

# Trinity Quarterly

Issue No 15: September – November 2026



| Diary for September |      |          |                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------|------|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday              | 6th  | 10.30 am | Morning Worship led by <b>Revd Stan Chatikobo</b><br>Circuit service at Letchworth Methodist Central                       |
| Sunday              | 13th | 10.30 am | Morning Worship led by <b>Catherine Edmonds</b>                                                                            |
| Saturday            | 19th | 10.00 am | KFC Coffee Morning at <b>St Martin's Parish Centre</b>                                                                     |
| Sunday              | 20th | 10.30 am | Morning Worship led by <b>Revd Stan Chatikobo</b><br>with <b>Holy Communion</b>                                            |
| Sunday              | 27th | 10.30 am | Harvest Service led by <b>Jackie Hall</b><br>Followed by <b>Harvest Lunch</b>                                              |
| Diary for October   |      |          |                                                                                                                            |
| Sunday              | 4th  | 10.30 am | Morning Worship led by <b>Revd Stan Chatikobo</b>                                                                          |
| Sunday              | 11th | 10.30 am | Open Church led by <b>Gill Hughes</b>                                                                                      |
| Saturday            | 17th | 10.00 am | KFC Coffee Morning at <b>St Martin's Parish Centre</b>                                                                     |
| Sunday              | 18th | 10.30 am | Morning Worship led by <b>Revd Stan Chatikobo</b><br>With <b>Holy Communion</b>                                            |
| Sunday              | 25th | 10.30 am | Morning Worship led by <b>Kate Dickinson</b>                                                                               |
| Diary for November  |      |          |                                                                                                                            |
| Sunday              | 1st  | 10.30 am | Morning Worship led by <b>Revd Stan Chatikobo</b>                                                                          |
| Sunday              | 8th  | 10.30 am | Remembrance Sunday led by <b>Revd J Whittle</b>                                                                            |
| Sunday              | 15th | 10.30 am | Morning Worship led by <b>Revd Stan Chatikobo</b><br>With <b>Holy Communion</b>                                            |
| Saturday            | 21st | 10.00 am | KFC Coffee Morning at <b>St Martin's Parish Centre</b>                                                                     |
| Sunday              | 22nd | 10.30 am | Café Style Worship led by <b>Mel Mitchell &amp; Team</b>                                                                   |
| Sunday              | 29th | 10.45 am | <b>Stevenage URC led by Revd Stan Chatikobo</b><br>1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent<br><b>NO Service at Trinity Church</b> |

**Youth Club Meetings** at Trinity during term times – Friday evenings, for school years 6 – 9.  
Trinity Quarterly is the newsletter of Trinity Church, Park Lane, Knebworth, Herts. SG3 6PD.

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***Opinions in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the United Reformed and Methodist Churches. Similarly, they do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Team***

## **NOTES FROM THE EDITORS**

As a child I remember a gas mask hung on our back door. Evidently my parents still needed to feel prepared. As a girl guide leader and a nurse, I learned that being prepared is vital, advice I still try to keep to. I expect that is why I take too many things on holiday! By starting to write the editorial for September early I hope I will be prepared. There is always a last scramble to get to the printers in time, to label the copies and arrange for their delivery. Thanks to all those who assist in this by getting their articles to us in early for proof reading and layout adjustment during our final team meeting. Thank you to Gill who always manages to print the name labels that are applied to Trinity Quarterly. So please take your named copy, the spare unnamed ones are for visitors or potential new members. Our next issue will be in December, when we are all busy! The Trinity Quarterly team will be looking forward to some early festive input please.

*Rosemary Rudkin, on behalf of the team – Camilla, Maureen, Tricia and Rosemary*

## **FROM REVD STAN**

### **HOW CHRIST CHALLENGED THE CONTEMPORARY EVILS IN OUR WORLD: POSITIVE ACHIEVEMENT- JESUS AND MORALITY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The apprehension of the truth of Christ's words has been painfully slow. People have taken many centuries to rise to the thoughts of Jesus; yet when they did, it resulted in tremendous rewarding. In this paper I am going to reflect on slavery, a very topical issue where we see churches engaged in the issues of reparations for the evil of slavery that was perpetrated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Scriptures had already challenged the ruthlessness and the inequality of the day as a way of giving rights to the slaves. The challenge was to bring change.

#### **Slavery**

Surprisingly, neither the indifference to childhood nor the contemptuous view of womanhood constituted the gravest blot on ancient civilization, but rather the institution of slavery. Slavery offended the moral sensitivities of none. It was taken for granted. Despite the inhuman treatment by their masters some slaves were men of intelligence and education - tutors, philosophers, physicians and state servants. Others managed to save enough to purchase their freedom, but many remained among the class counted scarcely human. Cicero declared slaves as *the excrement of mankind*.

However, slaves were the people who from the first were admitted into the fellowship of the church and were called *brothers* as Paul put it; **for whom Christ had died**. Christian ideas began to cut the ground beneath a system bound up with self-interest and immemorial custom. Before the close of the New Testament, we find Paul carrying the teaching of Jesus from implicit to explicit. He started writing to slave owners laying down the law of Christian brotherhood (Epistle of Philemon). Paul further elaborated that in Christ there is neither bond/slave nor free (Gal. 3:28). Paul's persistent teaching in the church caused slaves and prisoners to be counted as fair sport in the Roman arenas and further, a new reverence for human life was becoming general, promoting a new sense of justice and moral responsibility. Christian Influence was growing sufficient strength and recognition to enable Bishop Ambrose of Milan to impose an eight-month discipline on the Emperor only to be re-admitted in the church on condition that he passed a decree of no capital punishment.

Wherever Christ's Gospel went a new attitude to the underdog became apparent. Aidan the Monk used the money he received from the rich to redeem captives, many of whom became his disciples and were later ordained by him. In 1727, the Quakers protested against the rich

merchants. Their denunciation was supported by the Evangelicals who reminded people of the laws of Christ. IN 1833, the British Parliament indemnified the slave owners to the tune of £20 million. As the hour of the slave liberation struck, in every place of worship in the West Indian Colonies, a hymn of praise was raised to the God of the white man, the God of the black man and the God of the free.

When Jesus released into the world the simple but profound idea of the individual's importance as a child of God, having a place here, and hereafter, in His Kingdom, and then made it forgettable by dying for all men on the cross, the world began to see a different place. Therefore, Jesus speeded up the evolution of humanity. When Jesus gave to the world his conception of the Kingdom of God, he was sharing with man the comprehensive vision of the divine purpose, age-old, heaven-high, embracing every individual and the whole destiny of man, embracing all existence and the fulfilment of all being.

Through the Scriptures and his teachings Jesus refreshed us from a perennial spring, the very root of human compassion and sacrifice. He inspired a love that is ever branching out of the good of others.

Adapted from: Leslie and Paul Badham. *A New Testament of Evidence- Verdict on Jesus*

## CHURCH FAMILY REFLECTIONS

### CONTRIBUTION FROM GILL HUGHES

We are acutely aware in our fellowship of the number of members we have lost over the last few years, and of the impact each of them had on our lives individually and as a body of Christ in this community. In the immediate loss, family and friends navigate the rites and passages of grief in the best way they are able, and as a fellowship we seek to support as appropriate. Many of us are conscious of a value of returning later to remember the impact lives have had and continue to have, even in their absence. In a memorial service planned for November we hope to allow space to do some of that, giving thanks through our reflections of all they meant to us and to others.

Recently the charity "All We Can" asked if we could send them "a few words" about Hilary following her long held commitment to supporting them financially including a legacy in her will. They recognised her as a "champion" in 2016 and ask us to reflect on what she was like as a member of Trinity, what motivated her commitment to helping others, memories that reflect who she was. They would use this to share stories and encourage other supporters. I know that the volume of reflections I received when preparing to say a few words at her Service of Thanksgiving will give plenty of scope to help us to send what they ask!

What they have asked seems to me to be the sort of areas we should continue to recall in personal conversations and in times of reflective worship like the service planned for November.

May we celebrate and not lose the collective memory of our faith journey with such a rich variety of companions, the ways it has been shaped over the years and the directions it will take into the future. We each leave a legacy – monetary or otherwise!

*Gill*

### FAITHFUL FRIENDS – SENT BY JOHN WHITTLE

Faithful friends are a sturdy shelter:

whoever finds one has found a treasure.

Faithful friends are beyond price;

no amount can balance their worth.

Faithful friends are life-saving medicine;

and those who fear the Lord will find them.

Those who fear the Lord direct their friendship aright,

for as they are, so are their neighbours also.

Sirach 6.14-17

## MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

### PRAYER FROM TRICIA EASDALE

Thank You, Lord, for today's quiet blessings and tomorrow's gentle hope.  
As leaves fall, our thanks rise—and our hope remains in You.  
Grateful for today, hopeful for tomorrow, held always in Your love.

### CONTRIBUTION FROM TRICIA

#### AUTUMN

There is something quietly beautiful about autumn. The air turns crisp, the days grow shorter, and the trees begin their gentle transformation into shades of gold, amber, and red. Leaves fall softly to the ground, reminding us that change is not only inevitable—it can also be graceful.

For many, autumn is a season of reflection. After the busyness of summer, life seems to slow just enough for us to pause and take stock. We think about what has been, what has changed, and what lies ahead. It is a time that invites us to consider what we might need to let go of.

In the natural world, the trees do not resist the changing season. They release their leaves, trusting that this letting go is part of a greater purpose. Though the branches may soon appear bare, there is life beneath the surface, preparing quietly for renewal.

In the same way, our lives often include seasons of release—letting go of worries, past hurts, expectations, or even things we once held dear. These moments can feel uncertain, even difficult. Yet, autumn reminds us that letting go is not the end of the story.

Scripture tells us, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." Each season carries its own meaning, and each is held within God's care. Even when things seem to be fading or falling away, God is still at work, bringing growth in ways we may not yet see.

Autumn encourages us to trust in that quiet work. Just as the trees stand firm through change, we too can trust that God remains constant. What is released today may make space for something new tomorrow.

So as the leaves fall and the season turns, may we find peace in the rhythm of change. May we learn to let go with trust, to rest in God's provision, and to look ahead with hope.

Because in God's hands, every season has its purpose—and every ending holds the promise of new beginnings.

### ARTICLE BY REVD JOHN WHITTLE

#### SLEEPING ON THE JOB!

It was reported earlier this year that some police officers assigned protection roles at Windsor Castle were found to have been **asleep on the job and, as a result, they suffered discipline procedures**. One cannot help feeling a little sympathy for them, it must be a tedious, not to say, boring assignment; yet of vital importance. Recently, there have been

intruders captured in the grounds of royal residencies, indeed, once one even managed to gain access the late Queen's bedroom. Police officers are not the only ones prone to sleep at the wrong time, I have seen footage from motorway cameras showing drivers asleep at the wheel, and accidents, some fatal, have resulted from such situations.

**'Asleep on the job'** is sometimes applied to different settings, where those in charge of large organisations are charged with being asleep when they fail to act promptly and decisively when some crisis occurs. This charge has been levied at some churches and church leaders when it comes to matters of safeguarding from sexual abuse the young in its congregations, schools, care-homes and other faith-run institutions. Similar charges can be levied at many institutions in respect to racism and sexism.

All of us, especially, those with responsibility for the care of others, need to keep awake. Something Jesus had to call on his disciples to do, as he agonised in the garden of Gethsemane, and he found his disciples asleep - **'Stay awake that you might not come to the time of trial' (Matthew 26 v41)**. He also told the parable of the ten bridesmaids, with the closing line - **'Keep awake therefore, for you know neither day nor the hour' (Matthew 25.v13)**.

Isaac Watts encourages us, in his hymn, to awake each morning - **'Awake, our souls, away, our fears; let every trembling thought be gone; awake, and run the heavenly race, and put a cheerful courage on.'**

The story is told that some time ago when the US senate was meeting darkness suddenly descended across the city and members began to panic, believing the end of the world had arrived. In the midst of the rumpus the Speaker of the House called for calm saying - **"Gentlemen if the world is at its end I for one want to be found doing my duty, so bring lights and let us continue."**

In the book of Revelation in the message to the church in Smyrna the call is given to - **"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life"**; so, no **sleeping on the job**, let us strive to be faithful to the end.

*John*

## ARTICLE BY SANDRA ROBEY

### FORGIVENESS

**"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."**

Forgiveness is such a hard emotion to deal with; I imagine we have all struggled with it, close to home, and/or when we see terrible things happening in the world. I marvel at those who step forward out of adversity, and pain, to forgive the perpetrators of violence. I remember Kate gave a sermon on just this topic, her words far more eloquent.

Recently I went to see Jesus Christ Superstar with a friend. I had seen it three times before in different settings, this time in the intimacy of the London Palladium, we did not know what to expect. It was live theatre at its best, it started with the cast walking through the audience, to draw us in, to make us feel part of the scene, not simply an audience.

At the end, after the most wonderful experience, the characters stepped forward, out of their roles... Jesus, played by Sam Ryder, and Judas, hugged one another... a guttural roar went up. I could not contain myself any longer, **I was not alone**. A man sitting next door but one had said to me at half time, he preferred the film, as it was easier for him to follow, so we had a discussion on the bible characters, film versus live, and I asked him to give the second half a chance...he had seen the film when he was eight, at school.

When I bent forward to try to contain my own tears during the Crucifixion scene, the lady next door to me, put her hand on my back. I looked up to acknowledge her kindness and the said gentleman was crying and very red in the face... a convert to live

theatre, the experience opening spiritual channels he had not experienced. The Holy Spirit at work... I prefer that option.

A couple of years ago, I managed to find my birth mother's phone number. It had never been a positive relationship, but I was not so well myself and felt drawn by the Spirit to phone and make my peace. She said it was the best Christmas gift she had received. **When I put the phone down, I felt such great peace.** Forgiveness on that day, a two-way emotion. Too late for a meaningful relationship, but never too late to make peace.

None of us are perfect, we all need forgiveness, but the greatest gift of all is to know that whatever we have done, the love of our Lord Jesus, who suffered much for us all, rose again in glory to give us all hope. Hope that this world needs right now.

St. Teresa of Avila said...*Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours.*" Are we up for the challenge?

Is there someone or something we need to forgive?

Do we need to forgive ourselves?

*Love and prayers,*

*Sandra, as we journey **together with hope in Jesus.***

## ARTICLE BY JOHN WHITTLE

### WILLIAM COWPER - ONE OF ENGLAND'S FINEST POETS

William Cowper was a Hertfordshire lad, being born in Berkhamsted in the rectory where his father was a vicar. His mother died when he was only six, and his father sent him to boarding school where he faced loneliness, insecurity and bullying which left him mentally scarred for life. His father forced him into the legal profession, but he hated it. He also prevented him marrying the woman he loved. All this led to a period of deep depression. Later, following the death of his father, stepmother and his closest friend, he ended up in an asylum in St Albans, where one day, when in despair, he found a bible and read **Romans 3 v25**. This led him to write later – 'Immediately I received strength to believe it, and the full beams of the sun of righteousness shone upon me' This experience finds an echo in his hymn 'Hark my soul! It is the Lord' and v.2 'I delivered thee when bound, and, when bleeding, healed thy wound; sought thee wandering, set thee right, turned thy darkness into light.'

Sometime later he moved to live in a parish of Olney in Norfolk, where John Newton was vicar. The two men became life-long friends, with William helping John with his parish visiting and waiting on the poor, sick and dying.

Alas, his later life was marked with mental illness and insanity. He died in April 1800 and was buried in East Dereham, his funeral being conducted by John Newton. Alas, some of what I consider to be his best hymns have been dropped by modern hymn-books. These include hymns such as: 'O for a closer walk with God, a calm and Heavenly frame', and 'Sometimes a light surprises a Christian while he sings, It is the Lord who rises with healing in his wings, when comforts are declining, He grants the soul again a season of clear shining, to cheer it after rain'.

These hymns show that, even in his darkest hours, William found God waiting on him giving him light and comfort.

Out of his long hours of suffering, he has left us words to encourage us on our Christian Pilgrimage; he walked in the steps of the Master and would want us to do too.

I leave you with some words of his other best-known hymns – 'God moves in Mysterious ways His wonders to perform' (104 Singing the faith) words from v2 'Come all saints, fresh courage take, the clouds you so much dread are big with mercy and shall break in blessings on your head' and verse 5 'Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan his work in vain; God is His own interpreter and He will make it plain'.

*John*



## ARTICLES FROM MEL MITCHELL

### STEPHEN'S GRADUATION.



On Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2026 Stephen graduated from York University, Alcuin College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy. We were privileged to share this fantastic occasion with him at Central Hall and had a beautiful sunny day in the grounds of the University. Now he is preparing for his next step, packing up to go to Japan for a year on the JET programme to teach English to primary school children. *Mel*

### COMPASSION AT BIG CHURCH FESTIVAL

This August I'll be doing something I've never done before. Down in the Wiston Estate in West Sussex the Big Church Festival is happening. The charity Compassion are supporting the festival and I'll be one of 350 Child Advocates talking to people about the joy of sponsoring a child as we aim to release more children from poverty in Jesus' name. I'll be on duty in any 2 of the 10 cafes on site serving refreshments to up to 40,000 people! In the run up to this I've been learning more about Compassion and meeting some graduates from the local church led projects. In very moving accounts they explained how it changed theirs and their families lives and how they learnt of God's love for them, gained an education, enjoyed hearty meals and how entire villages have been given access to clean water with bore holes put in by funds raised by Compassion. I'll share about my experience at Big Church Festival in the next TQ. In the meantime if you'd like to read about Compassion here's a link to the website.

<https://www.compassionuk.org/>

*Mel*

## CONTRIBUTION FROM JOHN NEILSON

### IN THE WILDERNESS

Once or twice a year I go for a week's holiday in the Peak District. I euphemistically describe these holidays as "disappearing into the wilderness". The Peak is not a true wilderness but it's a place where the walker needs to keep their wits about them or they can get into trouble. Maureen Bodden asked me to do a piece on the subject for the Trinity Quarterly. It made me stop and think about "walking" (meaning hiking across country as opposed to getting along the street on foot) and why it's been one of my main pastimes throughout my adult life. Dredging my memory, I come up with a one-word answer: Adventure, mainly because in Scotland that's precisely what it is. You need to know what you are doing because if you get it wrong, you will be in difficulty. When you get it right you get a great sense of satisfaction

In England there is a less harsh type of walking. As I type this, BBC 4 is running a series of half-hour programmes at 7.30 each evening on country walks. The format is of a well-known person holding a special camera and he/she is walking a relatively easy expedition of about 8 miles or so in interesting English hill country. The walker comments on what he/she is

doing and has the occasional chat with a passer-by. The walker also talks about what they are feeling, specifically in relation to the de-stressing effect of the exercise in the open-air rural environment.

Taking this last point further, one of my walking friends had a habit, on reaching a summit or other pleasant place to stop, of sitting down on the grass and saying that it was time to “commune with nature”, i.e. to stop for a rest and look at the view and generally relax in mind and body. Or he would make a remark about “admiring God’s handiwork”.

And as it happens I’m currently re-reading Bill Bryson’s “Road to Little Dribbling” where Bryson, an American citizen domiciled in England, also waxes eloquently about the English countryside, occasionally comparing it with his home state of Iowa, where, it would appear, if you go for a walk in their countryside you are considered insane.

So, the leisure activity of “walking” as followed by millions of people in this country contains three elements:

- a) The planning and navigation of a route across a landscape,
- b) The physical walk across the landscape where you follow the planned route without getting lost or over-tired,
- c) A kind of mystical enjoyment of the nature of the landscape and the way it blends with the architecture of farmsteads and villages, particularly in England.

I first went into a wilderness when I was about 11 when, during the school holidays, my father first took me into the Pentland Hills south of Edinburgh. This is an area easily accessible to walkers and also by Edinburgh’s various Boy Scout troops for hikes, camping and learning map-reading skills and so on. It’s a fairly benign area, nothing much can go wrong if you keep your wits about you. That’s where the Scouts came in. You learned the basic skills which meant you didn’t get lost and you stayed alive. And in ensuing decades, whether accompanied or not, across Britain I continue to use them.

So, it never bothered me when, for instance, I wanted to explore a particular area and none of my friends were available. I just got on with it. Which is where the alone in the wilderness comes in. There’s nothing which concentrates the mind more than being on your own on top of a hill and looking around and thinking “I’d better get this right”. In Scotland this can be a quite arresting. You look at the horizon and all you see is the far distant edge of hills and in between are the intervening peaks. You know that, of course, in between these intervening hills there is a road of some sort because you can see it on the map and that if in trouble you head for it and it will take you eventually to the youth hostel you are heading for.

About half-way between the serious approach needed in Scotland and the benign Hertfordshire countryside we have the Peak District which I would describe as semi-serious hill walking. If you make a mistake you’re not going to be in great difficulty. But there are hills to climb, a need for serious map-reading, and when you get to a hill top, views to sit and look at and ponder as per my friend’s comment in the fourth paragraph above. Once you get off a popular footpath in the Peak you are very much on your own and must rely on your ability to navigate using the 1:25000 Ordnance Survey map in relation to the landscape in front of you. There are footpath signs but they are few and far between; and compared with the meticulous footpath signage in Hertfordshire, almost useless.

The Peak District isn’t “real” wilderness, but given the above facts and the nature of the terrain you can find you are very much on your own, a single figure in a landscape, relying on your knowledge, skills and experience to get to where you are going along footpaths, tracks and other by-ways. And it’s this combination of physical and mental exercise that brings about a kind of transcendental calming effect on the walker’s consciousness as described in the TV programme, Bryson’s book and my old friend from way back.

*John*



## ASHWELL CHURCH NEWS

**Church Secretary: Chris James**

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Minister: Revd Stanslous Chatikobo

### NOTICES

**Sunday September 13<sup>th</sup>** 10.45am Morning Worship  
led by Revd Jim Dalglish followed by refreshments

**Sunday September 27<sup>th</sup>** 3pm Harvest Festival led by the Elders followed by refreshments

**CAMEO - Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2.30 – 4.30pm**  
**Subject: Bingo and other games. Followed by tea and cake.**

**WEDDING of Ina and Gareth, Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September 1pm for 1.30pm**

**COMMUNITY WELLBEING HUB – Every Thursday 2.00- 4.00pm**

This exercise and social group meets weekly in our hall, enabled by the churches in Ashwell. All are welcome.

**JOURNEY WITH JESUS - Wed 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2.30 – 4pm.**

All welcome as we come together to think about what next month's Sunday readings might mean for us today, as we Journey with Jesus. Refreshments provided. Readings selected from: Matthew 18.15-20; Matthew 18.21-35; Matthew 20.1-16; Matthew 21.23-32



**SEASON OF CREATION - 1<sup>st</sup> September - 4<sup>th</sup> October**

We celebrate harvest, thanking God for his provision through the land and our farmers who have grown food for us in a challenging year.

### ADVANCE NOTICE

**CAMEO - Wed 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2.30 – 4.30**, think of a piece of music that reminds you of Autumn. Share your thoughts and we'll listen to the music.

**JOURNEY WITH JESUS – Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2.30-4.00pm**

Saturday October 3<sup>rd</sup> - 12 noon until 1.30pm – Harvest Lunch

Sunday November 8<sup>th</sup> – probably at 10.30am – Ashwell Service of Remembrance (URC hosting this year).

Saturday November 14<sup>th</sup> - 10.30 – 12.30am – Autumn Coffee Morning.

**Thought for the month:** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. **St Matthew.**

*Chris*

## **GREETINGS FROM WALKERN AND SANDON!**

**FROM OLGA GINN AND STEVE MASON**



We are pleased to report that Steve has been accepted for commissioning as an Elder in Local Leadership (ELL). It's great that his many gifts and talents have been recognised in this way.

We held Ascension Day Communion for the LEP at our regular Thursday Café Church. This was led by Revd Mark Bailey, Rector of St Mary's Walkern and St Peter's Benington. The regular Thursday mornings continue to be popular, with around a dozen people enjoying refreshments and fellowship, with a short Thought for the Day.

We have welcomed another new member, Kim, who was received into our fellowship at the Communion Service in June, and she has agreed to be involved in taking forward our plans for children's worship.

As part of our Eco Church journey we have had two house martin boxes installed – we will have to watch out for occupants next year! We also took part in the "Churches Count on Nature" wildlife survey and had a biodiversity survey thanks to the Parish Council with Herts. and Middx. Wildlife Trust. The garden and Burial Ground are obviously looking very sad at the moment due to the drought.

The Reception Class at Walkern School will visit the Church in September when we plan to have some Harvest-based activities, in advance of our Harvest Thanksgiving celebrations.

At the Elders' Meeting we discussed changing our pattern of Services during the autumn. Communion will be on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday with Julian Prayer on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, and we would also like to offer a Family Service once a month, so hope to report on that in the next issue.

Steve conducted a Marriage Blessing at the home of Steven and Faye – Steven had been baptised in the Church as a baby. This was a very meaningful occasion and was greatly appreciated by all who attended.

We held an Open Church afternoon in August when the Church was open for Quiet Space, with refreshments outside in the front garden, under a tree in the shade. We are very fortunate in having this wonderful setting for our beloved Church.

*Olga and Steve*

## **CONTRIBUTION FROM TRICIA EASDALE - PEACE.**

**You, Lord, give true peace to those who depend on you, because they trust you.**

**Isaiah 26:3 NCV**

Daily stress, nagging worries, and ceaseless squabbles make you long for a place - an-hour of peace. You don't need to look for a serene spot, however, and you don't need to arrange a special time to rest your heart in God's peace. He has it for you right now, right where you are. Give God all those things that drive out peace – name them, hand them over, and don't grab them back again! Then take comfort in the peace He has for you. *Tricia*

## REFLECTIONS BY PETER BODDEN



You may not be aware but music is one of, if not my main, pastime, hobby, if you prefer. These days singing as a member of a choir is my principal musical activity. In addition to The Eden Consort, a quartet of voices, I regularly sing with Positif Chamber Choir, Knebworth Community Chorus and Haileybury Choral Society.

Why? If you must ask, I was sat at the piano very early in my life and after several years of lessons and the torture of nationally recognised grade exams, I discovered football was equally, if not more, enjoyable, both in matching my modest skills as an amateur, and socially. Stay with me, please!

Fast forward to when my body could no longer match my sporting aspirations, a coincidence occurred. Having been told I probably had a good singing voice by a former lead of the National Youth Orchestra, I was invited to join others one Friday evening, and, as they say, the rest is history.

What is almost certainly “more” historic is the Feast Day of St Cecilia, celebrated annually on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. She became the Patron Saint of Music and Musicians because, allegedly, when the musicians played at her wedding, Cecilia “sang in her heart to the Lord.” Cecilia of Rome lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century AD and was a Christian virgin martyr, who is venerated in Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, as well as some Lutheran churches, such as the Church of Sweden.

One of Hertfordshire's best kept secrets is the depiction above of St Cecilia designed by Karl Parsons (1884-1934), one of the small, in number, but stunning stained glass windows in St Michael and All Angels in Waterford, near Hertford. All are the works of members of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

This year, 22<sup>nd</sup> November falls on a Sunday and our service that day is scheduled to be led by Mel and Team, café style. **Note to Mel**, your planning may well be made easier by the date coincidence!

Finally, I have been known to surf the internet looking at choir and other music-related websites. One I discovered in early August this year was that of Cantoria, a Spanish ensemble of singers and instrumentalists specialising in the Renaissance and early Baroque periods. This group has used the following strapline posted on social media. I leave it with you to ponder and, possibly, a topic for discussion sometime.

***“Music was probably Christianity’s most powerful storytelling tool.”***

## TRINITY 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SERVICE AND BBQ



On Sunday 12th July, the Moderator of the URC Thames North Synod, Reverend George Watt, led morning worship here at Trinity to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Local Ecumenical Partnership between the Methodists and the United Reformed Church in Knebworth. He preached on the pearl of great value (pearl is the gift for a 30th anniversary) emphasising the pearls of the good news of Jesus Christ and unity. The celebrations continued after the service with a barbecue. Many thanks to all who helped and took part. *Maureen*



## A TASTE OF THE WORLD AT OUR INTERNATIONAL SUPPER

What a wonderful evening we had at our recent **International Supper**! Trinity was filled with the delicious aromas of food from around the world, as members of our congregation, people from the local community and friends from other churches in the village came together for an evening of food, friendship and fellowship.

The evening began with opening prayers led by **Revd John Whittle**, setting the tone for what was to be a truly special gathering. From then on, conversation and laughter filled the room as people shared stories, experiences and, of course, their favourite dishes!

There was an amazing variety of international flavours to enjoy. We travelled from **Jamaica and the Caribbean**, with Jamaican jerk chicken, rice and peas and Caribbean sweet potato mash, to **Nigeria**, with delicious plantain and spicy chicken stew. **Zimbabwe** was represented by a hearty beef stew served with cornmeal, while **France** brought the flavours of ratatouille and coq au vin. We also enjoyed **Hungarian** *tócsni*, **Spanish** paella, shepherd's pie and many other wonderful dishes.

But the evening was about much more than the food. Around the tables, people who may not normally have the opportunity to meet, sat together, chatted and discovered more about each other. There was a wonderful sense of welcome and belonging as different cultures, backgrounds and generations came together as one community, a beautiful reminder that food has a special way of bringing people together, celebrating the richness of our different cultures.

Our International Supper was truly a **taste of the world, served with friendship, laughter and love**. We are grateful to everyone who cooked and contributed food, helped in setting up and contributed to making the evening such a memorable success. Over £284 was raised, mostly for church funds, 10% going to our charity of the month, Zimbabwe Presbyterian Church Orphan Fund. We look forward to welcoming our community together again for another occasion soon!

*Camilla*



PHOTOS OF INTERNATIONAL SUPPER ON 8<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST  
*Courtesy of Jackie Hall and Stan Chatikobo Junior*



**1 Corinthians 10:31**

'So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.'

## TRINITY SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

### ARTICLE FROM MEL MITCHELL

#### FAITH, NURTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Bible for All.

Our next Bible for all sessions will be 11<sup>th</sup> October and 1<sup>st</sup> of November. Usually during our sessions after the service we look at different passages together and have an informal conversation about it using some great resources. We would love it if everyone who is able, came along, so please let Mel know if there is a reason you aren't able to, but want to. We aim to be as accommodating as possible.

#### Prayer Walk



On Sun 24<sup>th</sup> May, after the service, 4 of us ventured out of church, turning right towards the High Street for our very hot, sunny Pentecost prayer walk. We stopped at several points to pray for that part of the village, the residents who live there and the services provided. One of the stops was the green at St. Martin's where we prayed for Knebworth Family of Churches and the community. It marked the end of Thy Kingdom Come 2026 (the 10 day Church of England event that encourages us to pray for others to find faith). It was a great opportunity to pray together for our community.

#### Worship planning

Our next worship planning group meeting will be Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct. As well as discussing the calendar of worship leaders and vestry duties we share worship style ideas and feedback from previous services so please let us know if there is anything you would like raised. We aim to grow in faith together, enrich our services and bring glory to God in all we do.

#### Singing/musical group.

We want to encourage and strengthen our current musicians and would really appreciate prayer for this area to develop, particularly for singers to come forward. We would like to continue learning new songs/hymns and perhaps adding some harmony and percussion to the ones we already know.

#### Children and young people sessions.

Trinity are meeting with Thames North Synod Children's and Youth Development Officer Lorraine to discuss and assess how we are supporting and encouraging children and young people in our church community. This is some of what our first meeting entailed. Please continue prayers for our sessions as we aim to develop our services for this age group.

#### **1. Where are we at the moment in our engagement with children, young people and families?**

- We have resources including rooms, materials, leaders and a willingness to engage with children and young people.
- Junior Church/Sunday Club with 2 to 5 members.
- One Truth – approximately 10 members aged 18 and over
- Youth representative for Thames North Synod in the congregation
- Some of our young people have attended Taizé for the last 5 years and 3 Generations gatherings previously.



- Community Youth Club on a Friday night – non-faith based but supported by churches.
- Older teenagers leaving for life and university, often no secondary age children/young people.
- Families going to livelier churches
- We have lost some established Sunday Club leaders.

*Possible considerations:*

- Rota for children's ministry, welcoming to be more robust.- video of the church on the website, social media, advertise, having welcomers at the door, use the A frame more often.
- Assess how we support those leaving for university and look at the role of One Truth in services.
- Could hold specific events or activities for families.
- Could get more involved in wider URC.

**2. Do children and young people feel unconditionally welcomed and that they belong?**

- The children that are already attending appear to be happy in church – activities in the corner of the Sanctuary.
- One Truth feel welcomed and happy – the group was moulded around them and their individual needs as they have become older.
- We are a church that aims to be accepting and welcoming.
- There is not much for secondary age children so they may not feel as welcome.
- Have we ever asked the children if they feel unconditionally welcomed? - plan to invite them to the next meeting of these sessions and to ask them.
- Not many events for children and young people and limited advertising for the groups we do have so is our church attractive for these ages?

**3. How do we think that engaging with this process will make a difference to our fellowship?**

- It will help us to grow in faith together.
- It will help us to think outside the box, to understand where we need to improve.
- It will open our eyes as a church to see how we can better serve the young people.
- It will help us become aware of our community needs for younger people and be more of a team.

We look forward to our next session and developing our services for the children and young people of our community.

*Mel*

**ARTICLE FROM CAMILLA STRAUGHN**

**A NEW CHAPTER FOR TRINITY**

We give thanks to God for a new chapter in the life of Trinity church as we introduce our new Constitution and welcome those who have agreed to take on important roles within our church family.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to **Alan and his team** for the considerable time, effort and hard work they have put into developing our new Constitution. This has been an important piece of work, providing us with a clear framework for the way our church is governed and helping to ensure that we are well equipped for the future. We are grateful for their dedication and commitment. We are also delighted to welcome **Victoria, Jackie, Brian, Chris, Becky and Camilla**, who have agreed to serve as our new **Trustees**. We thank them for being willing to take on this responsibility and pray that God will give them wisdom, strength and guidance as they serve.

A warm welcome also goes to **Sue, Cathy, Victoria, Kathy, Kate, Tricia, Rosie, Maureen, Jackie, Brian, Mel, Chris, Becky and Camilla**, who have agreed to serve the church as **Elders**. We are grateful for their willingness to offer their gifts and experience in supporting the spiritual life and pastoral ministry of our church.

We also warmly welcome our new **Treasurer, Alan, our Secretary, Maureen and Head of the Management Committee, Becky**. These roles are vital to the effective running of our church, and we are thankful to each of you for being willing to serve in this way.

As we begin this new chapter together, let us remember that although we may have different roles and responsibilities, we are one church family, called to serve God and one another. We pray for all those taking on new responsibilities and ask God to bless them with wisdom, patience and joy as they serve.

**“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.”**

**– Colossians 3:23**

May God bless Trinity and our **Minister, Revd Stan** for overseeing this new chapter in the life of Trinity Church. Amen.

Camilla

## OUR CURRENT MISSION STATEMENT.

*We worship the living God by:*

*- sharing God's love by continuing to welcome all and by participating in and supporting community events including The Youth Project.*

*- building on the sense of belonging, using God given gifts and nurturing the future growth of our church across all age groups and encouraging participation in all aspects of its life.*

*We seek to deepen our faith and become devoted followers of Jesus Christ through prayer and worship, developing our music and our understanding of Scripture, and to be a church that cares for God's creation in all our activities.*

## KNEBWORTH PARISH NEWS ARTICLES

### ARTICLE FOR THE JULY ISSUE BY REVD JOHN WHITTLE

I admit my knowledge of social media is only second-hand, but I understand that many people, especially young ones, tailor their lives by what an **influencer** tells them is the right food to eat, clothes to wear, what to believe, and that such influencers are able to make a living from the products they recommend in their outpourings. What is more disturbing are the negative effects of some of these creators of culture, especially on the minds of children, and young people when exposed to some of this content. I am, in particular, thinking of the way some portray women in what can only be described as in medieval terms, by such as Andrew Tate and his so called Manosphere. Boys are told that girls are only in search of a source of money, and that girl-power has gone too far, and men are now second-class citizens. It seems females are to be banished back to the kitchen sink! There is also the influence of online pornography which, it seems, is too easily accessed by the young. Such material, I understand, often shows degrading and even dangerous treatment of women. In the light of this, should we be surprised when young boys of the age of thirteen or fourteen seriously attack girls?

The question I pose today is - should followers of Christ shape their lives by the human influencers and their suggested pattern for life? Now it may not matter in respect of being influenced on many daily choices, though these can have an impact on how we view nature, and how much of our food industry involves endangering the future biodiversity and survival of human life on earth. What is more important is what influences our basic beliefs and hence shape our actions.

The church needs to point all to the **one true influencer – Jesus Christ**. It His influence which sets the pattern for Christian lives, lived by those who seek to follow the example of Jesus, the one who drew circles that embraced others rather than excluded them, who treated women with respect; remember they were first to learn of the Resurrection. So what the Kingdom of God needs, especially for our young people, are men and women whose Christian life inspires them to follow Christ. ‘Christians in Sport’ seems to me to have the

credentials to give this kind of witness, as too do those who serve their communities selflessly in food-banks, youth groups etc. Of course, we are not called to imitate Christ in such things as dress, or the food we eat etc. Rather as Paul entreats his readers to **'Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus'** The spirit of which is well captured by Kate B Wilkinson in her hymn-verse 1 **'May the mind of Christ my Saviour, live in me from day to day, by his love and power controlling all I think or say.'** She wrote a 6<sup>th</sup> verse, which has been omitted from most hymn books, but which I think is worth having: **'May his beauty rest upon me, as I seek the lost to win, and may they forget the channel, seeing only him.'**

## **ARTICLE FOR THE AUGUST ISSUE BY REVD STAN CHATIKOBO**

### **CHRIST'S ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD**

#### **Introduction**

If a person has no religion or if he has closed his mind to all thoughts of supernatural and if he regards the churches as purveyors of outworn myths, is there a place where Jesus may grip the person's attention? The answer is readily available in the world's most accessible book- the New Testament.

Jesus had a mind (of his own), and a view of life that raises a question-mark over most current values and attitudes. As powerful opposing ideologies make their goals more apparent, the relevance of what he taught and stood for challenges our contemporary thought today. Can we imagine if he was in a television program what would happen? Any question referred to Christ would be lifted to a new level. When the Pharisee and Herodians arrived together with trick questions about paying tribute to Caesar (Matt22:15-22), the answer from Christ took them by surprise. They went away and left him alone. Then the Sadducees came next with the question about the reality of any life beyond this, which the Sadducees had no belief in (Matt22:23-33). Christ's answer silenced them, yet the people heard what he said and were astounded at his teaching. Pharisees regrouped again to make another question about the greatest commandment in the Mosaic Law (Matt22:34-40). The reply of Christ was a combination of two separate statements from the Law which left them with no more to say. He asked them a question which they could not reply, and they shrank away from asking him any more questions.

In a world like ours today with various misunderstandings and questions, but short of answers, Christ could still deal with the contemporary questions our people may ask. The stories Jesus told are among the world's literary masterpieces, catching the ear of the passer-by and made people realise the unexplained depths in him.

The contemporary importance of Christ is that he spoke the highest things with an authority and gave them finality. Honest thinking penetrates to any depth, and they still take us right to the matters he talked about. Problem after problem today could be met by his answers. Economic justice, racial relationships, resorting to violence and the violence in most tragic forms such as wars, clearly shows how far his thinking remains ahead of us. The fact of life calls us to examine his teaching, freshly, objectively as a pressing contemporary need.

The question 'Who is my neighbour?' was never discussed in a legal way, yet the answer cited current practices, the level of human involvement and obligation towards each other. Neighbourliness rises above racial prejudices. Social justice is not a matter of race but of sheer human need. Furthermore, the law of Moses put resistance, or reprisal, in terms of tit for tat, life for life, an eye for an eye, wound for wound, stripe for stripe (Exod21:23-25). Jesus brought new thinking to an old problem where he had watched men meeting evil with evil, force with force and he saw the endlessness and viciousness of the proceedings. Jesus exposed its inadequacy. How can Satan cast out Satan? (Matt12:22f) How can you ever deal with any form of evil by matching it with equivalent evil. Somehow, the vicious circle of evil answering evil had to be broken. Your questions can be answered too.

*Stan*

(Adapted from: **A New Testament of Evidence. Verdict on Jesus 5<sup>th</sup> Edition by Leslie Badham. 2020 SPCK Great Britain, pg11-15).**

## KNEBWORTH FAMILY OF CHURCHES, INCORPORATING CHRISTIAN AID



Please don't forget to support the **food bank collection** (green box in entrance hall), which is taken on Mondays to the Lamex Stadium for distribution by the **Feed up Warm up** Charity.

The dates for KFC coffee mornings are on the front page of this issue and on page 20..

The Remembrance Sunday Commemoration will take place at the War Memorial in old Knebworth on 8<sup>th</sup> November at 12.30, with KFC churches represented.

The Eden Consort will be presenting 'Advent Voices' at Trinity on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December, and all KFC churches are invited.

*Maureen Bodden*



The members of the Knebworth Christian Aid Committee, (started some fifty years ago by Alan Richardson of Trinity, Ken Emsdon, and Michael Lucas both of St. Martin's) want to thank the Knebworth community for enabling us to raise over £2,500 with the donations made via the buckets at the Co-op and Post Office, plus other donations made on line, Gift Aiding, and at the KFC coffee morning.

This, at a time when incomes are being squeezed, shows people do care for the needs of others, and in the face of national cuts to overseas aid are willing to support the work of charities such as Christian Aid. Just to give you an example of the work of Christian Aid in 2023-24 – it funded 410 projects in Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, reaching directly 4.5 million of whom 52% were women and girls, and another 19.3 million indirectly via faith-based partners.

So a big thank you to all who have helped to make possible the continued work of Christian Aid.

*John Whittle*

## MISSION AND CHARITY NEWS

### HAVEN FIRST - Report from Sue Burrell

We have supported this hostel for the homeless in Stevenage for many years, and they **have now changed their name to ONE YMCA** supporting people's lives in Stevenage, Baldock and Hitchin.

Supporting, sheltering and shaping homeless people's lives couldn't happen without the support of the community, and Trinity Church has helped over the years with contributions of items from our Harvest Festival service. These gifts will still go to their premises at Ditchmore Lane, Stevenage. Further details will be displayed on the notice board at Trinity Church in September, and will be sent with email notices.

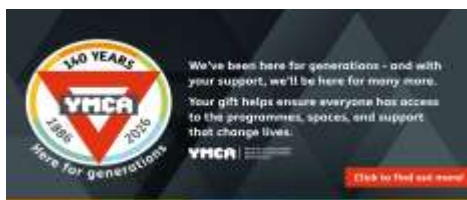
Another way to help is to support our charity of the month. Every September **Haven First** (now **ONE YMCA**) is the charity of the month. I appreciate there are many calls on our finances but please give as generously as you can, there is a great need, and a little love, care and monetary support now could help save someone a lifetime of heartache.

*Sue*

## MISSION GROUP SCHEDULE - Maureen Bodden

These are the charities we are supporting at Trinity in the next 3 months. You can help through our charity offerings at services, coffee money donations, or by bank transfer if you can't make it to church. Don't forget that Gift Aid adds 25 pence to every pound you give. If you pay UK tax, just give your name and address on the envelope, or ask Alan or Maureen.

### September



Please bring along non-perishable food and toiletry items to **the Harvest Festival service on 27th September** (there will be a list on the board). The One YMCA hostel in Stevenage very much appreciates these donations, as well as the monetary collection we make over the month.

**One YMCA** (formerly Haven First) plays an important part in supporting vulnerable people in the local community who do not have the privilege of a home to which they can return each evening.

To find out more about **One YMCA** go to: <http://www.oneymca.org>

### October



**Commitment for Life** is the United Reformed Church's global justice programme. They support the work of Christian Aid.

**Commitment for Life** belongs to every congregation. Many choose to support a region in the world through prayer, learning, advocacy, and action for justice.

Our partners are Christian Aid and Global Justice Now. Our four partner regions are Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Central America (Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala). Trinity has earmarked Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories as our chosen Region.

**Commitment for Life** means Life-Giving Faith, Defiant Hope & Generous Love

<https://urc.org.uk/your-church/church-local-and-global/commitment-for-life>

### November



**All We Can** is a pioneering international development, relief and advocacy organisation that believes in the power of partnership. It has its roots in the British Methodist Church and is inspired by Christian principles to focus on those in greatest need. The charity works through partnerships to end the cycle of suffering caused by poverty, inequality and injustice, and was supported by Hilary Dyster, for whom they are organising a tribute. Sue Burrell has now taken over as our contact.

The charity works through partnerships to end the cycle of suffering caused by poverty, inequality and injustice: 'We support and strengthen local partners – organisations, churches and emerging initiatives that share our vision and values – to implement effective and sustainable solutions for people living in some of the world's poorest and least served communities. We respond to humanitarian crises with emergency support and help communities to be better prepared for disaster. <https://www.allwecan.org.uk/>



## **HALL HIRING - Kate Dickinson**

At Trinity, we have the perfect venue for you and a variety of rooms available for hire, whether required for business or pleasure.

To contact our new hiring team, kindly use the following:

Lettings Team, Trinity Church, Park Lane, Knebworth, SG3 6PD

Phone: 07979 362133

Email: trinityknebworthlettings@gmail.com

## **Knebworth Family of Churches Monthly Coffee Mornings.**

We look forward to seeing you at St Martin's Parish Centre on the following **Saturdays** between 10.00am and 12.00 noon:



**19th September**

**17th October**

**21st November**

## **RECIPE CORNER**

### **RECIPES FROM TRICIA EASDALE- AUTUMN APPLES – SIMPLE SEASONAL RECIPES**

May these recipes add a little comfort to your home this autumn.

#### **Classic Apple Crumble**

##### **Ingredients:**

6–8 cooking apples (peeled, cored, sliced)  
100g sugar  
1 tsp cinnamon  
200g plain flour  
100g butter  
75g brown sugar



##### **Method:**

Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan). Place the apples in a baking dish and sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon. Rub the butter into the flour until it resembles breadcrumbs, then stir in the brown sugar. Scatter the topping over the apples and bake for 35–40 minutes until golden.

**To serve:** Lovely with custard or cream.

## Apple Recipes Continued .....

### Spiced Apple Soup

#### Ingredients:

4 apples (peeled and chopped)  
1 onion (chopped)  
500ml vegetable stock  
1 tsp cinnamon  
1 tbsp butter  
Salt and pepper



#### Method:

Gently cook the onion in butter until soft. Add the apples, cinnamon, and stock, then simmer for 20 minutes. Blend until smooth and season to taste.

*A simple, warming dish for cooler days.*

### Baked Apples with Honey & Nuts

#### Ingredients:

4 large apples  
4 tsp honey  
Handful of chopped nuts  
1 tsp cinnamon  
A small knob of butter



#### Method:

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Core the apples and place in a baking dish. Fill each centre with honey, nuts, cinnamon, and a little butter. Add a splash of water to the dish and bake for 25–30 minutes until tender.

*Tricia*

## METHODIST NEWS

The Methodist Conference elected and inducted the Revd Mark Slaney to serve as President and Caroline Stead to serve as Vice-President on Saturday 27 June at the Methodist Conference in Telford. The induction marks the start of their year of office.

. For a summary of news from the Methodist Conference held in June this year go to:

[Home - The Methodist Church](#) , where you can also sign up for the weekly newsletter

## URC NEWS

*This letter has been sent with a request it be shared with all congregations:*

### **To: All members and adherents of United Reformed Churches and our Local Ecumenical Partnerships**

Dear Friends,

This letter is designed to give you an indication of the denomination's central finances but is necessarily a brief over-view. Your church (or group) treasurer has a letter giving more detail which we are sure they will be delighted to share with you.

In recent years, on the Ministry and Mission (M&M) Fund, we have seen a gradual decline in church contributions and the shortfall on synod's pledges have been made up by the synods themselves.

We are hugely grateful to the synods for their generosity but recognise this is not sustainable over the long term. It is also of concern that the weakness of church contributions weakens the covenant that binds us together as a denomination, namely that those with resources contribute to supporting those who have less.

The central URC budget for expenditure (for 2026) includes a number of areas of expected costs reduction, significantly in staffing. Some very hard choices have been made and implemented. On the other hand, the URC needs to buy in expertise that we need for our world of increasing regulation and oversight, in view of the scarce resources available from volunteers. We hope that at local church level you will take a moment to reflect on the expertise (paid and unpaid) that steers the URC through all we have to do to be compliant with complex regulation. (Please pray for us!).

We know you have some of these challenges at local level too. We hope that one of the outcomes of the Church Life Review and Church Life Fund going forward will be the availability of URC resources and advice that can be accessed by local congregations. Ask your Church Secretary about these and look at this year's General Assembly decisions.

The annual audited accounts of the URC (for the year ended 31 December 2025) are now finalised and were published just before General Assembly. You can find a copy at <https://urc.org.uk/trustees-report-and-financial-statements/>

The accounts of the M&M Fund (the greater, but not only part of the URC Trust finances) show our total income £670,000 ahead of budget, but our costs were around £610,000 higher than expected. The deficit for the year on the M&M fund was around £650,000. We had hoped for much better.

So, thank you to all who continued to contribute to your local church, thank you to all those churches who met their commitment for 2025 in full, and thank you to all those who, in adversity, continued to treat the M&M Fund as the first priority and paid what they could.

If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter, please speak to your church treasurer who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help directly then they can get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

Yours in Christ,

Alan Yates (Treasurer)

Vaughan Griffiths (Deputy Treasurer)

## DATES FROM URC THAMES NORTH SYNOD News

**LCRF Annual Speaker Meeting "Roots and Refuge" Brother Johannes Maertens** on Thursday 17 September 2026 at 6.30pm (doors open at 6pm) at Wesley's Chapel EC1Y 1AU

**Church Action on Poverty Sunday** on Sunday 18th October 2026, [church-poverty.org.uk/sunday](http://church-poverty.org.uk/sunday)

**Join JPIT on Iona** from 17-23 October 2026. Bookings are now open.

**Meetings of Synod Dates/Venues** - 17 October 2026 Venue: TBA

For more TNS news, see: <https://urcthamesnorth.org.uk/>

For news from the URC go to Home - United Reformed Church , subscribe to 'Reform' , the URC news magazine.

## ECUMENICAL CHURCH SERVICES IN THE LADY CHAPEL

A **Free Church** service is celebrated monthly on a **Wednesday** of each month at **11am** with our Free Church chaplain and other ministers, and with a congregation from all denominations.

### 2nd September 2026

The Revd Stephen Copson  
Retired Baptist Minister.

### 7th October 2026

The Revd Andrew Openshaw  
Regional Minister, Central Baptist Association.

### 4th November 2026

The Revd David Jebb  
Superintendent Minister of St Albans & Welwyn Methodist Circuit.

**Contact:** The Rev'd Simon Carver [simoncarver@btinternet.com](mailto:simoncarver@btinternet.com)

[www.stalbanscathedral.org](http://www.stalbanscathedral.org)

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***Please send articles for the December issue of Trinity Quarterly to a member of the Editorial Team by 1<sup>st</sup> November at the latest:***

Maureen Bodden: [maureen.haycock@gmail.com](mailto:maureen.haycock@gmail.com)

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Rosemary Rudkin: [rosemary@tonyrudkin.f9.co.uk](mailto:rosemary@tonyrudkin.f9.co.uk)



THE CATHEDRAL AND  
ABBEY CHURCH OF  
SAINT ALBAN

JOIN US FOR

# HARVEST

## *Lunch*

At Trinity Church

On Sunday, the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2026

Following the church service

