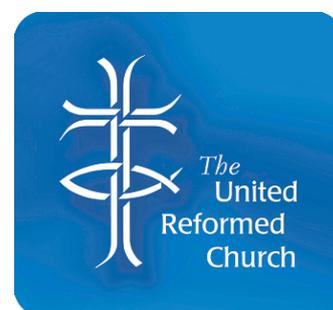
**James Garnett.** The Circuit Meeting was pleased to put forward James Garnett as a candidate for presbyteral ministry.

Your continued prayers are requested for all, the Circuit churches, and particularly the Circuit Leadership Team.

*Geoffrey Maunder (on behalf of the Circuit Stewards)*

### ***URC Wessex Synod***

The Synod meets twice a year in November and March and meetings are held in different churches within the Synod. There are also more local Area Gatherings. A news digest 'Sharing the Vision' is available regularly in the Welcome Area and can also be accessed through the Wessex Synod's website at [www.urcwessex.org.uk](http://www.urcwessex.org.uk). Cynthia Bartlett is the representative for Trinity and she also is a member of the NW Area's Pastoral Committee which meets four times a year.



*Cynthia Bartlett*

## **MISSION: NEAR & FAR**

### ***Faith in Action Group***

To look outwards at what our churches are doing and what is happening locally, nationally and world-wide which needs our support. The aim is to keep Trinity informed and, where appropriate, stimulate action or raise funds. Information is passed on in Triangle, Church Notice Sheets, Church services and the Faith in Action Notice Board.

### ***Activities***

Activities during the year have included the following:-

- At Harvest- receiving gifts of food-stuffs for Asylum Welcome Food Cupboard and envelope collection for projects in Zimbabwe via Commitment for Life.
- In October at the Autumn Mission Service, Halcyon Leonard spoke about the organisation "Freedom from Torture". A lot of interest was shown in this.
- In November, quite a number of people were involved in the Amnesty Greeting Card Campaign.
- Before Christmas, shoe boxes were again filled for children in Bulgaria.
- In January, Sue Russell updated us on the activities of the NASIO charity for AIDS victims in Kenya, and a collection for this charity was made.
- The very successful Lent Project was the Bateman Trust, which educates disadvantaged children in Chennai. Alex Thompson introduced the Trust on the first Sunday in Lent, and funds were raised by a very well-attended coffee morning, a cake stall and individual donations.

The financial contributions to URC and Methodist Funds were less than last year. We hope to do better in 2015-16. The work done by our churches in Britain and overseas deserves our support.

We are grateful to Mike Matejtschuk for taking over responsibility for the Mission boxes from Margaret Lloyd.

### ***Looking to the future***

We need more members for the group (offers to Eve or Ruth D.) We also feel that we need to review what we do, and welcome suggestions of what we should add, subtract or improve in our programme of activities.

*Ruth Dams*

### ***Church in Abingdon***



The Church in Abingdon is a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) of nearly all the Abingdon Churches, Anglican, Catholic, Baptist, URC and Methodist, Quakers, Community Church, Peachcroft (itself an LEP) and the Vineyard Church. It was formed in 1988 and grew out of the previous 20 years of local cooperation and exploration of the way other churches 'did things'. We now, for example, have just one Christian Aid committee for all the churches instead of all 12 organising their own competing events. The Bridge Drop in Centre, 35

Ock Street, and Church Twinning were all CiA initiatives. Other groups have come and gone but we still hold United Services at Easter, for Christian Aid, for Bereaved families, and during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In that week we also have the Annual Quiz – an evening of competition and comradeship. This year Ed Evans of the Community Church is the new chair of the Governing Body in place of Peter Bennett of Peachcroft and the Circuit.

Christian Focus Magazine is the Quarterly Publication of the Church in Abingdon. It has articles about new ventures of the local churches and experiences their members have had in charity projects abroad and in this country. It also has book reviews; articles about people of faith and articles about Christianity in its many forms as well as cartoons and puzzles. Something for everyone in fact and at only 40p a copy. Elaine Matejtschuk is Trinity's distributor and will be pleased to add you to her list - or give you an initial complimentary copy.

*Margaret Langsford*

### ***Action For Children***

The organization was founded in 1868 by Methodist minister Thomas Bowman Stephenson after he witnessed the plight of abandoned/orphaned children in London. Its first home was in a renovated stable in Church Street, Waterloo. In 1871 it moved to Lambeth and girls were first admitted. More homes were opened and run by a 'House mother' or 'House father'. They were small units designed to make the children feel that they were in a 'proper' home and not one of the large orphanages or workhouses of the time.

In 1908 it was known as the 'National Children's Home & Orphanage' and in 1926 became an adoption agency. 1969 saw it start work outside the UK in Africa. In 1994 it was renamed 'NCH Action for Children'. 2008 saw the



'NCH' part of the title dropped and 'Action for Children' began to move away from providing children's homes to provide a wider range of services.

This reporting year saw the congregation at Trinity raise a total of £1,278.61 through collecting boxes and a coffee morning and bring & buy sale. In addition the sum of £872.92 was raised by a collection at the funeral of our dear friend June Etheridge. You will all be aware that June's husband Ron was collecting box secretary at Trinity for many years. Should any of you wish to give to this worthwhile cause please see me and I will arrange for you to receive a collecting box.

*Kevin J Goodman*

### ***Bible Society***

We, at Trinity Church, acknowledge Bible Sunday (usually in October) by distributing envelopes, supplied by the Society, to the congregation asking for donations.

Last year we were able to send £100 to the Bible Society through your donations, thank you. Every little helps.

Malcolm Newton, our Preacher for Bible Sunday this year showed some colourful Bibles of varying styles to the children in the congregation and as a result two Bibles were sold.

*Christine Hutchinson*

### ***Christian Aid***

This is the Aid Charity which is run by Christians but which donates funds to groups in the third world whether they are Christian or not. The criteria depend on need not creed.

In Abingdon fund-raising for Christian Aid is organised by the Church in Abingdon. A group with representatives from all the Abingdon Churches meets as required and works tirelessly to raise both funds and awareness of the needs. We run talks and films and, when possible, visits to schools, and organise fundraising events.



*At the Christian Aid Sale*

The highlights of the year are the sponsored walk and Christian Aid Week. The sponsored walk is on New Year's Day and is a good chance to walk off the Christmas excess, although this is not always successful due to the Christmas leftovers offered as midway refreshments. We usually raise over £1000. Both last year and this, the government is doubling the money raised in December and January, so we hope to raise a good amount.

Christian Aid Week is in May and Abingdon is one of the few towns able to still retain a house to house collection. Knocking on doors and asking for money as hard, but we do it not only to raise money but also to raise awareness of the need and to make sure that people know that Christians are prepared to beg if necessary to improve conditions for those in need. Over £9000 was raised during the week.

In total we raised £13,500 during the year.

We are entitled to three representatives on the group and at present have only one. If you are interested in third world issues and would be prepared to serve, please contact me.

*Ruth Sillitoe*

### ***Soup Kitchen***

It is incredible how almost every week items, food and/or clothing, are brought up to be blessed. Many thanks for all contributions. Nearly all the items are taken to the Soup Kitchen, but if there is anything which can not be used it is sent to the Abingdon Food Bank, so nothing is wasted.

Twice a week the Soup Kitchen, situated in Manzil Way in Oxford, opens to provide meals for the needy and homeless and at the same time give them a friendly welcome and a listening ear. Please continue with your contributions, and thank you.

*Margaret Butcher*

### ***TrinityLearning***

People often bemoan the small number of children in churches like Trinity. TrinityLearning takes Trinity to them – in the past year, we've worked in small groups with around 1000 children, as well as welcoming around 1500 into the church at Christmas. We've also sent out over 500 Hello Abingdon magazines, telling people about Abingdon and TrinityLearning's work.



*Young participants engaging with Experience Easter*

With a growing awareness of mindfulness and gradual change in the politics of education, our services are becoming increasingly sought after. This is particularly true of the supported work experience places Trinity offers. Our **three work experience** students in July proved particularly challenging, but returned to school glowing with pride that they had not only completed their weeks placement but had undertaken a far greater and more challenging variety of tasks than most of their peers. The importance of these positive experiences cannot be over-stated. We have been enabling

one of last year's pupils to attend an ongoing placement with All Saints Fellowship on Thursday afternoons. The Assistant HeadTeacher of her school wrote "There is no doubt that her experiences have helped her grow as a person and have enabled her to complete Year 11 successfully. Her time spent with you has helped her to positively embrace a college course for next year". With outcomes like this, I was delighted that, with my encouragement, Peachcroft C.C. also took on a student this year.

Through the year we have:

- Worked with 6 work experience students
- Provided Prayer Spaces for two schools
- Put on 2 Hello Abingdon workshop series
- Helped 300 people to Experience Easter
- Supported Carswell's Harvest & Christmas services, including coffee for parents
- Enabled Carswell School to become a Beacon School for the Peaceful Schools Movement

- Designed a KS2 reflective outdoor area for Carswell

We also celebrated our 5th birthday, with a special exhibition in October. This resulted in an interview on Radio Oxford and double-page spread in the Methodist Recorder. This is not so much publicity as an opportunity to disseminate valuable ideas. Like work experience, most of what we do can be used by other churches and schools. Our Prayer Space workshops and Experience Easter resources are available online and have had around 1000 downloads in this year alone. Volunteers often use something of what they have experienced in their church or their own life.

Having begun a much-needed and innovative outreach that has developed into something very special, Trinity Church must now be considering the long-term direction of TrinityLearning. We are still seeking experienced teachers and managers to join a dwindling LINK group. Attending just two or three meetings a year will help the TrinityLearning team and the schools it supports to have a clear idea of the project's future.

*Rosemary Perrow*

## **MINISTRY OF PASTORAL CARE, FELLOWSHIP & SUPPORT**

### ***Bookstall***

It is rather a misnomer to call it a bookstall as I no longer display books, mainly because very few were sold over the year. The card sales do quite well so I shall continue to keep a good variety, hopefully to suit all tastes! If you have a particular book you need, I can easily order it for you. Thanks to Lynette Seymour-Jackson for looking after the money side of things

*Christine Hutchinson*

### ***Elders***

The year has been a very sad one for Trinity with a succession of deaths of some dearly loved members of our community. We miss them all. June Etheridge attended the elders' meeting in September and it came as a great shock when she died very suddenly in November after a short illness. June helped so many people in so many ways whether lending a listening ear or turning to practically as she so often did. Through these difficult times our minister Ian has been a rock to bereaved family members and to all in our church who are deeply grieving.

These events have naturally overshadowed the year. However the care people at Trinity offer each other is evidently a great support to those who are shocked and grieving or suffering in other ways. We as elders continue to look for ways to maintain the network of pastoral care provided through our groups, but as June pointed out when we met last September, our existing elders are getting older and fewer and we need God's guidance as to how pastoral support moves forward in our church. Old most of us are and less agile but we can and do pray and believe God hears our prayers. Establishing a prayer network in our groups is a possible way of reinforcing the links between us and we believe this might be done by setting up a simple prayer partnership. Each member of an elder's group would have the names of the others in their group and would then be asked to pray regularly for each of them. Maybe it would encourage people to get to know those others in their group a little better so they could pray with more understanding.

It is encouraging that there are those who now offer support informally through groups they lead in our church and in other ways too. We are always pleased to hear from anyone who would like to do this and who might have a particular interest in any part of our church family - whether looking out for new folk, visiting the old who may be isolated, having fun with children, or being involved with some other people who are on your mind.

*Eve Newton*

### ***Evergreens***

Trinity Evergreen Club continues to flourish and most months we see a new face joining our ranks. This outreach work is so important to many people, and the friendship, care and concern that we offer is much appreciated. All members receive a birthday card and "special" birthdays are marked with a small plant. None of this would be possible without the hard work of the Committee. I extend my grateful thanks to them all for their support during my first year as Chairman. This year we thank Ron Etheridge for auditing our accounts for many years, and thank Margaret Langsford for taking over this task.



There are times when we would appreciate some "muscle" – moving chairs/tables etc. Also it looks as if we might be asking for some volunteer drivers.

*Tricia Cook*

### ***Fairs***



*The Town Crier at the Summer Fair*

After some discussion of the need for church fairs as a fundraiser we again held 2 fairs this year. The Christmas Fair organized by Jacky Purtell raised £1,256.14. The summer fair which I organized raised £891.89.

It takes a lot of willing volunteers to make each fair the success they are and I would like to thank everyone for their help. Special thanks to Jacky Purtell as she stepped down from organizing the fairs to take up another role in the church.

I believe strongly that the function of the fairs is not only to raise funds for the church but that they are also important social events where our local community and church family get together.

*Joanne Graham*

### ***Friendship Group***

The Friendship Group is a group of ladies who meet once a month, for friendship and support. We have lots of fun doing a wide range of activities, which includes being told off at Waddesdon Manor!

In September we started planning for the year ahead, covered boxes and filled them for less fortunate children, had a craft evening at Jo's house, making things for the Christmas Fair followed by a meal out in December - where we were given a separate room – perhaps they thought we were a rowdy lot!

In the New Year we had a bring and share meal, flower arranging, film night and coffee and a natter. In the summer we had an Aunt Sally evening where quite often the stick ended up in various places such as the stinging nettles, rather than anywhere near the dolly! After the games we ate (again – we like food)! In the middle of this, there was an almighty crash and someone had driven their car into a brick wall, and then drove away again. We were all a bit bemused!

This year we are looking forward to more activities including a craft evening at “Pottering About” in Spring Road amongst other things, such as Cheese & wine evening. We hope not to get up to too much mischief this year. Any new comers are most welcome.

Lindsay Busby

### ***Home Groups***

We have met five times since January. John and Barbara have hosted most of these meetings and Esther and Owain have hosted one. The group are keen to combine a discussion of ideas with some Bible study.

In January we considered a chapter from John Robinson's book 'But that I can't believe' about the Virgin Birth and looked at the gospel accounts in Matthew and Luke. In February we continued our study of difficult beliefs to explain in considering the Trinity, using John Robinson's book and a short extract from one of the books Ian had recommended, 'How to Explain your Faith' by John Pritchard.

In the late spring, we used two more chapters from John Pritchard's book, 'The God I don't believe in' and 'The Bible – big, black and boring.' We looked at Psalm 121, Daniel 8 and Revelation 13:1-10 as example of different kinds of writing in the Bible and their meaning and importance for Christians today. At our meeting in June we discussed the final chapter of the book 'What's the main thing?'

This autumn, we considered, in our first meeting, two stories, the Feeding of the Five Thousand and the Walking on the Water, and the different accounts of these in different gospels. We have decided to consider during the next meetings some of the issues relating to the OT record of the Exile, and perhaps reflect on issues relating to refugees in our society today.

We have found the discussion helpful in enabling us not only to think about how we can explain our faith to others but also to share what we believe ourselves. I think the variety of views, experiences and ways of understanding the scriptures within the group is both thought-provoking and helpful.

*Cynthia Bartlett*

In the autumn of 2014, we followed studies produced by Cynthia, introducing us to some other faiths, which we found instructive and interesting. We did not meet as a group before Easter 2015, because there were Church in Abingdon Lent Lectures at All Saints.

After Easter, we studied the book “Jesus People” by Stephen Croft. The writer expresses himself very clearly, so we found the book easy to work with, and everyone joined in the discussion. We were encouraged by the writer's attitude that, contrary to some people's

gloomy predictions, the church in Britain has a future, though changes may be necessary to reflect changing society. It is essential to the true life of the church that it should express the qualities shown by Jesus. What this means in practice is explored in the book by looking at the beatitudes, providing some refreshingly new insights to this well-known text which we found stimulating. We must both build the church and change the world - possible only if we remain in contact with Jesus Christ as branches of his vine. We found this study challenging and hope it has enriched us as members of Trinity.

*Margaret Langsford/Ruth Dams*

It's good to be part of a group of people with time to talk about some things which matter to us. We get to know each other better and trust each other more. It's easier to admit doubts, share problems about Faith and sometimes other things. How do we explain our faith - to our families? to our friends who may accept that we go to church but find it strange that we should do so? Looking together at John Pritchard's book, 'How to explain your faith' may help us to find answers.

*Eve and Malcolm*

I have continued to lead the House Group which is hosted by Margaret Greaney. Over the past year we have looked at some material on comparative religions kindly provided by Cynthia Bartlett and studied the book "Jesus People: what the Church should do next" by Stephen Croft. We have just started looking at issues raised in the book "How to explain your faith" by John Pritchard. For various familiar reasons our numbers have dwindled over the years; there was a time when up to a dozen of us would squeeze into Margaret's sitting room, whereas at one recent meeting just four of us were able to come and spread ourselves out. Nevertheless, I think it is fair to say that the discussions are invariably enjoyable and stimulating; despite the welcoming heat generated by Margaret's wood-burning fire, nobody has yet fallen asleep listening to my efforts to get a discussion going!

*Simon Purtell*

### ***Prayer Support Group***



This is a group which meets every Friday Morning at 10am in the Quiet Room. We pray, in the name of Trinity, for those in the Church whom we know have health or other problems and we often send them cards with our good wishes.

Are thoughts and prayers also for the wider community; locally in Abingdon; for the work of charitable organisations; and for people caught up in disasters such as the ebola crisis, earthquakes, eruptions, wars, famine and the Haj disaster near Mecca.

This year our numbers have grown by 50% - which is because Ruth Dams has joined Gillian Macklow and myself! We would be pleased to welcome even more people.

*Margaret Langsford*

### ***Stroke Club***

Abingdon Stroke Club started in 1987 and is affiliated to the Stroke Association. We are a small group of stroke survivors, partners and helpers who meet in the Conduit Centre every 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month (excluding Bank Holidays).

We sometimes have talks on subjects which are of interest to us, meals out, quizzes and most important of all is friendship and knowing that we all have similar problems. We don't dwell on them, but go forward as best we can with a cheery outlook and a smile on our faces.

Recently we had an exercise afternoon from two lovely ladies from Age UK. Some of our members thought this was going to be boring and didn't particularly want to do it. How wrong they were, we all thoroughly enjoyed it and they said they would like it more often. We all had a good laugh. Laughter is a good healer. Although our club is not a remedial club we can signpost people in the right direction. New members are always welcome.

*Stephanie Talbot*

### **Traidcraft**



The Traidcraft stall continues to be held in the church foyer after the service on the first Sunday of each month.

The importance of supporting Traidcraft remains as important today as it was when the organisation first started supporting farmers and workers around the world.

This year the money we raised was again split equally between Trinity church funds and the Traidcraft Exchange charity, each receiving £66.15.

Thanks go to Ruth Sillitoe who continues to work on the ordering and money aspects and to Margaret Greaney who works on sorting the orders, setting up the stall and is with me on Sunday mornings.

Thank you to the church members for your continued support of this venture.

*Joanne Graham.*

### **Trinity Thursday Group**

The Thursday Group is a group of ladies who have been meeting together for over 40 years and meet in the Conduit Centre on the 2nd Thursday of each month. At present we have 27 members and hold a variety of events throughout the year.

In October last year we held a members evening entitled "Memories of schooldays" when we shared many amusing anecdotes. In November Tricia (assisted by Jean Mears) put us through our paces with extracts from "My Fair Lady" after she had explained exactly what is involved when the operatic society puts on a production. We had trouble getting to grips with the cockney accent and as for the dancing - least said soonest mended!! Our Christmas party was a delight and once again no present from the bran tub was duplicated. We started in January 2015 with our AGM. The officers agreed to carry on for a further year and we agreed to raise our annual subscription to £4. Several suggestions were put forward for the programme for the coming year. In February we had a games evening and although many members were unable to attend those who did enjoyed a variety of games. Jackie Smith visited us in March and gave us an interesting insight into the relationship between Abingdon and the Thames. Once again we were amazed at Jackie's breadth of knowledge about the subject and very grateful to her for giving up her time to talk to us. In April Carol led us through some line dancing routines – this exercise requires good brain/foot co-

ordination and some of the routines, accompanied by lots of sighing, became quite muddled! In May Felicity Lusk (head teacher at Abingdon School) talked to our group about her lifetime in education. Felicity was an excellent speaker and we felt privileged to be given an insight into her life and experiences. After her talk we had an interesting and invigorating discussion about education. In June Anna Fowler from Macmillan Cancer Support came to tell us about the organisation's work – very interesting to discover what a broad area this covers. We held a bring and buy sale and raised £72 for the charity. Our yearly barbecue was held in July at the home of Val and Paul Dalby. The weather was brilliant and we were able to sit in the garden enjoying good food, friendship and fellowship, after a deduction to cover the cost of the meat a surplus of £55 was given to the church. Thank you very much to Val and Paul for the use of their home and also those who helped with the cooking. We were invited to the home of Eileen and Alan Pennington for our coffee evening in August. This was a lovely evening. Thank you very much to Eileen and Alan for your hospitality. Jackie Smith visited us again in September to talk to us about "History through heraldry". Using Abingdon's coat of arms as the centrepiece she described in detail each symbol and related it to Abingdon's past. This was fascinating and everyone present said how much they had enjoyed the talk.

*Myra Bolle*

### ***Trinity Triangle***

The idea of producing a Church Magazine was suggested by John and Audrey Spencer at a Church Meeting and the first issue of The Triangle, on A4 stapled sheets, came out in September 1982 during the ministry of Revd John Dolling. It was printed in the Church Office by a team of volunteers.

The original editors were Joan Cleveland, Dennis Roebuck, Audrey Spencer and Connie Sylvester. In the first issue they stated aims for The Triangle:



- To keep the membership and the public at large informed about Trinity Church.
- To help to create an environment which binds all activities into one church.
- To create a situation where individuals can both grow in the knowledge and light of God.
- To enable members to take a greater part in the running of Trinity because of the knowledge and trust that has been obtained.

Also in that first issue John Dolling wrote about the importance of a news sheet to the church: 'It is no accident that the Christian has been in the business of spreading News from the very beginning of the Church'. He expressed the hope that it would be a good news bulletin that would be used to get to know each other better, publishing happy family events (weddings, baptisms, anniversaries) as well as telling of the various church groups and clubs and the campaigns for various good causes and simple accounts of how God has touched our lives. He hoped that the Triangle would be in our midst for years to come building up the Church Family and widening our outreach in the community. In the second

issue Revd. Justine Wyatt, who had joined John Dolling as a minister of Trinity in 1980, wrote that she was sure the magazine would help people feel more a part of the church by keeping them informed about events and activities.

Several families who have moved away from Abingdon have asked for copies of Triangle to be sent to them each month, now mostly by email, and we do occasionally receive articles for Triangle from previous members: Lesley Barter, Suzy Lang, Ken Hill amongst others have contributed over the last few years. Present members themselves send copies to previous ministers and members – Revd. John Dolling and Eileen Samphire both continue to keep in touch with Trinity in this way.

Our present editors are Cynthia Bartlett, Val Dalby, Clare James, Esther Hughes and Gloria Sandford and this year we were sorry when Jean Mears retired after many years' service. Esther has been a member of the team since July 1987 when she was recruited by her elder, Connie Sylvester, as soon as she became a member of Trinity! We meet on a Monday morning, usually the second Monday in the month, and take it in turns to be the editor for each issue. The team together look at what has been sent in, do an initial 'proof reading' and decide on any 'fillers' that need to be added to complete the magazine. The editor then is responsible for the final checking on the order and content and taking the hard copies to our printer, Mike Coleman. We do send as much as possible to him by email now as this saves a huge amount of typing out and does mean that he gets a proof copy back to the editor very quickly, often within two days. After a final proof reading when any corrections are sent back to Mike, Triangle is printed and then delivered to Clare James who is responsible for distribution.

We hope that Triangle will continue to keep our members informed about all aspects of our church life and also Trinity's involvement with the Methodist Circuit, The Church in Abingdon and the Wessex Synod of the URC.

*The Triangle Editorial Team*

## **YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRY**

### ***JAM / Crèche***

JAM stands for "Jesus and me", which is for children aged 3 and upwards and we meet twice a month. At the moment we have approximately twenty children on our books aged between three and twelve years of age.

We usually start with a talk and a story followed by a craft activity, which, sometimes we take back into church to show our Church Family.

As from September 2015, we will be meeting every 1st and 3rd Sunday, on the 2nd, 4th, and 5th when there is one, there is plenty to do in the welcome area, such as activity and reading books.

Recently we have been lucky enough to have extra help from Selina, our new Deacon.

We are also hoping to have a children's Party in January.

### ***Crèche***

Crèche runs every week in the Welcome area. Parents are welcome to come and play with their babies and toddlers with a member of our Crèche team. There are toys, books and colouring to do.

*Lindsay Busby*

## ***Trinity Brownies***



6th Abingdon Trinity Brownies meet on a Wednesday each week. We have 17 Brownies aged between 7 and 10 years old. We have two leaders Niki and Sarah and three young Leaders who help with games and crafts.

We like to give the girls a good range of activities to do each team this includes cooking, crafts, games and working on

Brownie Badges. We also make great use of the lovely open grass space where the Brownies enjoy games. We often invite the parents to come along to help celebrate special occasions, such as the enrolment of their daughter and parties. This year at Christmas we will be doing a small Christmas sing-song with parents joining in the fun. We also take an interest in the local area taking walks, map work and we also had a visit to the Fire Station and Police Station.

*Sarah Fernihough*

## ***Trinity Guides***

The Guide unit continues to thrive with an around 22 girls aged 10 – 15 years registered with the unit. The guides continue to follow the programme called 'Go for It' where they work as patrols to prepare and run different activities. They also carry out personal challenges, gaining their different Challenge badges. Over the year favourite activities have included ice skating at Milletts Farm, Penny Hikes and outdoor cooking.

We had girls performing in the Oxford Gang show and we went to watch their brilliant performance on stage at Radley School.

OxyGen is Oxfordshire's patrol competition and we had a team enter again, with some of the girls camping overnight once again.

The Abingdon Flower Club helped us with a Lonely Bouquet activity which followed our entries in the Abingdon Flower Festival. We are very grateful to Melissa and Mary Thompson for all their help. The Lonely Bouquet involved the guides making bouquets of flowers that were then left around Abingdon to be found and taken home by members of the public and spread a little cheer.

Carol and two guides attended the international camp, Quest 2015, and we were very proud of Phoebe and Carolien who made their Guide Promise with the Chief Guide, Gill Slocombe MBE.

We are also very proud of our guides who have gained the highest award in Guiding, the Baden-Powell Award. Rosie and Megan achieved this award last year and Hope and Fiona have just completed theirs.

One of the activities organised by Hope was to raise funds for the Nepal Earthquake Relief. This was a joint meeting



with the Brownies and more than £174 was raised with a Beetledrive, Bingo and Baking evening!

Two of our guides, Imogen and Holly, were part of the Oxfordshire Girlguiding team at the High Sheriff's summer garden party where they made a great impression with all the distinguished guests.

Future plans include attending Girlguiding's Big Gig at Wembley Arena and the indoor adventure camp, Supernova, in Lincolnshire as well as helping with the Abingdon Scout and Guide post.

To help with our funds we have an Easyfundraising Account. It is very easy and works by giving us a percentage of anything purchased online through around 2,000 different retailers. Many of these will be retailers already used and their prices are just the same as going to them directly. If you would like to help us, please go to your usual online stores (there are many well known ones included) via the easyfundraising link and register as a supporter. You have to use the easyfundraising link but all the stores are there for you to use: <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/6thabingdontrinity>

We are very grateful to the continuing support we receive from Trinity Church.

*Carol Dunne and Anna Swan.*

### ***Trinity Scout Group***

Scouting aims to engage and support young people in their personal development and to empower them to make a positive contribution to society. We do this through involving them in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities which challenge them and make

*Scout survival camp*



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 currently have more than 70 young people in our 3 sections and have 12 adults supporting them by providing an interesting, enjoyable and varied programme.

The highlight of the last year was our family camp, held in June. We ran this jointly with the Group from St Helen's Church. We had 110

youngsters and adults camping at Youlbury for the weekend. The weather was mixed but the young people enjoyed a wide range of activities including: archery, climbing, crate stacking, zip wire, 3G swing, leap of faith (a trapeze for the older ones), pedal go-karts (for the younger ones), a picture trail, water rockets, a hike, a campfire and of course the camping. The 'lowlight' for me was cooking 10kg of rice in a metal bin under an umbrella in the middle of a field in a thunderstorm! The great thing about family camp is that the parents get to see that their children can survive a weekend without a TV, an iPhone and a shower, and that the young people love spending a weekend running about in the open air getting wet and muddy.

Last Christmas, as part of our aim to serve the community, we joined other Scout and Guide Groups from across Abingdon to provide the Scouts and Guides Christmas post service where we collected, sorted and delivered about 6500 cards.

### **Beavers (6-8 years old)**

The highlights of the Beaver programme over the last year were: the 'torch trails' at Youlbury where they had to follow a trail and find hidden messages in the dark; Singalong Santa', a day of mainly outdoor fun activities at Wytham in December, our 'sleepover' in the Conduit Centre just before Christmas - which should have been called a 'wakeover' as there didn't seem to be a lot of sleeping going on!; and our evening hike in July where Beavers and their brothers, sisters and parents came along for a pleasant evening walk.

The Beavers also did lots of cooking, creative activities, learning about safety, health and fitness and outdoor activities like scavenger hunts, tracking and putting up a tent.

### **Cubs (8-10½ years old)**

Over the last year the highlights of the Cub programme have been: a night hike and 'sleepover' where the Cubs did a 5 mile hike, finishing at about midnight, then sleeping over in the Conduit Centre (they did more sleeping than the Beavers because we had tired them out on the hike!); the Sixer & Seconder Camp, where the older Cubs had a weekend of camping and fun activities with other Cubs from around the District; the District 'scrapheap challenge' where the Cubs had to build something from the contents of a green recycling bin; the indoor hockey tournament where six local groups competed against one another, and the 'karty rally' at Dry Sandford where Cubs from around the District competed with push go-karts.

This year the Cubs have learned a lot about personal, home and fire safety, disability awareness and world faiths. They have also been involved in many outdoor activities including fire lighting, backwoods cooking, shelter building, tracking and wide games.

### **Scouts (10½-14 years old)**

In the last year the Scouts have focused on honing their camping skills to get them to the point where they can camp independently in patrols – setting up their own site and preparing all their own food over wood fires. We held 4 camps in the year; the first three were weekend camps at Youlbury. The first of these was a survival camp where the Scouts built shelters and slept in them and (any vegetarians should look away now) they skinned, gutted and cooked rabbit, plucked prepared and cooked pigeon and gutted and cooked trout in cabbage leaves. The culmination of the camping season was a week long summer camp in North Yorkshire, held with a number of troops from around the UK. We were really proud of the way our young Scouts looked after themselves and each other for the week – they were able to cook a fantastic array of food over an open fire, including making pies and cakes.

In preparation for the camping season the Scouts completed their chef and fire safety badges. As part of their community support work, and their Environmental Conservation badge, they spent several Monday evenings helping at the Earth Trust centre at Witteham Clumps carrying out a range of tasks including removing thistles from one of the meadows.

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.

*Tom Kyffin*

### ***Trinity Toddlers***

Our Thursday morning group for toddlers with their parents, grandparents, or carers continues to be popular, and many new faces have been welcomed during the year. The friendship offered and shared is greatly appreciated, and some have even found their way to the group having arrived from abroad without other contacts. They enter a network where friendships can be made and much useful information is shared.



We are a Christian based toddler group which aims to provide a place where:

- Everyone feels welcome regardless of their faith
- Children learn to play alongside and with each other, to develop socially with each other, and learn through play
- Parents and carers can meet each other and have the opportunity to sit and chat over refreshments
- There is a friendly and supportive ear for all who come.

We owe thanks to Kathy Westmacott, our organist, and to Melissa Day, two grannies who have led the organisation this year. Not only have they had their grandchildren to look after, but they have shared responsibility for keeping things going. Now as their grandchildren move on they will have a well earned rest, at least from Toddler Group! Fortunately our own Amanda Stead is able to gather up the reins again and from September she will lead with Catherine Coke, another Trinity mum. This is great news for the group and they will continue to be supported by a Trinity team who between them prepare the Hall in the morning, serve refreshments, supervise activities and clear away after each session. It's quite a complex show to keep on the road and a very worthwhile outreach for our church. Some more hands would be most welcome for all or part of the morning between 9 and 11:30am, and any time offered could be fortnightly rather than every week. Help with putting out the furniture is a particular need and can be done on Wednesday evening or Thursday morning. Email Amanda and Kathy at [toddlers@trinity.com](mailto:toddlers@trinity.com) or speak to either of them if you are interested in joining the team.

*Eve Newton*

## **MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY**

### ***Catering Group***

When refreshments or a meal for the church are needed the group gets together to plan whatever is necessary - it usually involves booking the Conduit Centre, thinking about the food and drinks, ensuring there are enough helpers and working out the publicity needed



for the event. We don't have a named organiser, but after Nan retired we naturally looked to June Etheridge to make sure everything was planned and prepared. June's death left us feeling not only sad but uncertain how we could carry on. It didn't take long to realise that the one thing June expected of us and that we should do was to make sure that Trinity's catering needs continued to be met as best we could. This meant organising refreshments for a succession of funerals but we managed because we always had plenty of offers of help from other people in the

church. During the year we also arranged a Welcome Lunch for Ian and Tabitha, and recently one for Selina when it was good to celebrate their arrival at Trinity. Mince pies after the Carol Service and the ever popular bacon rolls at the Fairs have also been provided, the latter proving a successful fundraiser. We should say that Nan and Ernest Draper have continued to work hard in the kitchen for which we are very grateful. Our thanks also to those who willingly make cakes and puddings whenever we put out a request. We couldn't manage without you.

*Nan Draper, Rosemary Richards, Liz Oastler, Christine Hutchinson,  
Christine Foskett, Jenny Cadman, Eve Newton*

### **Coffee**

Enjoy fellowship and a cup of coffee after our Morning Service!

We have had some fun getting to grips with the new coffee machine, but by now nearly everyone on the rota has been initiated! Comments have been good about the taste and donations have gone up slightly. Thanks to all those on the rota and, as always, if a change has to be made please ensure the list in the welcome area is amended. We are always happy to have new volunteers which would spread the load. If interested please speak to Margaret Butcher.



*Margaret Butcher*

### **Housekeeping**

So many people help keep Trinity running smoothly – working quietly (or not so quietly for the lawn mower) in the background, so thank you to the willing army of volunteers who look after the garden so beautifully, wash the towels and tea towels, help with small DIY tasks etc.

There are always opportunities to help, so don't wait to be asked – do offer your services.

### **Office**

I have very much enjoyed my first year at Trinity, getting to understand the role and meeting so many new people – both members of the congregation and the many visitors to the Church and Conduit Centre. My thanks to all who have helped me settle in, and to those who assist each week – with copying, powerpoint projection etc.

We have made a number of changes during the year, and now have a single photocopier / scanner / printer which can cope with A3 and A4 and colour. (Very reasonable rates offered for private use).

The Office now handles enquiries for bookings, but I am indebted to Tom for his help with the practicalities – not least the heating controls.

Although the Office is usually only 'manned' on Thursday and Friday, I try, with the wonders of modern technology, to reply to email queries in a timely manner throughout the week. The answerphone is still there, but requires someone to be in the building to see that a message has been left.

I look forward to working with you all in the year to come.

*Eluned Hallas*

## **MINISTRY OF GOVERNANCE**

### ***Church Meeting & Trustees Report.***

This year has been another very busy year for both the Church Meeting and the Trustees. Topics discussed have been wide in their scope and have included such things as: Safeguarding, Same Sex Marriage and of course putting Trinity's finances on a secure footing. Yet alongside the governance of Trinity, as a church and charity, we have also looked at our Spiritual life and heard from our Home Groups as we learned of the kinds of areas that feed us in our discipleship. We have also invested in a new hymn book, Singing the Faith.

During the course of the year we expressed our thanks and gratitude to Gordon Grossart and Lillian Seymour, both of whom stepped down from their roles as trustees. It will be no surprise to anyone that Gordon continues to offer his wisdom and experience for which we are all very grateful.

As we embarked on the TRIO Campaign we did so with some trepidation, yet the response was amazing, more than we dared hope for. It said volumes about our confidence in what God is calling us to, as we seek to continue to follow him here at Trinity.

Much work has been done behind the scenes this year as we sought to understand and clarify what our constitution means and how the various groups relate to each other. Our constitution means that we do not operate in either a traditional URC or a traditional Methodist way. It is actually a mix of both. Clarity of how the Church Meeting and the Trustees relate to each other has been all the more important as this year as we see the majority of our current Trustees coming to the end of their term of office. We owe them a great deal of thanks for the prayerful way they have exercised this ministry for Trinity over the past few years. At the AGM we will be appointing a new team of Trustees for the next three years which we pray will bring another new chapter into the life of Trinity.

In terms of the relationship between our Church Meeting and the Trustees, perhaps a word or two would be helpful. Both the Church Meeting and the Trustees are opportunities to discern God's leading of the Church as a whole. The Trustees however, have to operate as the Executive Committee and therefore, according to the constitution, have the overall responsibility for the running of the Church and all final decisions rest with them. For example, if the Church Meeting decided to explore the possibility of alterations or updating the Church Premises, the final decision on whether it could go ahead would have to rest with the Trustees. They would need to decide whether it was in the best interests of the Church and whether we could meet the costs etc.

So the relationship is very close and interwoven. The Church Meeting informs the Trustees and vice versa, except that responsibility rests with the Trustees. We need to be very clear on this because we are answerable to both denominations and also to the Charity Commission. It means that we cannot think of the Trustees as a Finance and Property Group anymore, because the responsibilities go beyond that.

Another of the outcomes of this 'behind the scenes' work, was the realization that with a property the size of Trinity, it was asking too much of the Trustees to deal with all the property matters as well as everything else. So we welcome our new Property Group, members of which have the knowledge, skills and expertise required to look after our property. Of course they will be working closely with the Trustees and will be answerable to them. Our hope is that this will free the Trustees to consider the wider life of Trinity Church, its mission and ministry and so offer some leadership in our work in the coming years.

As a body of Trustees, we look back at the year that has passed with thankfulness to God and how the Holy Spirit has led us. We look forward to the years ahead, trusting in God to continue to lead and challenge us as we carry out our work for the Kingdom here in Abingdon.

*Ian Griffiths*

### ***The Property Group***

The new Property Group consists of Ray Chadwick, Ken Clark, Peter Foskett, Tom Jarratt, Ruth Sillitoe, Reg Williams and Paul Young. We will continue to care for the buildings and fabric of Trinity Church and the Conduit Centre. Working with the Trustees, we will maintain and if the budget allows improve the property on this site for Church Members and the wider community.

*Peter Foskett*

### ***Safeguarding***

The purpose of Safeguarding is to ensure that children and vulnerable adults attending Church activities are kept safe from harm. We comply with legal requirements and best practice in Safeguarding by implementing the policy and guidance issued by the Methodist connexion. The URC also provides policy and guidance which is very similar to that of the Methodist Church, but to ensure consistency of approach Trinity has chosen to implement the Methodist policy. The Church policy is displayed on the notice boards in the south porch and the entrance to the Conduit Centre.

Adults in roles that involve unsupervised activities with children and vulnerable adults are appropriately checked and are given training via the "Creating Safer Space" modules.

*Tom Kyffin*

### ***Treasury Team***

A lot of work goes on in the background looking after the church finances which many people are unaware of, but this year we have been in the public eye due to the TRIO campaign, which reached every church member. The reason was the increasing difference between income and expenditure in Trinity.

The campaign was a resounding success and shows a welcome commitment both to Trinity's finances and to the future of Trinity. It also brought us a new Treasurer in Tom Kyffin, allowing me to finish after six years. I wish him well.

I want to take this last opportunity in writing this report to thank all the team for their regular help during this time. Gordon, Lilian, Owain and Margaret are always willing to help count the collection after church, and there are others who will also help if needed. Simon works hard at persuading people to sign up to regular giving with Gift Aid and makes the claim to supplement our funds with the tax due back.

I would also like to thank Ian for his immediate understanding of the financial position and his encouragement in taking the necessary action to look at our finances as a whole.

*Ruth Sillitoe*

### **Don't forget**

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

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

## In conclusion:

“It has been a moving experience to read the church report,” are not words that usually spring to mind when reflecting upon such a document, but in the journey of getting to know you all and contextualising the various activities, I simply cannot find any other words to use in the closing remarks.

I like to think of Church life as a tapestry upon which we journey together. Within it are the knots of grief that seem insurmountable to overcome; the darker shades of doubt, despair, and worry about the unknown; the vibrant colours found in the new beginnings of birth, baptism, new church members and the sharing of our personal celebrations and testimony; the easy and not so easy textures of meetings that need to discern ways forward on our behalf; the shades that blend so well when we come together in fellowship, hospitality and mutual support, and underneath all of these is the canvas of a prayerful people, with and without offices, all of whom are absolutely integral to the beauty of witness and worship at Trinity. Without such fundamentals, there would be no place for the embellishing golden



*Painting by Sieger Koder*

threads of Christ, to be woven into our lives, to catch the light, fill the gloom, bring hope and bless the witness and faithful service at Trinity. And so it is a great privilege to be amongst you all, to share in your life, to journey with you in faith and to serve in a “foot washing” capacity within the community. The Deacon’s ministry is expressed in servant ministry, in sacramental living, and also liturgically in the sending out of the people from worship, as a reminder to reflect the living water of Christ. In this new appointment, I have been out and about seeking out the “dusty tired places” where God may be calling us as a community to serve. As Peter initially resisted Christ’s intentions to wash his feet, so too have I faced a lack of willingness to engage, but there have also been others, who have indicated their profound need to not just have their “feet washed” but their “hands and head as well” and so as we further discern the way forward in this new appointment we pray:

*Lord Jesus, Servant King, you set aside your glory to become our slave. You touch us in intimate love. Help us to know you in our service of others, in their service to us and, in the breaking of bread. Amen*

*Deacon Selina*