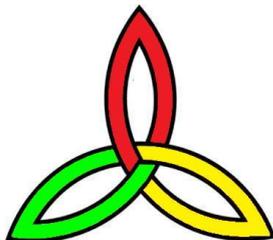


Trinity Times

December
2021

Issue No 249



Diary for December

Sunday 5th	10.30 am	Team-led Toy Service
Sunday 12th	10.30 am 12.00 pm	Morning Worship led by Peter Rogers Christmas Lunch
Saturday 18th	10.00 am	KFC Coffee Morning in St Martin's Parish Centre
Sunday 19th	3.00 pm	Carol Service led by Jackie Hall (No Morning Service)
Saturday 25th	10.00 am	Christmas Day Worship led by Kate Dickinson
Sunday 26th		No Service

Youth Club Meetings at Trinity during term times – Friday evenings - School years 6 – 9.

Trinity Times is the newsletter of Trinity Church, Park Lane, Knebworth, Herts, SG3 6PD

Minister: Position vacant

Please contact one of the Elders or via the church website or office telephone

Church Website: www.trinitychurchknebworth.org.uk Tel: 01438 210321

Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the United Reformed and Methodist Churches. Similarly, they do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor

Diary for January 2021		
Sunday 2nd	10.30 am	Morning Worship, Covenant Service, led by John Whittle
Sunday 9th	10.30 am	Morning Worship led by Christine Warren
Saturday 15th	10.00 am	KFC Coffee Morning at St Martin's Parish Centre
Sunday 16th	10.30 am	Team Worship led by Rosie Berry
Sunday 23rd	10.30 am	Morning Worship led by Kate Dickinson
Sunday 30th	10.30 am	Open Church
<p>Youth Club Meetings at Trinity during term times – Friday evenings - School years 6 – 9.</p>		

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

As in previous years, this final Trinity Times for 2021 is a double issue covering both December 2021 and January 2022. The reason for this is that our friends at Triographics are taking a well-earned holiday over the Christmas and New Year period and will not be back at their printing machines until early January. Many thanks to our usual contributors for ensuring that their reports or articles will see us into the New Year.

Notwithstanding, may I perhaps be among the first to wish you all a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Graham Fothergill

TRINITY FAMILY NEWS

There is much encouragement as, with due awareness of the restrictions to protect ourselves and others from the continuing presence of the Covid-19 virus, we begin to gather again. We have enjoyed a return of the Big Brekkie, a variety of informal afternoon tea concerts, small gatherings for study and fellowship, and both traditional and new patterns of weekly Sunday morning worship. December brings more events when we can live out Christian worship and care in our community.

But we are certainly nowhere near back to being fully connected, and winter months, health risks and changes in personal circumstances all contribute to the difficulty of establishing the opportunities we were used to for relaxed face-to-face gatherings. This means that for a long time now we have been less able to share together the personal news of the joy and sadness we each experience. Isolation in its variety of forms remains a very real issue for many. It is both a cause and an effect of fragmentation in community structures and the church is no exception. There is much that works well in the pastoral care of Trinity, but it is important that we all share the responsibility of noticing people and situations that may need encouragement or support to know that we all belong within the reach of God's love and care. As we move through the season of Advent, may we each recognise and take the opportunities we have, and ensure that together we reflect the vine and branches image in Chapter 15 of John's gospel.

Gill Hughes

PARISH NEWS ARTICLES

As mentioned elsewhere, Trinity Times will not be putting in an appearance next month (January) but the writers of both the December and January Trinity Times articles for the Parish News have been able to provide their copy to me in good time and both are reproduced here (Ed.).

Firstly, this is the piece written by Rosie Berry for the December issue.

Yes, it's that time again. Time to empty my purse of all my loose change and lighten my handbag. It's quite a ritual, separating the various coins. The smallest ones are easy, silver and copper. I hesitate over the 10 pence - am I feeling generous? "Small change - big difference": that's the slogan on my Christian Aid collecting box. It soon fills up - at the last count, with an overflow box, I'd collected nearly £21. The challenge is making up the box from its flat pack original - I've found strategic rubber bands help. If you would like a collecting box contact John Whittle on 01438 813517.

Not much news from my Irish family: Covid restrictions mean the holes in the drive are still unfilled. Helena and Damien have switched grocery suppliers! On the bird front, they have been visited by a sparrowhawk in the garden. Perhaps he is keeping an eye on the goldfinches that use the seed feeder.

I have been asked several times if I'm going to Ireland for Christmas; for various reasons I'm not. Ryanair seem uncertain about flying into Cork, and Christmas fares are triple the normal ones. I shall be spending Christmas day at Trinity Church, where a warm welcome awaits with Christmas dinner, fun and fellowship. If you would like to join us, single, couples or family, contact Kate Dickinson on 07825700580.

Yes, it's that time again, time when family and friends come together to celebrate, Covid restrictions permitting. What's at the centre of your celebrations? Do you have room for a tiny baby, the Saviour of the world? If you want to support someone who's homeless, "Crisis" provides all year help and encouragement as well as their Christmas centres. You can find details at www.crisis.org.uk.

Every blessing to you and yours this Christmas,

Rosie Berry, an Elder at Trinity.

And now the text of the Trinity article which has been prepared by John Whittle for the January 2022 edition of the Parish News.

"Be an angel!"

We have all heard this request at some time; have we not! "Be an angel and fetch me my glasses from the bedside cabinet", "Be an angel and take the dog for his/her walk". However, angels seem to be rare, except of course at Christmas time, when every school, every church hall, every Christmas film has its angel or cohort of angels.

But have you actually ever seen a real angel? Yet, a survey conducted by ICM on behalf of the Bible Society, found that 41% of women and 23% of men in Britain professed belief in angels and 5% claimed to have seen one, and 29% believed angels were watching over them. Perhaps, not surprisingly the figure in the USA was 80%! And one of Britain's largest funeral directors revealed that the most popular music request at secular humanist funerals was Robbie Williams hit 'Angels'!

And they pop-up quite frequently in the Bible from mysterious visitors for Abraham and Sarah, to hosts of angels appearing to the shepherds and myriads singing songs of praise in the Revelation of St. John. What I find interesting is that in both Hebrew (the language largely of the Old Testament) and in Greek, the word used for angel can mean a heavenly or earthly being. So the word in both Testaments can be used for mortal messengers.

The flying angels may look pretty, but I prefer down-to-earth angels such as those who came to light during the pandemic - researchers working night and day to develop a vaccine, hospital staff who often, with only poor protection, nursed and cared for the victims of Covid, ordinary folk doing extraordinary things - such as turning one's pub into a food bank!

So messages can be delivered by angels in many guises:

A word can be an angelic messenger - it may be a word from the pulpit, or a radio preacher - the story is of a desperately sad man who went into a church to escape the rain. He heard the preacher speaking of how God can take a broken life and use it for his purpose, then told of a famous violinist who in the middle of a concert broke a string on his instrument, but then played, still able to produce beautiful music - that illustration and the preacher's words struck home and changed the man's life, he went home strengthened, knowing that: **'God never yet forsook at need the soul that trusted Him indeed'**.

A hymn can also bring a revelation as William Cooper suggests in this line from one of his hymns: **'Sometimes a light surprises a Christian while she sings, tis the Lord who rises with healing in his wings.'**

A stranger can be a ministering angel - the one who came to our aid when we fell, or were lost, or lonely; when we were sad and bereaved and s/he spoke that word that lightened our mood and helped restore our faith in God and in human nature.

Conclusion - so behind the imagery of winged white angels there stands the reality of God's willingness to minister to us the comfort or challenge, whichever will keep us moving upward. And that can come via a person, a word or an experience. We must be awake to angels when we meet them, and heed the word of Hebrews 13, v. 1&2 **'Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing some have entertained angels without knowing it.'**

Surely, a good call to carry with us into 2022!

Reverend John Whittle

DINNER ON CHRISTMAS DAY

The Social Committee is inviting members of the church family and wider community to join them for Christmas dinner on Christmas Day if they would like some company and to celebrate this joyous occasion with others.

Guests are invited to arrive at 12.30 pm with the meal being served at 1 pm. There will be the option after to stay and chat to others and enjoy coffee and mince pies. Transport can be provided if necessary.

This offer is open to those on their own, as well as couples and families of all ages. There is no cost although donations would be appreciated.

Places are limited so, if you would like further details or to book, please contact me.

Thanks

Kate on behalf of the Social Committee

CHARITY AND MISSION NEWS

Action for Children – Charity of the Month for December



At 'Action for Children' the ambition is that every child and young person in the country should have a safe and happy childhood and the foundations they need to thrive. To that end they seek to protect and support children and young people, provide practical and emotional care and support, ensure their voices are heard, and campaign to bring about lasting improvements to their lives.

The figures are impressive with 604,885 children, young people and their families supported during the year 2021 up by 64% on the previous year. Their mental health services reached more than 98,000 children and their families a rise of 291% from the year before.

As we all know, Covid struck many families and they were forced onto Universal Credit, which is what happened to Kate and her husband, who ran a small cafe on the coast, they found themselves without income but still paying rent. The Universal Credit barely covered their rent, so they had no money. Fortunately, they were in touch with **Action for Children**, and, drawing on their Coronavirus Emergency Fund, the charity was able to supply them with family vouchers and a grant for their children's school uniforms when schools reopened. However, that was not the end, because the schools closed again, and the family did not have a laptop or computer for home-schooling. **Action for Children** again stepped in, and provided them with a lap-top. Kate wrote: *'It's hard to explain what this last year had been like. People need to hear about Action of Children. Because everything they did saved us'*. That fund supported 20,266 vulnerable children and young people last year.

You can help with all this work by answering the call for toys for the Toy Service to be held on December 5th. The toys will go to the Pines in Hertford. This provides residential short-breaks for children aged 5 to 18 years who have learning disabilities and complex health needs (see below).

In addition, the Charity of the Month will raise money, as will the collection on Christmas Day. Plus you can help save the planet by instead of sending Christmas cards to Trinity friends, you can send greetings via the **Action for Children Notice Board** and make a small donation at the same time.

Thank you for any help you can give.

Hilary and John

TOY SERVICE - Sunday 5th December

Suggested gifts for The Pines

Although the children are mostly teenagers, their developmental needs are of those much younger and the staffs at the centre has requested, that with a few exceptions, we give toys suitable for very young children, up to about 8 years.

Here are some suggestions:

- *Toys , books (including picture books for infants) and puzzles (with large pieces)*
- *Sensory toys (toys that make a noise)*
- *Musical toys and percussion instruments*
- *CDs, these can be for teenagers*
- *DVDs for young children and teenagers.*

For further information, contact John Whittle

Trinity Mission Project for January 2022

We will be supporting the local branch (North Herts and Stevenage) of Samaritans whose work has continued throughout the pandemic. It may be possible in the New Year to plan a revised version of the traditional “Soup Lunch” to add to the support of this work– please watch out for details.

Please see the national website www.samaritans.org for information about the charity we are supporting – an extract is below:

Whatever you're facing, a Samaritan will face it with you

Whatever you're facing, a Samaritan will face it with you

Every day, Samaritans volunteers respond to around 10,000 calls for help.

We're here, day or night, for anyone who's struggling to cope, who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure.

Samaritans is not only for the moment of crisis, we're taking action to prevent the crisis.

We give people ways to cope and the skills to be there for others. And we encourage, promote and celebrate those moments of connection between people that can save lives.

We offer listening and support to people and communities in times of need.

In prisons, schools, hospitals and on the rail network, Samaritans are working with people who are going through a difficult time and training others to do the same.

Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy, and Samaritans' vision is that fewer people die by suicide.

That's why we work tirelessly to reach more people and make suicide prevention a priority.

Read more about [our vision, mission and values](#).

Gill Hughes

DIARY INFORMATION AND NEWS ITEMS

Trinity Traditional Christmas Lunch

This festive event is to be held on **Sunday, 12th December**, after the Morning Service. There will be a poster and a list on the notice board for people to sign so that we will have an indication of numbers. For further information please contact Kathy Cole.



CAROL SERVICE – 19th December

Urgently wanted - volunteers to read poems and prayers at the Carol Service, 3.00 pm, Sunday, 19th December.

If you can help, please contact Jackie Hall by email at jackiehall0912@ntlworld.com or phone 01707 322122 (leave a message) as soon as possible.

We need lots of readers so that we can include as many folk as possible and have a wide variety of voices during this service.

Thanks

Jackie

KNEBORTH FAMILY OF CHURCHES (KFC)



KFC Coffee Morning: Saturday, 18th December, 10.00 am – 12 noon: St Martin's Parish Centre

Why not take some time out from the pre-Christmas rush and come along for a drink and some cake and a chat? You will still be able to do some shopping at the Traidcraft stall. Donations made at our Coffee Mornings are used to support various charities. Many thanks to everyone for your continuing support.

Service of Remembrance – A Retrospective

It wasn't supposed to happen like that!

You may be aware that the original plans for this year's Service of Remembrance at the War Memorial in Old Knebworth on Sunday, 14th November, were along the lines of how it used to be, pre-Covid. And then we learnt that the local police would be unable to provide the necessary road blocks on the relevant section of Park Lane, and so we had to do a rethink.

Having publicised the Service of Remembrance in the November Trinity Times and on the front cover and one of the inside pages of last month's Parish News, we realised that we needed to alert as many people as we could to explain that, in effect, the event was cancelled, although residents, and local groups and organisations, were still welcome to lay their wreaths at some time during the day.

However, Knebworth Family of Churches felt that we should recognise Remembrance Sunday in some way and decided to hold a short Service at the War Memorial at the usual time (12.30 pm). We didn't publicise this in any way, except to invite a small number of locals to join us who we knew would usually wish to lay a wreath. In the event, we were surprised that more than a hundred people turned up. Clearly, our efforts to warn residents of the change of plans fell on a certain amount of stony ground!

So our short version of the Service went ahead, led by Reverend John Whittle and assisted by Father Daniel Cronin. Our trumpeter, Ed Moye, gave a fine, and much appreciated, rendering of the Last Post and Reveille and, after an unexpected spontaneous round of applause, the Service ended with a spirited, and unaccompanied, singing of the National Anthem.

One of our invited friends said to me later that it was "The best attended cancelled event I think I've been to!"

Thank you to all who attended - whether by intention, by default, or by accident - and thank you to those who contributed in other ways and made it possible.

Graham Fothergill
Secretary: The Knebworth Family of Churches

METHODIST CIRCUIT NEWS

Malcolm's Message

All Saints to Advent, that is the journey we take this November - with a few fireworks along the way. This time of year I find difficult - the clocks have gone back and what is left is the sense of longer hours of darkness. This November I am heartened that Advent begins and I can catch a glimpse of the light that transforms the world.

As I noted above, November begins with All Saints. For me this is a time of remembrance and recollection. This past year or so has been difficult with respect to funerals and having opportunity to remember and give thanks for people we have loved and respected. Many of us are looking for a time when we can mark, in a significant way, the lives of those who have died and share in a thanksgiving service for them. At All Saints, I take time to remember those funerals I have been involved in over the past year. I give thanks for the lives I recall, and I am filled with sadness that so many people who I have respected and cared for are no longer around to spend time with. I know that it is part of life and living and I know that my faith holds the promise of life, light and hope. Even so, there is a proper sense of loss where special people are no longer with us.

This often then moves into a period of introspection, and for me this often turns into reflecting on those things which I think I could have done better - gloomy thoughts on gloomy evenings. So, this year when November ends with Advent I feel uplifted and positive because Advent for me is always about light appearing in darkness and the gift of hope that goes hand in hand with the presence of light.

I enjoy the gift of faith, that God comes into darkness, that God meets us where we are and as we are and brings light. The light is forgiveness, new hope and new life. Darkness may still be all around us, but fear and the power of the dark have been removed and I can be who I am, not anxious about what I may or may not have done, but comfortable that the living God is with me and holds me precious and important.

Malcolm

[This item has been reprinted from the November issue of the North Herts Methodist Circuit Newsletter (Ed.)]

**You are invited to attend the
Free Church Service
in the Lady Chapel on:**



THE CATHEDRAL AND
ABBAY CHURCH OF
SÄINT ÄLBÄN

Wednesday, 1st December at 11.00 am
Preacher: **Rev'd Graham Clarke**
Minister of Marshalwick Baptist Free Church

Free Church Ecumenical Chaplain: Reverend Simon Carver,
Email:simoncarver@btinternet.com

TAILPIECE

Fire Walk

Many thanks for all your kind sponsorship and support of my fire walk. I raised over £500 for the Isabel Hospice.



It was fun, but please DO NOT try this at home!!

Jackie Hall

***Please send items for the February 2022 issue of Trinity Times to
Graham Fothergill by Thursday, 20th January:***

E-mail gafothergill@gmail.com

Telephone 01438 813371

or drop them in at 7 Stockens Dell, Knebworth